



MERRY & BRIGHT



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Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the Yuletide edition of the Western Park Gazette.

At the time of writing we're in the middle of the continuing Hell that is Tier 3 lockdown. No pubs, no restaurants and no socialising as we head towards Christmas. At least "non essential business" can now open so you can get a nice hair cut, get a manicure and buy a lampshade.

Happily, we seem determined to celebrate the season no matter what, judging by the festive light displays bedecking front gardens and windows. We've captured a few for posterity and we keep it festive with Alexandra Tustall's Christmas card making exercise - it'll keep the kids quiet for a while. A new pentanque club on Western Park is due to open, Helen Knott has one or two Yuletide thoughts, Tony Huxley has his final Compost Corner and we have the latest policing update from Ed Jones.

And there's the traditional Bigly Crossword on the inside back page.

Have a great Christmas and let's hope 2021 is a far better year than 2020 for so many reasons.

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- 1: Stay at home except for specific reasons, such as work or education.
- 2: Limit your contact with other people.
- 3: Don't mix with other households indoors or in private gardens, unless you have formed a support bubble as a single adult.
- 4: Work from home if you can.
- 5: Reduce the number of journeys you make.
- 6: Walk or cycle if possible, or use buses outside peak times if you can.
- 7: Stay 2m apart from anyone you don't live with.
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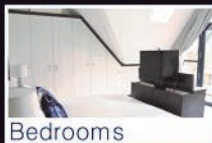
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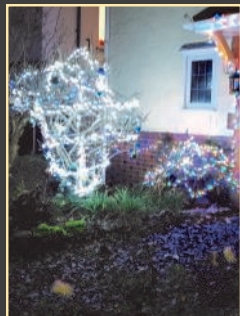
MERRY AND BRIGHT

Western Ward Community Enterprise joined up with St Anne's Church for a spectacular festive light show across Western Park.

24 households trimmed up their gardens in spectacular displays in the run up to Christmas.

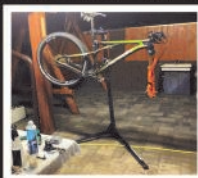
WWCE's Kristian Naylor said: "We are delighted to have got together with St. Anne's in order to present an Advent Trail as part of our Light Up Western Park event. "During December a new display will appear every day at different sites around the area, each created by local schools or parishioners".

A free map that showing the location for each day can be downloaded from Facebook @wwceleicester or from wwce.org.uk".



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KNOTT'S LANDING

'Tis the season to be jolly, unless you are a turkey, shielding, an old person, or you work in a pub. Then it's not really a time of great joy is it? It's more like a moment of mild panic followed by, in the case of the turkey, hanging upside down by your ankles and well and truly plucked.

Let's be honest, even if you aren't a turkey, Christmas is often a season of forced jollity, hard work, massive expense and gritted teeth. There is stuff you have to do simply because it's Christmas and it's expected. Buying Auntie Nellie a set of soft top socks because of her diabetes is part of the season. You might get away with not doing it this year; you might have to make the effort.

What you are going to have to do is suck up and accept buying a gift for everyone you work with. Secret Santa is banned this year but in spite of the COVID-based 'no presents' rule, you know they're all going to buy you something. You are going to look a complete lump when you turn up with nothing unless you shell out. More than that, if you don't - you won't be seen as a team player and



someone will remember, so when the next round of redundancies comes... well Ho, Ho, Ho.

What is hopeful about this year is that there really is a chance to create a new normal (an awful phrase but useful here).

If you don't like mince pies, working from home means you don't have to have one near you for the entirety of Christmas. You can surround yourself with chocolate mini rolls, Yule log and Mr Kipling's Frosty Fancies. If you don't like Christmas cards you can zoom everyone instead. If you don't like lots of loud parties, well there aren't any. Is the only Christmas song you like The Pogues A Fairytale in New York? Play it on an eternal loop. If you can't bear hordes of family coming round you can pretend to self-isolate.

The magic of this Christmas is it can be whatever you want it to be (provided you stay at home and obey the hands, face space rules in your designated bubbles). Personally I think there's a lot to be said for a little bit of peace. I'll be sat at home with zoom set up and the Frosty Fancies waiting for two weeks COVID free to pass so I can go and visit my Dad who I haven't seen since September. I hope you get your little bit of peace and a hug from someone special too. Merry Christmas.

Helen Knott






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PENTANQUE ON THE PARK

The Leicester Petanque Club (LPC), now located in the former bowls club on Western Park itself, will soon be inviting friends old and new to enjoy what Petanque can offer.

Petanque is played on a hard gravel surface called a piste, where players aim metal boules towards a small "jack". It has similarities to bowls in rules and scoring, but is played over shorter distances. It's great fun, extremely social, and is one of the most diverse sports around.

As with many sports, the pandemic has made participation difficult of late, however with the news that grass roots sport is returning, LPC, a not-for-profit club, will soon transform the former Western Park bowls venue into a sizeable, safe and vibrant playing area for both existing members and those new to Petanque.

Chairman John Edmondson said: "We look forward to meeting new people and introducing them to the game.

The pétanque community forges long term friend-



ships and while this pandemic has affected the physical and mental well-being of so many people, this is our chance to do something positive for them, for our sport, and for the local community."

Secretary Michelle Roe, who along with John is a qualified DBS registered coach, explained further: "We are hoping to attract park visitors all year round to see what we can offer, whether that's free coaching sessions for juniors or adults, league match play, or a friendly game. Petanque is such a sociable sport. Win or lose, what better than chatting over a cup of tea in the clubhouse, or reliving your best shots over a drink from the bar."

It's not an expensive sport with prices ranging from a few pounds to get started. The club has a few spares to use for visitors who want to see what it's all about, but like any club they need to build up membership. Treasurer Allan Edwards said it's cheap to join: "...at £5 per year for juniors and social members, £20 per year for adults, LPC provides all year play for a small outlay"

The long term ambition is to grow the venue into both a community sports club and a regionally and nationally recognised venue – something for West Leicester to get behind!

For any further information, Leicester Petanque Club has their own Facebook page and website (www.leicesterpc.co.uk), or you can email the club at info@leicesterpc.co.uk

A. Edwards

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Making a Festive Robin Card

Not only is making cards a fun, Christmassy activity that you can enjoy this festive season, but the finished result also makes a great gift for a loved one. One of my favourite cards to make is this simple robin design, which you and your children can easily make at home.

You Will Need: 1 A4 sheet of coloured card (I like to go for blue!), 1 A4 sheet of white paper, brown paper, roughly 10x10cm, red paper, roughly 7x7cm, yellow paper, roughly 1x1cm, Scissors, glue-stick, black pen

Method: Begin by folding your sheet of coloured card in half, so that the two shorter sides meet.

Next, tear your white sheet of paper into a strip that will fill roughly half the space on your folded card (don't worry about making this too neat – it will be representing piled up snow!) and use the remaining paper to tear five or six small blobs, each roughly the size of a five pence piece.

Glue the strip of white paper along the bottom edge of your coloured card.



Cut circles out of your red & brown paper, and a triangle using the yellow paper.

Glue the brown circle onto the centre of your card, glue the red circle on top of that, just below the centre, and then glue the yellow triangle at the top of the red circle (this will be the beak!). After that, glue the blobs of white paper from earlier around the outside of the brown circle, to create the effect of falling snow.

Finally, using the black pen, draw two dots for eyes just above the beak, and some little legs coming out of the bottom of the brown circle.

And there you have your very own jolly robin card! If you don't have the right colour paper, try colouring in white paper or see if there are any recyclable materials you could use from around the home. You might even want to mix it up and use a different colour altogether - it's your card, so you can make it whatever colours you like!

If you enjoyed this project, please upload photographs of your robin cards to the Western Park Gazette Facebook page – we'd love to see what you come up with.

Alexandra Tunstall



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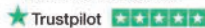


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PICTURES OF PAST LEICESTER

City councillor and historian Susan Barton is finishing writing a book about the history of our area from ancient times, the medieval era and through to the more recent past. She is exploring the old Leicester Forest, the Frith and the enclosure of the New Parks and the rural life of the once pastoral landscape. The developments of the twentieth century communities of Western Park on both sides of Hinckley Road, New Parks, Braunstone Frith and Kirby Frith are just the latest chapters in the story.

Susan said: "As the Records Office has been closed I haven't had access to the maps and images I'd like to see and perhaps use in the book. I was wondering if any readers had any old photos of the area. I'd also love to see any maps or plans that might be in the deeds of someone's house that they might share with me. I know there are lots of images that have been posted by Facebook groups but to be able to use them in my book I need to know who the owner of the photo is so that they can give permission to use it and be credited for doing so.

Thank you to anyone who is able to help in my quest. I'm working to a January deadline in anticipation of publication in March.

Contact Susan on 0116 4546 360 or email: susan.barton@leicester.gov.uk



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Dec Police Update

Out of lock down and straight into Tier 3. For the people of Leicester, this seems awfully unfair, as we endure further hardship. Our infection rate, whilst falling, is still high compared with our neighbouring counties. Many officers have family working within the NHS, and will testify to how busy they are, fighting this wicked virus. Out of sight should not mean out of mind. As the winter months approach, the greatest gift you can bestow upon our emergency services is to help save lives by following the rules. For information about Tier 3 visit gov.uk/coronavirus

On the theme of rule breaking, we have seen a spate of street robberies; the target seemingly being Carrera brand bicycles. We have made several arrests and been able to repatriate bikes with owners. This has been possible because of solid identification marking. It is worth investing in a post coding kit and registering your bike on bike-register.com (the national cycle database). As part of a trial, we have teamed up with Halfords at St Margarets Way to offer free bike marking kits to under 18's who buy a mountain bike from them.

Earlier in the year I wrote about the Police's new operating model and recruitment. As these cohorts reach the completion of their training, we are starting to see our numbers swell once again. Leicestershire Police will have a young workforce, which I see as an advantage in tackling new crime types commensurate with our digital age. There is still room for us 'oldies' who possess the wisdom and skills of policing our neighbourhoods.

Your neighbourhoods have seen an uplift in staff, with the Fosse Ward in particular, welcoming three new Police Officers onto the beat. Each brings with them a raft of experience and different policing interests, which will no doubt add value to community policing.

As the colder weather bites, I want to express a heartfelt thank you to the community volunteers who staff the various food banks operating within Leicester. There is not enough space to name them all, but my staff and I have had the privilege to visit some sites. I have been overwhelmed at the sense of community cohesion these sites bring and the sheer dedication of the volunteers; truly amazing work.

Your teams will continue to work through the winter break, and there will be a more visible police presence throughout the festive season. As always, I encourage you to sign up to our Neighbourhood Link at neighbourhoodlink.co.uk to receive the latest updates and alerts in your area. Remember to keep healthy, be a good neighbour, and of the forthcoming events I wish you Hanukkah Sameach, Joyful Yuletide, Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays! **Sgt Ed Jones**

Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



Finally! Christmas heralds the final chapter of an awful year. Out with the old and hopefully in with a better new. Some have realised how fortunate they are to have a garden to tend and enjoy during lockdowns. Some will be left to imagine how gardening could have improved their quality of life.

For all, I recommend you give the gift of life - plant life that is. Like many businesses, garden centres have been hit hard by the pandemic. Thankfully they've been allowed to trade, regardless of which tier they're in. So why not make them your first port of call for your last-minute presents?

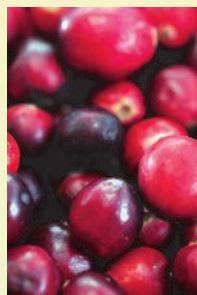
This has been an exceptional year for berries so you could reflect this in your gift choices. There are several plants sold as Christmas berries. One, *Ardisia crispa* makes a handsome patio plant. It's not fully hardy so needs some winter protection. Or try its smaller more delicate houseplant cousin *Ardisia crenata*. Both have attractive scalloped leaves and small fragrant flowers and sprays of bright red berries. The Checkerberry, *Gaultheria procumbens* is a hardy, low growing shrub, which

wears a festive covering of red berry jewellery. It too has a berry-tastic relative, *G. mucronata* or Winter Heath with fruit in a range of whites, reds and pinks.

If the trials of the year have made you see plants in more survivalist terms, why not treat your loved ones to a Cranberry plant so they can make their own Cranberry sauce? Useful to have as part of your diet anyway, cranberries are considered a superfood with good levels of vitamins and antioxidants. They love acid soil so they're best grown in pots or even hanging baskets of ericaceous soil. And as Christmas is all about family, the Cranberry has an equally jelly-licious relative, the Lingonberry, and of course the Blueberry, which seems to be super trendy as a patio plant.

As the year comes to an end, so does my ten and a half year tenure as the Gazette's gardening writer. I hope you have enjoyed at least some of my green-fingered ramblings. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and pray that 2020 brings you a year of hope and new beginnings, both in and out of the garden.

Tony Huxley





Martin Page

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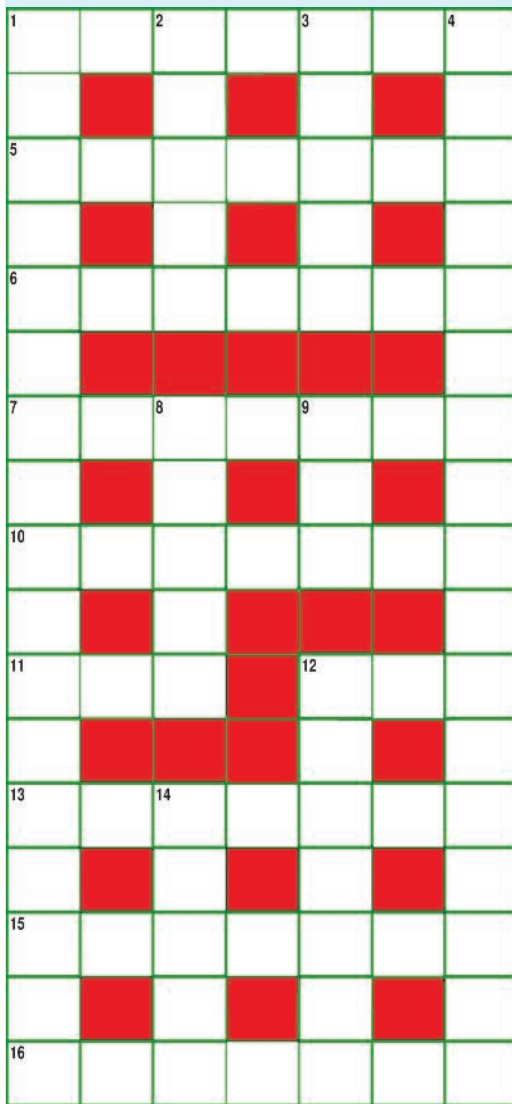


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1 Across: Photographic kit **1 Down:** Make available for sale **2D:** TV & radio **3D:** resliced **4D:** Not fully awake **5A:** A bit **6A:** Stretchy **7A:** Animation **8D:** Repeat **9D:** Sphere on Xmas tree **10A:** Type of exercise **11A:** Tavern **12A:** Exclamation of contempt **12D:** Old aircraft **13A:** Receives **14D:** Stick to **15A:** Mimic **16A:** Annoyers (*Paul Towers 2020*)

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