



# HELLO 2021!



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## Hello From The Editor

What fresh nightmares lie in store, we wonder, as 2021 stretches ahead and the pandemic continues to rip holes in lives and business across the world? Normally finding editorial in January is an uphill struggle as it's so quiet on the local news front. People haven't quite climbed out of hibernation but with the Lockdown, the winter snooze could carry on into March or even April. The Gazette has struggled to survive but with the continued support of many local businesses we're still here, if slightly thinner!

So this month we put the call out for a nice winter picture for the front page and got some really good responses. You're a talented lot with cameras! We welcome Carey Tunstall as our new Gardening Guru, Roger Blackmore reminds us that holidays began in Leicester with Thomas Cook, Helen Knott thinks the lockdown isn't working, there's the Project Hive news, Ed Jones has the policing update, Paul Towers checks out what's not happening in the local theatres and the first Crossword and Sudoku of the year squat on the inside back page.

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- 4: Work from home if possible.
- 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.
- 8: Wash or sanitise your hands regularly.
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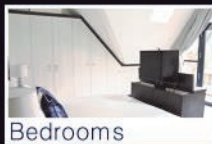
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# HELLO 2021!

We put the call out for some nice illustrative winter photos to kick the year off and you didn't disappoint!

January is always editorially quiet, doubly so now, so we took the lazy way out and screamed for help! We needed a front page photo and we certainly got one!

It wasn't an easy choice but Louise Kindsvater's picture of a misty early morning band stand just pipped Simon Headley's atmospherically lonely tree. Thank you to all who contributed.



Elaine McGilly Johnson



Graham Wiley



Lisa Clare Whelan



Louise Kindsvater



Simon Headley

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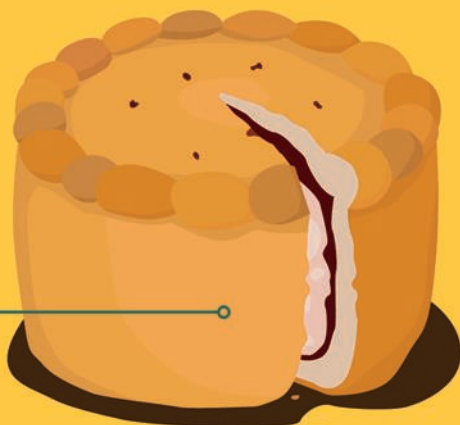


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# KNOTT'S LANDING

**Where is everybody going these days? I was under the impression we were in lockdown and confined to barracks.** Pandemic and all that... bluster, bluster, obscure Greek reference, hands, face, space.

I stood outside the garage on Hinckley Road the other day and wondered where on earth everyone was going to! The traffic on the road was backed up going into town and it was busy going out of town. Quite a few of the cars had more than one person in them. A bus went past with lots of people on board, all socially distant, their eyes telling a tale of unhappiness at their predicament.

It can't be to work in shops because only essential trading is allowed. So the supermarkets can fog you a TV but the local electrical store can't. They can sell you beer and wine but the local pub or micro-brewery can't. The garden centre chains can sell you DIY stuff and pet food but the local pet food store gets hassle because it's open. The big guys are taken care of and the little guy, yet again, gets to take one for the team. It still doesn't explain where everyone is going though. I'm pretty



sure the blonde tribble in charge told us all to work from home unless we couldn't.

I get that people in factories and the construction industry are out and about. Delivery drivers keep the economy moving. Teachers and school staff are still on the move. NHS workers and social care staff are still travelling for work. I'm not so sure where the three young women in platform heels were teetering off to. Where the young lad at the bus stop was going. I haven't got an answer for the man in a suit who was filling up his BMW. I don't know where the lycra clad Mamil (Middle aged man in lycra) on his bike was cycling to.

They may all have very valid reasons for being out and about, or they may be thinking "Oh it won't matter, no-one I know has got the 'rona". The trouble is, if enough people say that, it stops being a lockdown and becomes a COVID party, which ends in death.

So where is everyone going? Perhaps they are going to funerals.



*Helen Knott*



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## THOMAS COOK THE HOLIDAY MAKER

The other day I came across an old advert for Thomas Cook's company, published around 1900, which made interesting reading.

The company had made enormous strides from its establishment in the 1840's. From small beginnings, the enterprise set up an office in London's Ludgate Circus, in addition to its original base in Gallowtree Gate, Leicester. Holidays and travel opportunities all over the world were available. The first trip with 500 temperance supporters were offered with what he called "enthusiastic philanthropy" but within 10 years he had gone international.



Those of our ancestors who could afford it were encouraged to arrange tours through Thomas Cook and travel independently. What we would now call

"package tours" throughout Europe also became increasingly popular.

The Company's Ocean Travel department arranged voyages to destinations further afield, such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Some of this travel involved both emigrating and immigrating. Interestingly, the prospect of visiting exotic locations appealed to quite a number of clients, who fancied the idea of travelling to countries such as Egypt, with its antiquities and ancient sites.

The aptly named Forwarding Desk concerned itself with transporting passengers' luggage and possessions. These included baggage, personal effects, furniture, carriages, motor cars, dogs and horses! The Banking and Finances Department covered a wide range of issues including currency and insurances. Included in the latter was insurance against salt water damage, which does not seem to fit entirely with confidence in their own transactions.

To support travellers on their journeys, Thomas Cook also offered vouchers for accommodation at 2000 hotels.

It is small wonder that the work of the company involved travel all over the world. Its founder is celebrated on our city Walk of Fame on the pavement near Curve. Perhaps if a place on the Clock Tower ever became vacant the statue of Tom Cook might prove a worthy substitute.

**Roger Blackmore**

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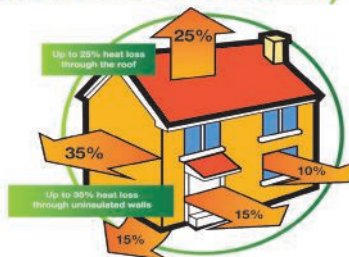
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**Happy New Year from the WWCE Project Hive team!** We certainly find ourselves in a different place now compared to the highs of the closing stages of our crowdfunding campaign this time last year.

The project to rebuild the old Eco House on Western Park into a community space continues to move forward, even if we haven't been able to have the whole community involved as much as we'd like. We are still awaiting an outcome on our planning application for the redevelopment and hope to have a positive answer soon. Despite the extremely compromised schedule of fundraising events last year, your fantastic support still managed to raise a total of £3747 towards our cause with over £1000 coming from the Light Up Western Park weekend alone.



Covid restrictions will obviously continue to impact our plans but we do intend to re-run the Parklife Calendar. It proved very popular in its first year, so get busy snapping those potential entries during this lockdown and your photograph could end up as one of the stars next time out.

Find out more on our website [projecthive.org.uk](http://projecthive.org.uk) or on Facebook @wwceleicester you can also send an email to [projecthive@outlook.com](mailto:projecthive@outlook.com)

## LETTER BOX



**Dear Editor: I have read your article in the December WPG regarding Pentanque.**

I would like to point out that the Western Park Bowling Club still exists and that we have given up our green but moved to the ladies green and pavilion next to it. The men's and ladies clubs have amalgamated.

We are confident of re-starting bowling in April after Covid.

**Geoff Forse Secretary Western Park Bowling Club**

**Would you like to try the Patchwork & Chat craft project, meet new people and make lockdown life more interesting?**

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## Off Stage & Online In Leicester

Due to the ongoing pandemic there is no live theatre for the foreseeable future. Hopefully the rolling out of vaccines will mean that there is light at the end of the tunnel and slowly our vibrant entertainment scene here in Leicester will rise, phoenix-like from the ashes of 2020.

As of the date of writing Curve has several dates booking. 8th February is Kevin & Joanne Clifton direct from Strictly Come Dancing. From 9 – 25 February a series of comedy gigs are programmed to coincide with the 28th Leicester Comedy Festival, all of which is online. Visit [comedy-festival.co.uk](http://comedy-festival.co.uk) for the impressive line up. And the postponed concert production of The Color Purple is due to be staged from 1 – 13 March. Maybe Curve can repeat the unqualified success of Sunset Boulevard and stream this production if theatres are still not open.

Over at DeMontfort Hall they are optimistically taking bookings for various one-nighters from 8th April. At Leicester Little Theatre the postponed Christmas show, now rebranded as Spread A Little Happiness, is theoretically on from 1-6 February.

At The Y Theatre all shows have been postponed or cancelled until further notice.

While I don't think any live theatre is liable to be staged until at least April it is worth checking websites and subscribing to mailing lists so you have the most up-to-date information. **Paul Towers**

## Golf Course Development Opposed

The fate of the Western Park Golf Course on Scudamore Road could be sealed in spite of over 1500 objections to council plans to redevelop the space into an industrial complex and housing estate.

The historic 104 year old public golf club finally closed in 2016 as part of cost cutting measures aimed at reducing the sports and leisure budget.

The 149 acre site has been earmarked for 466 houses and a 50 acre employment zone, all designed to cope with Leicester's expanding population.

A public consultation is back underway following a suspension at the start of the lockdown last March, however, local residents have organised an online petition objecting to the plans. Over 1500 signed up.

They say the old course is now a wildlife sanctuary and should be left undisturbed. Some are also concerned that the plans don't include schools or infrastructure and that the process has been rushed due to the pandemic. City Mayor, Sir Peter Soulsby says the point of the public consultation is to get the conversation going and that the Western Park golf course is just one of the sites under consideration.



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## Jan Police Update

As I write this, more than 80,000 Covid related deaths have been recorded within the UK. Behind these numbers are stories of people grieving the loss of their loved ones. The experts tell us that the new variant is 50% more infectious, compared to the virus in March. We **cannot** become complacent. I can personally testify to its veracity, my family and I having succumbed to this virus in recent weeks. The message is crystal clear, "**Stay at Home & Save Lives**". Our local hospitals are extremely busy but have yet to declare a major incident, as have some areas of the country. The Police are stepping up our response to target those who ignore the rules. We are now moving quickly towards enforcement action through our 4 E's approach. Ignorance of the rules no longer holds sway; you **will** be fined. The vaccination program has started, and we need to give this a chance to embed into society. So, follow the government advice and act 'like we have the virus' and restrict our travel.

If travel is absolutely necessary, then please be mindful of opportunistic thieves when defrosting your vehicle. Don't leave it unattended with the engine running, even for a few seconds. Each year we receive reports of vehicle theft by this method, with owners sometimes encountering difficulties when claiming upon their insurance.

Uninsured and untaxed vehicles on the road seemingly raises the blood pressure of local residents. I have yet to meet anyone who relishes the thought of spending hundreds of pounds insuring and taxing their cars, but most honest citizens do just that. For a time the DVLA allowed a period of grace, free from enforcement. However this has now subsided, and vehicles need to be taxed, roadworthy and insured. Your teams have been active over the last few weeks stopping and seizing such vehicles. In many cases additional crimes have been discovered and arrests made.

We continue to enforce upon drugs and drug dealing through a number of warrants. More enforcements are planned. Feel free to give us a wave if you happen to see officers' running at fair speed towards a property, carrying various metal gadgets ready to 'bash in a door'.

We have received a number of reports of cold calling specifically targeting the doors of elderly residents. Whilst reports of distraction burglaries are thankfully low, please remain vigilant and report any suspicious behaviour. Offer to be a point of contact, that way your neighbour can instruct the caller to speak to you first, genuine callers won't mind doing this. More advice on bogus callers can be found here:

<https://thecrimepreventionwebsite.com>

Keep yourself safe, keep healthy and be a good neighbour (from a safe distance) **Sgt Ed Jones**



# CAREY'S COMPOST CORNER



January may be considered a quiet time of the year in the garden, but with over 20 years of experience in horticulture, I can assure you that there is still plenty to do to ensure a beautiful revival in the spring.

The festive season is finally over and if you had a real tree it's time to dispose of/recycle non-rooted specimens. These can either be taken to your local waste recycling centre or they can be shredded and added to your compost. Rooted trees, however, can either be planted in the garden or in a larger pot ready for next year's celebrations - which will hopefully be a little more normal!

Speaking of trees, now is the perfect time to prune apple and pear trees, removing any dead, dying or diseased branches whilst the tree is still dormant and giving it an overall haircut of 10%. The open goblet shape is always my go-to, as this allows the air to flow through and reduces the risk of pests and diseases. It is also a good time to prune any overgrown/misshapen perennials including wisteria, willows and ornamental grasses; grasses should be cut back to a few centimetres above ground. Roses can also be pruned whilst they are dormant - remove any cross-

ing or dead branches and prune on an angle just above any buds.

Cleaning pots, tools and greenhouses is good prep for the new season as well as ordering/chitting seed potatoes and vegetable seed for the coming months. Chitting potatoes is as straightforward as placing them "eyes up" towards the light in a frost free environment. Applying a little care to your lawn now can also give it a great boost. When it is dry



it's a good idea to disperse any worm casts as they can encourage the growth of unwanted weeds and moss, but don't do this on frosty grass though as footprints can burn or scorch the grass leaving black marks where you have walked. If your lawn is prone to waterlogging it would be beneficial to spike and aerate, especially if you didn't do this in the autumn. When I do this, I like to brush a mixture of lawn sand and loam into the holes created as this will help with drainage and limit soggy areas.

Finally, I always make sure to continue feeding the hungry birds and leave tidying/pruning some areas of the garden to provide protection for other furry friends through the cold months.

**Carey Tunstall**



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# Martin Page

## YOUR LOCAL TREE SURGEON

- ✧ Are your trees too tall, blocking light or untidy?
- ✧ Do your hedges, conifers or shrubs need trimming?
- ✧ Would you like to remove that stubborn stump?

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## BRAIN TAZERS

1		2		3		4
5						
6		7				
8						

**1 Across:** Start of a New Year **1 Down:** Lucky bird  
**2D:** Zero **3D:** Bring to life **4D:** Favoured curdled  
milks **5A:** Soothing **6A:** Hopelessness **7D:** Off-  
spring **8A:** Aimlessly walking *Paul Towers 2021*

**Answers at [w:westernparkgazette.co.uk](http://w:westernparkgazette.co.uk)**

		2			5	1	6
6	7						
		5	3				4
5			9		8	2	6
	4	6	2		7		1
4					6	7	
							4
							9
2		7	5			8	

**Local Story or Event?**

E: [editor@westemparkgazette.co.uk](mailto:editor@westemparkgazette.co.uk)

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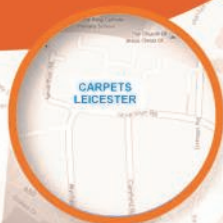
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