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## Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the December edition of the Western Park Gazette.

News is a little thin on the ground as we creep towards Christmas and an exciting, or not, 2020. Nevertheless we've dug around for local stories and successfully avoided the General Election and Brexit except for New College who ran their own parliamentary hustings. In other features DMULocal hosted their annual Christmas party, a Western Park rock fan prepares to broadcast to Leicester over the festive period and Tony Shelley remembers Christmas 1971 in Leicester's West End.

Our regular features include Helen Knott cutting the cord on Sky TV's Xmas telly, Roger Blackmore heads back to 1910 for The Leicester Homecoming, Project Hive have their latest news, there's the local policing update, Tony Huxley has some seasonal advice and there's a Bigly (Bigly's a word now) Crossword at the back.

Finally we wish our readers, contributors and advertisers a Merry Christmas & a prosperous New Year.

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If you've got a local news story or event email:

[editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk](mailto:editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk)

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Published by Rapsallion Media

62 Ainsdale Rd  
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# Events Diary

**St Anne's Weds Club:** Monthly, 1st Weds. St Anne's Hall. Letchworth Rd. 2.30-4pm.

**Free Thurs Club:** 2-4pm. Robert Hall, 147 Narb' Rd.

**Perfectly Edible UK's** Market & Community Cafe: Fri 11-2pm. West End Centre, Andrewes Street.

**Coffee Mornings:** Fridays 10-12 noon. St Anne's Hall.

**Women's Taekwondo.** Fridays. Brite Centre -10am & Thurs - 8pm at St Anne's Hall. 07951 426 386

**Sun Eve Dru Yoga with Emma:** St. Anne's Hall, Letchworth Rd. 7.15-8.30pm 07393 811150.

**Musical Memory Box:** Monthly, 1st Tues, 2-3.30pm. St. Anne's Hall. £3 donation.

**Free Children's Art Club:** Saturdays 10.30-12.00. Fosse Neighbourhood Centre. Mantle Rd.

**Free drop-in Coffee Morns:** Tues. 10-11.30am. St. Andrew's Methodist Church, Glenfield Rd.

**Upstairs @ Western in Dec 17th: Comedy Soc**

**Xmas Party, 18th: Find The Right Words, 20th**

**Rhymes Against Humanity.**

**Aladdin:** De Mont Hall until 5th Jan.

**Robin Hood:** Little Theatre. Until 5th Jan.

**Beauty & The Beast:** Til 26th Dec. Peepul Centre.

**Curve: West Side Story.** Until 11th Jan, **Giraffes Can't Dance.** Until 5th Jan

**Winter Extravaganza:** 21 Dec. New Parks Leisure Centre. 1pm

**Santa In The Square:** Til Dec 22nd. Market Place

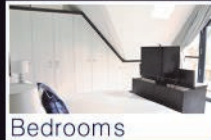
**Tropical Xmas Eve Party & Pub Quiz:** West End Brewery. Braunstone Gate. 8.00pm.

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# KNOTT'S LANDING

**Men and women might as well be different species.** Sometimes I even wonder whether we are actually on the same planet, in the same universe. Christmas is a time that really brings that home to me. You know men and women are different when you borrow a car and find the heater set at 23 degrees for the woman and 16 degrees for the man. You know it to be true when women have finished their Christmas shopping by December 2 and men don't start it until December 22. Mostly you know it when your husband decides to ditch the satellite TV provider just before Christmas because it's £50 a month and has been for about 20 years and we are not blooming-well paying for it anymore!

This provoked a bit of soul searching on everyone's part.

We followed the Moneysavingexpert's guide to persuading Sky to offer us a deal but we were met with paltry discounts and ennui on the end of the phone so that was it, the guillotine fell on our subscription package. It turns out it's not all bad out there in the Freesat hinterlands. We got a Now TV stick for £15 and after lots of searching we found a deal that got us Sky channels and movies for a tennor a month. Result. I can afford a bit of Netflix action and we already have Amazon Prime so

actually – we have it covered for half the price!

It is a bit odd not having Sky anymore. That remote control is so familiar you can use it in the dark without thinking! We are having to learn new things, like how to get Alexa to turn the TV on and off. How to find the much smaller Now TV remote in the dark. How I will live without being able to pause live TV. How to explain to my elderly father that he cannot watch murder most foul on his beloved Alibi channel anymore. Mostly though I'm having to devote valuable resources to learn how to use all this stuff. Christmas is not a time when I have spare brain space. School events, social gatherings, works nights out, these things take their toll and require thought and preparation. This is now at risk because I have to spend time working out how to switch from HDMI1 to HDMI37. If I manage it, we may just be able to watch the Queen's Speech on Christmas Day if I don't, my husband may find I stick the remote where the sun don't shine. He should have waited for New Year.



*Helen Knott*

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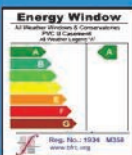
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# FESTIVE FEASTING

DMULocal's annual festive lunch once again proved to be an incredibly popular event, at the West End Centre on Andrewes Street, attracting over 100 people eager to tuck into turkey and trimmings.

The free event has been held since 2015 as part of the DMULocal programme which helps the University connect with the community.

The continuing aim is to create a network of support to people living alone and hopefully create a new social group that can continue beyond the festive period.



# EDD & HIS ROCKY XMAS HAT

Western Park resident Edd Kent will get his rock on over Christmas as he returns to Takeover Radio 103.2 for a rundown of 2019's biggest and best rock tracks.

"It's called Edd In The Hat", said Edd. "The idea is - all year I wear a hat to stop the tunes leaking out and at Christmas I take it off and let loose!"

Edd who has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the genre and spends more time in mosh pits than he does in bed said: "I've always been a massive rock fan. The good stuff doesn't get played on the radio so when I was approached to do last year's Edd in The Hat, I snapped their hand off. Then they go and ask me back again for 2019!"



Edd In The Hat on Takeover Radio 103.2 Boxing Day at 6.00pm & repeated New Year's Eve at 11am

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## ELECTION EDUCATION

New College hosted a General Election hustings event to enable students to quiz parliamentary candidates on their approach to local and national policy. The December event was part of a week-long focus on the General Election, with students learning about party manifestos and the positions of all the parties concerning issues that matter to them.

Harry from Year 7 said: "It is important to know how to vote and what each candidate says so that we can make good decisions about how we want our country to be run"

Two local candidates for Leicester West Liz Kendall (Labour) and Ian Bradwell (Liberal Democrat) attended the hustings and took questions from students concerning pensions and the retirement age, poverty, crime and of course BREXIT.

Students were keenly engaged and interested in the debate which preceded our own 'parallel' election taking place the following day. Students took the role of candidates, returning officers and helped to set up and run our very own polling station. Sera Shortland, Head of Citizenship at New College commented "Citizenship education and political literacy is crucial for young people so that they can learn about democracy, government, politics and participation in order for them to develop the confidence and strategies they will need to navigate the complexities of world issues."



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# CHRISTMAS PAST

Just before Christmas in 1971, I was leaving the Earl Of Lancaster pub in Goswell Street (now Newark Close) in the early afternoon, having said goodbye to many of my fellow apprentices. They, like me, were indentured for five years in the many printing companies that existed in Leicester at that time.

I was employed at Heliemo Ltd, a print trade house, and a subsidiary of Lowe & Carr Ltd, on the Eastern Boulevard. The first thing that hit me was the cold, and fog which hindered my directions somewhat, and a little worse for drink, I had to negotiate my way through the terraced streets, on my way home to the New Parks Estate.

Stopping first at the Kirby and West dairy, I purchased a 'pyramid carton of milk from the machine which stood outside, then crossed into New Parks Street, turning right into Little Holme Street, then left into Leamington Street, where by this time the fog had come down. Searching for an off licence, a slight man in middle age sold me a bottle of vodka for the family Christmas gathering at our house on Bird Nest Ave.

I had no bag, so holding on tight to the bottle neck, I walked with some trepidation through the smoke grey mist. Just inside our garden gate, my feet went from under me, sending the bottle flying,

shattering into pieces outside the front door. My mother looked on with pity, and a little despair.

The West End was a very different place back then. Far more industrial, fewer cars, bleaker, with none of the wonderful diversity that has enriched the area we know today. There was far less of what we know today as consumerism and many families, including my own, used to save all year around, for the festive season. I don't live in the past, but I do remember it, especially at Christmas.

**Tony Shelley**



Little Holm Street

What are your memories of bygone West Leicester? Email@ editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk

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## HOMECOMING 1910

Many kinds of events throughout the city were carried out to mark the Homecoming in the last week of September 1910.

The celebration of the return of some 300 Leicestrians to their home city was not only the first event of its kind to take place in Leicester, it was the first of its kind in Great Britain. Initially the organisers of the event were unsure as to the likely numbers who would return to Leicester for the event. They were delighted when folk began to arrive from all over the world.

From Canada and New Zealand they came; from the United States and Australia and from distant parts of the Commonwealth in Africa and Asia, they were all returning to the place that had once been their home. Emigration was a factor even in those days. For example, one former mayor, the boot and shoe manufacturer George Green, had seven sons, four of whom had emigrated to New Zealand.

No doubt with advice from other countries including The United States, where such events were popular, programmes of events was drawn up including a civic reception by the mayor, a popular fancy dress parade and visits to local factories and businesses including Corahs and British United Shoe Machinery and several other hosiery and boot and shoe companies.

The Leicester Automobile Club laid on a highly popular tour of Charnwood Forest which brought back fond memories for many of the visitors. So many spots like the Bradgate House ruins, Swithland Woods and Beacon Hill were memorable and participants were delighted that so much of the countryside was unspoilt and not built on.



It is interesting that such environmental concerns were being voiced nearly 110 years ago.

The tour of the city tramway system was an eye opener to so many who remembered the horse drawn transport of their childhood in the city and its suburbs.

The city fathers were especially keen to show off Abbey Park in which a big Homecoming welcome reception had been arranged. Many visitors remembered the area as a boggy strip of land by the river and must have marvelled at the transformation which had taken place.

And thus they departed after renewing friends and acquaintances in the city they had once known so well. **Roger Blackmore**



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**Leicester Musical Memory Box will be starting a new monthly group in conjunction with St Anne's Church on Letchworth Road.**

Leicester Musical memory box formerly the Alzheimer's Society group, 'Singing for the Brain', offers a valuable community service for people affected by dementia, other memory problems or simply loneliness and isolation in the community.

The group uses music, singing, exercise and chat to stimulate conversation, musical memory and fun. Sufferers confidence is improved, new memories are created and friendships formed.

The main focus is music but refreshments and gentle seated exercises are also included for a suggested donation of £3.

The sessions are open to all especially those with memory loss or dementia and their carers.

Come along to the Hall at St Anne's on the first Tuesday of each month starting on Tuesday 7th January 2-3.30pm, call 07752 826 228 or email [lmmbx2018@gmail.com](mailto:lmmbx2018@gmail.com) for further details.

*Christina Birkby*

## COUNCILLORS SURGERIES 2020

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**New Parks Centre:** Aikman Avenue.

First Friday of each month 3.00pm – 4.00pm

**St Anne's Church Hall:** Letchworth Road.

Second Weds of each month 7.15pm – 8.15pm.

**Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre:** Sharman Crescent. Third Saturday of each month 11.00am – 12.00noon.

### Fosse Ward

**Fosse Neighbourhood Centre:** Mantle Road.

Second Sat of each month 10.30am – 11.30am.

**Woodgate Residents' Association:** 36 Woodgate. Last Saturday of each month 10.30am – 11.30am.

### Westcotes Ward

**Westcotes Library:** Narborough Road.

Third Tuesday of each month. 5.30pm to 6.30pm.

First Friday of each month 10.00am – 11.00am

### Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields

**Christ Church:** Barbara Road.

First Weds of each month 5.30pm to 6.30pm.

**Oak Centre:** Cort Crescent, Bendbow Rise.

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**Brite Centre:** Braunstone Avenue.

Third Friday of each month 2.00pm – 3.00pm.





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PROJECT

hive

# Update

Project Hive is run by the  
WWCE, a group of local  
residents raising funds

to redevelop the former Eco House into a  
community space.

Seasons Greetings to all of our readers!

As we finished the tidying up after the Project Hive Christmas Party, the team started reflecting on a very busy year in the life of the project. This time last year we had only just begun to jot down a list of community events that we hoped would run across 2019 raising both funds and vital awareness. It had not even entered our head that we would be appearing on radio interviews, in newspapers and being tweeted about by the city mayor!

It's been a steep learning curve for us at times, and we hope that returning events next year will be even better for our experiences this time. The whole team like to say that we have felt humbled by the support you continue to show the project. 2020 will be a massive year, the crowd fund is only the first step that starts us on a journey to the finished building.

If you've not managed to pledge to our crowd fund yet, there's still time. Every pledge, no matter the size, gets us closer to the goal of realising a new and vital space run for the benefit of the community. We just need that last push to see us over the line.

Go to [www.spacehive.com/project-hive](http://www.spacehive.com/project-hive).  
[wwce.org.uk](http://wwce.org.uk) or on Facebook @wwceleicester



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## Dec Police Update

This time of year signals an array of festivities and your teams have been actively engaging in these community activities, so a big thank you to all those event organisers who support the beat teams. In addition, we are in the middle of a campaign of targeting drug dens, actively pursuing those wanted on warrant and visiting those people whom we suspect to habitually carry knives. We have increased efforts to educate children and young people around knife crime through our schools campaign.

As the temperatures drop, please be a good neighbour to those who are elderly or with vulnerabilities. Loneliness impacts upon people's wellbeing and just being a friendly face can mean a lot. Be vigilant and always report suspicious activity. I mention this, as neighbouring beats have witnessed several distraction type burglaries where the assailants pretend to be from the water/gas companies and plain clothed police officers. Always ask for Identification and leave them on the doorstep until you've checked out their credentials. No genuine caller would ever object to this.

Later this month we will start our annual drink drive campaign. My advice is not to chance it and stick to non-alcoholic drinks if you intend to drive. Remember, you can still be over the limit the following day if you drank heavily the night before. We have a zero tolerance for drunk-driving and you are unlikely to receive a sympathetic ear if you are caught.

Catalytic Converter thefts are on the rise with some brazen criminals using trolley lifts to gain access to the underside of vehicles. Avoid being a victim by parking your car in a locked garage or in a well-lit area with the exhaust being close to fences, walls or a kerb making access more difficult. Avoid parking your vehicle half on the pavement and half on the road, as this may make it access easier for thieves. Consider buying catalytic converter alarms or metal cages, which can be fitted to act as a deterrent. If your catalytic converter is bolted on, you can ask your local garage to weld the bolts to make it more difficult to remove. Marking kits for catalytic converters can also help police identify them at scrap yards or on suspect vehicles.

We are looking to increase the use of neighbourhood link, a police community messaging service where we will send you the latest news updates and events direct from us. Registration is free and you can join by going to the web page [www.neighbourhoodlink.co.uk](http://www.neighbourhoodlink.co.uk). Finally, we are supporting the alternative advent run by the Salvation Army. Food parcels, however big or small can be dropped off at Hinckley Road Police Station, which will be distributed to people and families in need. Be safe and see you next year.

**Sgt Ed Jones**



## Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



**"What would I like for Christmas, you ask? How about an all-inclusive holiday on a tropical paradise? Or the new Aston Martin?"**

'Be serious? Ah, I see. You want me to suggest presents that are more suitable for a gardener, like me. A bus man's Christmas! Well in that case, a lifetime membership of the RHS at £1,350 would be very nice.

'Too expensive? Those new Fiskars UPX86 extendable tree pruners look very smart. They can reach up to 4 metres high and prune branches 32mm thick and cost about £100.

'Still too expensive! Well what about a Plant and Grow Botanical Cocktail and Flavour Set to enhance the taste of my favourite tipples. There's a set for gins and one for whiskey and bourbon.

'Of course, a bit of fizz is always nice at Christmas so how about a Prosecco-making kit from The Gluttonous Gardener. They'll send out a potted grape vine, attractively packaged with personalised labels for when I'm bottling my first batch of sparkling wine, sometime well into the next decade.

'Or how about a Game of Gnomes figurine to stand guard against gardening foes? Or a funky Dr Who Tardis birdfeeder for avian time travellers? Both available from Guesswhatiforgot and other online retailers.

'Or, for something Christmassy to plant in my garden, there could be few more appropriate plants than *Gaultheria* "Jingle Bells", or *Helleborus* "Christmas Carol" with its snow white petals.

'But I'll probably just want to warm my feet in front of the fire while reading a good gardening book. I could do far worse than fingerling through a copy of *Prick: Cacti and Succulents: choosing, styling, caring* by Gynelle Leon, £15 online.

'So Santa, if it's OK with you, I'd really like to get off your lap now. And judging by the unmistakable smell of Advocaat and rolling tobacco emanating from behind that false white beard I guess I've just dictated my Christmas article to the Gazette editor in person!"

Merry Christmas West Leicester! **Tony Huxley**  
**Christmas or not -You Are So Fired... (Editor)**





# Martin Page

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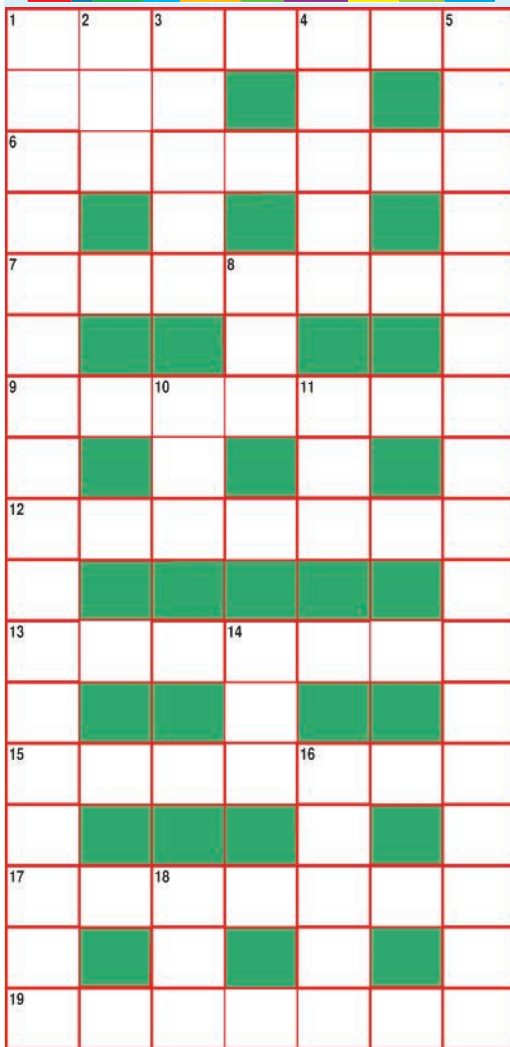


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## BIGLY XWORD



**1 Across (A):** Type of marmoset **1 Down (D):** Gentle nature **2D:** In the past **3D:** Type of coffee drink **4D:** Eject **5D:** Not of the church **6A:** In the Catholic church the Office of Matins **7A:** Flexible **8D:** ID card in a mobile phone **9A:** Dangerous **10 D:** Decay **11D:** Payment **12A:** Female actor **13A:** Cassava product **14D:** Demon **15A:** Wettest **16D:** Consumed meal **17A:** Unpredictable **18D:** Fish eggs **19A:** Of the sternum

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