

# Western Park Gazette

Information and advertising for the Western Park Area  
No 6 July 2009 [www.westernparkgazette.co.uk](http://www.westernparkgazette.co.uk)



## A Blooming Success!

Western Park exploded into a riot of colour during the first weekend of July as the latest Open Gardens Event took place.

17 gardens were open to the public following a crowded opening ceremony in the grounds of St Anne's Church by the Lord Mayor Councillor Roger Blackmore, with entertainment provided by the Tudor Choir.

The weather held off allowing over 400 local people the chance to enjoy the sun and happily ramble around some of the most spectacularly vibrant and creative gardens in Leicester

More than £2000 was raised from tickets, plant and homemade food sales and from the many traditional fun activities taking place at Dovelands School and Eastfield Road Tennis Club who also threw open their doors for the weekend.



Western Park's Gardens on Show

WIN A MEAL FOR 4  
FROM THE GLOBE



Raising Funds in St Anne's Garden

Proceeds from the weekend are to be divided between Rainbows, the Leicestershire children's hospice and the Community Hall Building Fund. One of the team of organisers behind it all is Pat Abraham. She says it was the most successful Open Gardens yet "It took a lot of planning but it's paid off. Everyone enjoyed it: It went extremely well; people were meeting up and talking. I think it's helped bring the community closer together".

Visit [www.westernparkgazette.co.uk](http://www.westernparkgazette.co.uk) and click the Picture Archive to see photo's of the opening ceremony and some of the gardens.

### Greetings from the Editor

Hello and welcome to July's issue of the Western Park Gazette.

In this edition, The success of the Western Park Open Gardens, Roger Blackmore, now well into his Mayoral stride has taken time out to tell us about a local tradition that will upset Western Park's cat lovers. However in 1760, that wasn't a problem!

Helen Knott recycles her son, he's noisy, so we understand. The King of Compost Corner - Tony Huxley gets "metro sexual" about flowers and Richard Perry looks at what we can expect when we have pay our extra £6 phone tax.

Following a spate of burglaries in Western Park we have suggestions on how you can protect your property and Andrea Banks-Stazak from Tansley's goes nose to nose with the dreaded Ann Robinson! Who will be the weakest link?

For lovers of beer and food, we've teamed up with one of Leicester's most historic hostels, The Globe, to offer you a free meal for 4.

And as always if you'd like to contribute to the Gazette, get in touch!

Sharon

editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk

## Events Diary

**Stay and Play** - West End Children's Centre Catesby Street. Free activities and nibbles for under 5's and carers. Weekly, Weds 1-3pm & Fri. 9.15-11.15. Tel: 0116 2252225.

**Knitting Circle** Meet every Thursday from 1pm at Mary Clare, 4 Shaftsbury Av. Tel: 0116 2551866

**IN2SHAPE** - Women's Healthy Lifestyle Group meet on Mondays between 6-7.30pm at the Braunstone Leisure Centre.

**Newarke Houses Museum and Gardens** - 26th July, Summer Sunday in the Gardens, take a picnic. 11-4pm. 28th July, Mad Hatters Tea Party. Find the Cheshire cat. Entry £1.10.

**Kite making at the Eco House** - 22nd July, 2.30 - 4.00pm. £1.00 per child. suitable for 5-11 yrs.

**Multi Sports on Western Park** - 20th 22nd July, 1.30-3.00pm

**Eco House** - 29th July. Make a Papier Mache Pot. Suitable for 5-11 year olds. 2.30-4.30pm. £1.00.

**Abbey Pumping Station** - 1st August Train rides with Lenny the Loco. 11-4pm and Circus fun on 13th Aug between 11-3pm.

**Market Festival** - 8th August at Leicester Market. Street entertainers, music and Titan the Robot.

**Eco House** - 9th August. Annual Ugly Bug Hunt. Suitable for 5-11 year olds. 2.30-4.30pm. Free.

**Fosse Park Clean Up** - Tuesday 11th August. Meet at the park gates on Wentworth Road at 6pm

## CREDIT CRUNCH !

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**The Western Park Gazette  
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*The leafy suburbs of Western Park hide a dark secret. From the times of witchcraft and superstition, comes our latest fascinating tale from Roger Blackmore .....better hide the cat.*

## A Curious Custom

I know many of you were intrigued by the story of Black Annis, or Black Anna, published in the Gazette in January.

I am indebted to my fellow Ward Councillor Peter Coley for details of a bizarre ceremony which used to take place in the Western Park area until well into the eighteenth century and beyond.

Peter tells me that every Easter Monday it was customary for the Mayor and the Freemen of the City to meet near Black Annis's Bower for a strange hunting ritual.

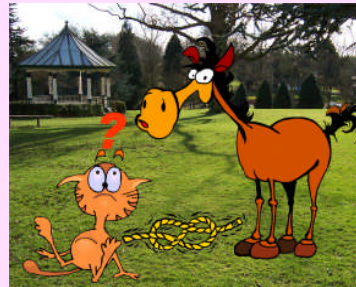
After spending the morning in various sporting activities and other amusements, they would then order a dead cat be trailed from the tail of a horse through the streets of Leicester.

Followed by huntsmen and dogs, the chase continued until this strange group eventually arrived at the Mayor's house, where a mayoral banquet took place with feasting lasting into the early hours.

We know this old custom started to fall into dis-

use in the 1760's, but traces of the ritual lasted into the nineteenth century when an annual holiday and fair continued to be held in the Dane Hills area on Easter Monday.

The dead cat which featured in these proceed-



ings may originally have once been a live hare. Interestingly, a similar custom of "hunting the hare" is also recorded as taking place only a few miles away at Whetstone. There may also be a connection with the Hallaton Hare Pie Procession in the South East of Leicestershire, which also takes place every Easter Monday.

Readers can be assured that I have grave reservations about reintroducing this custom into the municipal calendar.

## The Magic of Books

A month of reading is underway during the Summer of Reading Challenge in Leicester's Libraries.

Hot on the heels of Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince film, the theme for this year's challenge is fantasy and magic. During "Quest Seekers", children and young people are invited to join in at their local libraries and get reading through the school holidays. They can also participate in activities, events and reading challenges.

Some of the free, fun activities include sticker collecting, competitions, story telling, crafts and quizzes.

Quest Seekers runs until the 30<sup>th</sup> of July and is hoping to attract more than 5000 young people across the city.

More information is available from local libraries



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*Western Park resident, journalist, broadcaster and frazzled new mum Helen Knott, cuts costs with her first born.*

## KNOTT'S LANDING

*Helen Knott*

The credit crunch is really biting in our house. Maternity leave isn't all it's cracked up to be on the finance front and babies need a lot of stuff. But in our house we have a secret weapon to aid us in the fight. We have a recycled baby.

Early on in pregnancy it became clear that we were going to have to buy an enormous amount of stuff. At a time when we are all being encouraged to reduce, reuse and recycle the amount of baby bits and bobs you need and want, seems almost obscene and I love to shop as much as the next person.

The crunch came at the Baby Show at the NEC last year. I saw a woman pushing a cot built like a four poster bed that looked like the Christmas fairy had thrown up on it. She was being followed by four attentive men laden with bags. She clearly had everything she needed, for about three months.

## RUTH'S IN THE SWIM

Western Park resident Ruth Huxley will be taking the plunge for charity when she competes in the Vibes and Scribes River Lee Swim in Cork, Ireland.

This is 2km river race that takes place on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July. Ruth is raising money for the Laura centre, a charity that gives free counselling to bereaved parents. If you want to sponsor Ruth's watery adventure you can make a donation at [www.justgiving.com/ruthdoyle](http://www.justgiving.com/ruthdoyle)



**Ready for a Dip! Ruth Huxley**

Then she would have to start buying more. She was a one woman assault on the planet's resources.

There and then I resolved to reuse and recycle as much stuff as I possibly could when it came to my little one. Reusable nappies went on the shopping list, second hand if possible. I bought bundles of baby clothes from eBay and signed up for free things online. I also cleaned out my friends and family of all the old baby stuff they had lying around. It's amazing what people have stuffed in their lofts and garages.



A year on, our baby seems none the worse for his reused clothes, nappies and furniture, we are considerably in pocket in comparison to buying new and we have saved some of the planet's resources. Everyone is a winner. You can follow our journey online now at [www.recyclebaby.co.uk](http://www.recyclebaby.co.uk) and even join the discussion. Because we know we have really only just got off the starting line!

**Helen will be back next month.**

**Support our local businesses – Tell them you've seen them in the Gazette**

## Tony Huxley's Garden Tidings

Horticulturally I'm as metro-sexual as the next gardener. I've no problem with pretty little flowers or delicate blooms with girly names. I don't even mind pink as a colour. But sometimes a red blooded gardener wants big, bold plants with a bit of muscle that can handle themselves at the back of a border. It's worth having some prominent perennials in any reasonable sized planting area to give structure through the summer. Now is the time macho herbaceous perennials start to perform.

Architecturally you can't beat the artichokes. Remove the flowers if you just want to admire the silver green foliage. The edible blooms may match those of any exotic Protea but sap the plants strength.



The Cardoon (*Cynara Cardunculus*)

The cardoon (*Cynara Cardunculus*), it's cousin, is also spectacular. The stems are edible if blanched like celery. Two plants that mix business and pleasure. Both prefer fertile, moist but free draining soil. Aphids can be a problem, but nothing a quick spray with some soapy water won't fix.

Echinops or Globe Thistles are another manly favourite with handsome foliage. Bees and butterflies love the vivid blue spheres of blooms. This plant tolerates poorer, drier soils but can be prone to mildew. Excessive shade, dampness and crowding can contribute to this. Remove and dispose of infected foliage in the autumn to stop spores spreading.

As macho flowers go you can't beat *Verbascum olympicum*. This yellow flowered brute has already reached over 2 meters height in my garden, and looks capable of wrestling a Triffid. Now that's what I call a man's plant!

## St Andrea and the Dragon

Western Park hairdresser Andrea Banks-Stazak has taken on TV's Queen of Mean, Ann Robinson on *The Weakest Link*.

Andrea who's been cutting and styling hair at Tansley's Salon on Hinckley Road for five and a half years was up for the challenge and applied to go on one of Britain's most popular quiz shows.

Having contacted the Weakest Link via their web site, an application form dropped on her mat a few days later. She filled it in, attached a photo, sent it off and waited.

Andrea, whose Ann Robinson impression is almost better than the real thing, was invited to Pinewood Studios to face the dragon!

Under orders from the wardrobe department to take 3 sets of clothes; no blacks, whites, pastels, bright reds, spots, stripes or navy blues she travelled to London for an overnight stay and to prepare for the show.

The next day, caked in TV makeup, she was ready.

"It was fantastic, terrifying but really great", she says, "It takes two hours to record the show and the only time you see Anne is when the lights and music start. You don't have any contact with her until she asks you the question. And she started with me!".



Andrea Banks-Stazak The Queen of Cutting!

The fight between St Andrea and the Dragon was short. She was the second weakest link. "It was my own fault. I hesitated on a pop question about Cold Play and the others spotted it, so I was out".

Andrea, who denies she's a glutton for punishment, enjoyed it all so much, she wants to appear on another game show. "It was a brilliant experience, and I wouldn't have missed it for the world. I'd recommend it to anyone and I'm ready to do it all again!".

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## GAZETTE LETTER BOX

The world wide gnashing of teeth and wall to wall TV coverage following the death of Michael Jackson leads me onto this thought.

If it's okay to have a statue of Ghandi on Belgrave Road, why can't we all raise the money for a statue of the King of Pop in Western Park.

They have two things in common; both have a world wide following and both never set foot on Western Park.

We could demolish the band stand and have a fifty foot marble statue to the Messiah of Music.

This would become a place of pilgrimage for the millions of Jacko fans and glittery glove sellers.

It would boost the local economy no end.

**I.M. Bad - Western Park.** (You certainly are: Ed)

I saw two odd red/orange lights slowly flying over our neighbourhood during the evening of the 4th of July round 9pm.

I thought they were passenger jets, to begin with but they were not displaying navigation lights.

I looked at them through binoculars and they faded out but I suspect they may have been Chinese lanterns.

Did anybody else notice this?

**Name Withheld**

(Nope. You're on your own. But it was a hot night and people were partying, so it's not unlikely: Ed)

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## GAZETTE COMPETITION

**Congratulations to our reader Jan Butler who won last months Gazette competition for a hand crafted bird table from Dayman's on King Richard's Road.**

## THE GLOBE

Sponsored competition

This month we offer you the chance to win a meal for four at one of Leicester's most historic pubs!



The Globe on Silver Street has been famous for serving fine ales and food for nearly 300 years. In the 18th Century ales were brewed on the

premises using water drawn from it's own well, which still exists today, beneath the pub, .

Prior to becoming a hostelry, the building was used by cattle merchants and women awaiting execution by hanging in Gallowtree Gate.

This may go some way to explain the reported hauntings!

It's said that there's the ghost of a woman on the stairs, two very dead brothers who argue over the bar and a young spectral lad in the cellar who turns off the beer!



To win a 3 course meal for four (excluding drinks) answer this question:

When was The Globe built?

- A. 1720
- B. 1730
- C. 1740

Email your answer to:

[editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk](mailto:editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk) or by post to  
Editor c/o Rapsallion Media, 62 Ainsdale Road,  
Leicester, LE3 0UA

Send your answers in by the 30th of July 2009 (1 winner will be picked at random, editor's decision is final)

**Western Park is a glorious place to live with good local shopping, amenities and one of the biggest parks in Leicester on our doorstep. There is much to be said about living here. But, there's a down side and it's rearing its ugly head.**

## SAFE AS HOUSES?

**Summer is here. Burglaries are on the increase and Western Park is the target.**

Figures from the Safer Leicester Partnership - an organisation supported by the City Council, Police, Probation Service, NHS and Fire Service, makes depressing reading for home owners.

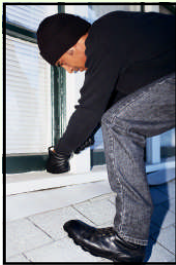
The number of domestic burglaries dropped in 07/08 from 163 to 128 but this year we hit 165.

The amount of other burglary has steadily increased year on year from 53 in 06/07 to 87 and is now above the City average.

Other offences appear to be dropping, like criminal damage, violence against the person and vehicle thefts.

Still others, like theft from vehicles, have stayed fairly even.

The total number of crimes



across Western Park dropped from 1189 to 1033 in 07/08 and this year reached 1059. This is still well below the City average.

The conclusion is simple. You're far less likely to be mugged or have your car broken into in Western Park. But break-ins are definitely on the increase following a lull last year.

## Crime Prevention Measures

Install and use good quality window locks and remove keys from windows. Secure gates. Chain and padlock your ladder. Install a multi lock on your patio door and don't leave them open during the hot weather. Trim trees or shrubs near doors and windows to increase surveillance. Install exterior sensor lights mounted out of reach. Put up net curtains or blinds to prevent burglars looking into your house. Installing a reputable alarm system is a deterrent and may reduce the cost of your home insurance. Secure your garden shed because it can contain tools burglars can use. Postcode your property. Keep your car keys hidden and never keep spare door keys under a plant pot! And ...Smart Water. It's available as a liquid which is dabbed onto your valuables and glows in ultra violet light. It has a unique chemical code which so far has a 100% conviction rate.

## All Steamed Up!

**If you were heading off to the Western Park Open Gardens on Saturday July 4<sup>th</sup> and attempted to cross Hinckley Road at around 1 in the Afternoon, you might have come across this rather unusual sight.**



Described by our Managing Editor as a "steam thingy", it slowly crawled its way out of the City along Hinckley Road dragging a trailer and a Land Rover behind it.

The "pilots" as our clueless ME described them, were heading to Hinckley and causing a fair

amount of backed up traffic along the way.

He reckoned it would take them about a week.

Embarrassingly our ME also shouted after them, "I hope you have Road Tax!". They don't need it.

No wonder they looked at him like he was Western Park's village idiot.



We haven't identified the engine, but we think it may be an Avling and Porter Class BT Steam Road Roller or similar probably built in the 1920's.

The prancing horse motif on the front was the clue. (Thank you Google!)

Our Managing Editor still thinks it was an early Ferrari.

We await his appearance on Top Gear with some interest.

**We could have to pay £6 a year tax per telephone landline under plans to extend internet access and make Britain "The digital capital of the world". But what's it actually mean?**

## Nice Box - What's in it? Richard Perry

**According to the Digital Britain White Paper, nearly everyone should have access to fast internet at work and home within eight years.**

By 2012, we all should have 2Mbps broadband, currently out of reach for one in ten households.

From 2013, the £6 annual tax would be introduced for a minimum of 7 years allowing the broadband network to be upgraded to 10Mbps.

The assumption is that the tax will raise just over £1 billion with private investment funding the rest of the £5 billion needed. But critics believe the price tag will be around £7 billion with some even putting the end cost much higher.

But what does it mean for Western Park's thousands of computer users?

The technical wizardry needed to fully exploit super fast broadband may be some way off, but it's sprinting towards us.

10Mbps will be fast enough to download films and TV programmes in seconds. You would also be

able to watch several channels of high definition TV at the same time.

It will alter the way we work, rest and play as PCs and software become more sophisticated. For instance, there may be no need to buy a daily paper when you can download it onto a thin flexible laptop, roll it up and stick it in your back pocket. Sony has already developed ultra thin, bendy prototypes of the screen called OLED and electronic paper is also being perfected, so it's on the way. Your future lap top could look like this!



Universal Display's FOLED® flexible technology

New technologies and "must have" new toys will be developed to use the increased speed and device power.

The trouble is we don't know what they are yet. There's a fortune waiting for the right ideas but it's going to cost us all 50 pence a month to find out what they are.

## Table Top Sale A Success

**Customers of the Sir Charles Napier pub on Glenfield Road, rallied together to raise money for local charity Wishes for Kids.**

Landlady Shirley Walsh, who organised the table top sale was delighted with the turnout. "Every year we nominate a charity and this year we chose Wishes 4 Kids, because of the work they do granting wishes to terminally ill children. We've already raised £300 towards our £500 target".



10 tables loaded with jewellery, home made cakes and knick-knacks and a busy barbeque all helped raise the much needed cash.

But there is more fundraising to do. "We have two more raffles, a fancy dress party and a special music night all on the way," says Shirley.

## Events in the Parish

**St. Anne's St. Paul's and St. Augustine's**

**Tuesdays 10 am:** Mums and Toddlers at St. Paul's. At 2 pm: Over 60's Group at St. Paul's.

**Thursdays:** 1.30 pm - Pram Club at St. Anne's

**Fridays:** 10 am - Coffee Drop-in at St. Anne's  
**1<sup>st</sup> Friday of each month** - light lunches from 11.30 am)

**Sunday July 19<sup>th</sup>** 12.30 pm. Carvery Lunch at 24 Clarefield Road.

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> August:** 10 am to 12 noon: Children's Society Coffee Morning at St. Paul's Worship Centre

**Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup>:** 2.30 pm in the Vicarage garden (inside, if wet) St. Anne's and St. Paul's & St. Augustine's Mothers' Union Afternoon Tea and Bring and Buy (The terrace is easily accessible for those who don't want to go mountaineering!)

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August** 4 pm Praise in the Park at the bandstand. Bring your own chair, although there will be spares!

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September** - Ride and Stride Day and Table-Top Sale at St. Paul's.

**More details from The Rev'ds Chris and Paula Oxley. 0116 2858425.**