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Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the November edition of the Western Park Gazette.

As Lockdown II ruins Halloween, Bonfire Night and Diwali, the Gazette continues to be published in spite of the collapse of Western civilisation as we know it.

A big thanks to our contributors and advertisers who are continuing to support the magazine through these trying times. It's tough economically for many small businesses and we've lost a few recently but hopefully they'll return as things get back to normal next year.

Our main feature is this year's slightly muted Halloween celebrations. We headed out with cameras to capture the atmosphere. Helen Knott actually does get on her bike, Roger Blackmore discovers how some voluntary organisations are dealing with lockdown, Alexandra Tunstall goes on a nature ramble, Emma Greasley has seasonal gardening advice and we have the latest policing update from Ed Jones.

As always the ever annoying Sudoku and Crossword lurk dangerously on the inside back page.

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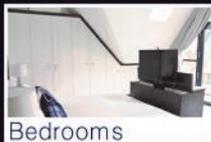
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PUMPKIN TO SHOUT ABOUT!

The headline may be a spooktacularly bad pun but pumpkins were the order of the day across West Leicester as the traditional Halloween celebrations took hold.

The festivities were muted this year, the traditional pumpkin roll on Western Park had to be cancelled and many households resisted the temptation to deck out their homes but the area's youngsters still glided out about in fancy dress. This time they were on a pumpkin hunt quiz rather than knocking on doors.

It was a smaller event mostly put together on social media. Organiser Beccy Millar said: "We didn't want to encourage too many people out of the area to descend and it become unsafe, but no one does Halloween like Western Park does Halloween, and it's one of the highlights of the kids' year.

We still want our children to have fun in a safe, socially distanced way, so we thought we could arrange a pumpkin hunt!

On the night, we suggested parents give their children a sweet for every word they spot whilst hunting the pumpkins, or people could leave out treats which didn't involve touching the same containers as other kids".

(Cover photo: Sharon Clark-Monks)



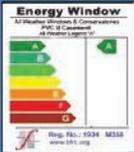
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KNOTT'S LANDING

Beware drivers of cars and trucks, there's a new menace on the roads. I've bought a bike and I am using the Pop-up cycle lane on Hinckley Road daily in anger to commute to work. This has amused him indoors considerably as he has been sceptical of the usefulness of the cycle lanes from the start. "Waste of good road" and "another bloody vanity project" were among the phrases that were used when the cones appeared.

He started to get involved when I went bike shopping because heaven forbid that I should purchase a mode of transport without input from a manly man! Now he waves me off at the door in the morning as I wobble off on two wheels and proclaims I "should be grateful they built it just for you as we never see anyone else on there".

I do like whizzing along on my bike. The bike lanes going into the city on the road are mostly great. Wide, well made bits of tarmac that don't make your teeth chatter in your skull as you bump over the pot-holes. It all gets decidedly more dodgy around the



national cycle lanes. If this is a 'national' thoroughfare, then I'd hate to see what the country lane version looks like.

In Holland, where my bike came from, everyone cycles and they have special bike roads that are wide, smooth, well lit and busy, even in winter. Here I have to cycle through badly lit parks, roadside pathways, underpasses, squeeze down narrow paths, along canal towpaths and under bridges.

Imagine a Public Information film about all the places you should not go in the dark because robbers might get you. Our national cycle lanes run through those. The tarmac looks like a stormy seascape frozen in time because of all the roots bursting through the pathways. Riding over those roots is a jarring experience for me and my bike. There are people sleeping rough under the bridges. Magnet fisherman lurk around every watery corner. My highest rat count on one journey is three. They were not small beasties and I'm now fairly sure Nimh is located somewhere in Leicester. I haven't even begun to discuss the drivers in town who seem unable to see a large, brightly lit woman on a bike sitting six feet in front of them.

I shall persist though. It's good for me, it's good for the environment and I get to work mildly terrified and ready to face all challengers. There's nothing like a decent dose of adrenaline to set you up for the day.

Helen Knott

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How They Cope With Lockdown

Most voluntary groups have found it hard going this year. Several of those involved with the arts have developed imaginative ways to carry on. These include the city's International Music Festival led by of its enthusiastic Director, Nicolas Daniel, and its chairman Kevin Rush and the trustees. With funding made possible by donations from the public, they have pressed ahead and have had all their concerts recorded in the Victorian Gallery at the New Walk Museum. These included the ones for the 4 day festival in September and also the ongoing weekly lunchtime concerts through the autumn. No live audience was present but the concerts have all been made available via YouTube to Friends of the Festival and the public alike. The LMIF also managed an appearance on BBC Radio 3's In Concert Series with 'Leicester In Lockdown' featuring highlights from the September festival.



Leicester
International
Music
Festival

Leicester folk surfing the net will have enjoyed the first lecture of the season by the Leicestershire Historical and Archaeological Society (LHAS). This was delivered by Zoom from the home of the speaker and included the rise and fall of Simon de Montfort, who featured during a lecture on



King Henry the Third. Members and guests were invited to ask questions and they will be able to enjoy a wide variety of talks in the future. Some are already looking forward to being able to hear the lectures in the comfort of their own front room, during the depths of the winter.

With a history going back not far short of two centuries, and being no stranger to dealing with organisational problems, Leicester's Literary and Philosophical Society (the Lit and Phil) have, this year, been planning an extended programme, to be delivered via the internet.



Rather than hoping for what is often referred to as a return to normal, enterprising groups are thinking of different methods of coping with the effects of the pandemic as they map out their future. The alternative might be extinction, which would indeed be a tragic outcome.

Roger Blackmore

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CONNECTING WITH NATURE

Spotting Autumn Wildlife in Western Park

With the introduction of stricter lockdown measures and the approach of the colder, darker months, it's likely that the mental health of many of us will suffer quite a blow this Autumn. However, this time of year is also ideal for seeing some of England's most fascinating wildlife.

Taking a nature walk is not only a safe and fun activity that you can enjoy during lockdown, but is also often a neat way of giving your mental health a little boost. We're incredibly lucky in that Western Park is home to a vast array of exciting wildlife, just three examples of which I've included here to help you get started on your adventure into nature.

Eurasian Jay: This charming bird is sandy orange in colour, with black and white markings and a distinctive bright blue stripe on its wing, which makes it surprising to find that they are in fact a member of the crow family. Jays are very noisy, and it's likely that you'll hear their strange, scrapey, jeering call before you see them. At this time of year, they're hard at work burying acorns, so keep an eye out in areas populated with oak trees.



Bracket Fungus: Take a look up the trunks of any trees you pass and you might find yourself some Bracket Fungi. These large, plate-like fungi look rather alien, which makes them an exciting find on any nature walk, and with many trees shedding their leaves, they're easier to spot than ever.



European Larch: The Larch is an unusual tree in that, despite being a conifer, it loses its needles during the colder seasons. These needles, which form in little rosette-like clusters dotted along their twigs, are bright green in the spring. If you go to see them now, however, you'll find them a striking golden-yellow as they prepare to drop off, making them an impressive autumnal spectacle.



These are of course just a handful of the many exciting species you can find in Western Park, so go on – wrap up warm, remember to abide by social distancing measures, and see what you can spot!

Alexandra Tunstall

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PROJECT Update

hive *wwwce.org.uk*

WWCE's Project Hive is run by local residents who are raising funds to redevelop the old Eco House into a community space.

We are delighted to confirm that we will be working alongside St. Anne's Church over the festive period to create a living advent calendar with scenes and window displays all around the Western Park area. There will be a new one to enjoy every day of advent with the locations for each one shared on our social media channels.

Additionally, over the second weekend in December (12th & 13th) we will be encouraging you to shake off this difficult year and "Light Up Western Park" with your own illuminated window display creations and Christmas light displays. We hope to run a competition to find the community's favourite display. Alongside this and again depending on restrictions, we hope to hold a walking street market based all around the area with the opportunity for you to support Western Park's creative community with stalls based at their homes. A map showing where and when you can visit them will be available should this go ahead. If you would like to register to take part in the light competition or book a stall please pay very close attention to our social media channels and website where we will confirm details as soon as we can.

Don't forget to order your copy of the Parklife 2021 Calendar for only £7.50

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Nov Police Update**It's one step forward and two back, or so it seems when it comes to the Covid Pandemic.**

As the nation went into lockdown for a second time, I take solace in the hope that Leicester is afforded the lowest tier when the lockdown ends on December 2nd. This now depends upon how well we, as a City, choose to follow the rules. Leicestershire Police still utilises the '4 Es' approach of Engage, Explain, Encourage & Enforce, though we are stepping up our response to target those who continue to flout the regulations, in a manner that directly threatens people's health. We have dedicated Covid patrols and have been focusing upon those that choose to flout the wearing of masks in shops and supermarkets. Those who are genuinely exempt know to carry a card or letter from their GP. The emphasis is upon the individual to prove they are exempt, not for the police to prove they are not.

On the theme of safety, November saw the National Knife Crime Awareness Week. Your teams were engaged in a number of proactive activities to prevent, protect and pursue. Knife arches were deployed at strategic locations, officers and partners engage with schools and there were more 'boots on the ground' arresting those suspected of knife related offences. This problem is mostly inherent amongst our young people. We and our partners seek to break the cycle of knife carrying through the "lives not Knives" campaign. I have yet to meet a knife carrying offender who possesses the skill set of a surgeon and intimate knowledge of human anatomy. Is the second it takes to inflict a wound worth the years spent in prison or the torment for the loss of a family member? As a community we need to have these conversations with our young people.

I thank the community for your continued vigilance and reporting of suspicious behaviour. Your teams have been busy enforcing drugs warrants, particularly against so called Cannabis factories where we have seen a rise in the numbers disrupted. Seemingly, we have been so successful at targeting our efforts upon organised criminal gangs, that a vacuum has emerged which is trying to be filled by other criminal elements. These elements are less organised and easier to spot. This presents a window of opportunity to drive out the scourge of commercial cannabis grows in residential areas by making the initial investment economically unattractive. I therefore encourage the public to keep reporting their suspicions either directly to the police or through crime stoppers.

To keep abreast of policing updates, you will need to sign up to Neighbourhood link. In the meantime, keep yourself safe, keep healthy and be a good neighbour (from a safe distance)

Sgt Ed Jones

Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



Here we are in Lockdown number 2. At least it gives those of us with a garden extra time to get things ready for the winter without hurrying!

We have already had the first frost so dahlia tubers should already have been cleaned and stored away somewhere frost proof. It's also time to clear faded perennials and annual climbers like morning glory and thunbergia and thoroughly mulch the surrounding area.

Any rose leaves suffering black spot should be gathered up and put in the bin to prevent contamination next year and prune out any infected stems. Other fallen leaves can be piled up and kept damp, perhaps in bags to create some decent leaf mulch or in your compost bin. Leaves with blotches are not a problem and forking over, to aerate your compost, can speed up the decomposition process. But spores from diseased plant roots will survive and be ready to cause havoc next year, so



dispose of separately. And don't stop weeding! It can be never ending but has to be done. The more you can dig out the better.

At this time of year the soil is wet, so care should be taken not to compress it, so rather than stomping along in gardening boots, use a plank as it spreads the weight. Thoroughly digging in heavier materials like garden compost, rotted manures or leaf mould feeds the soil, and improves its structure. This releases nutrients slowly, improves soil conditions, and stimulates essential micro organisms. You can even spread thick mulches to suppress weeds and protect the soil over the winter.

If your lockdown fun has resulted in a nice vegetable patch, you may still have leeks, sprouts, broccoli, carrots and other root crops still in the ground. If they've started to flower or bolt, get them out as soon as possible and store them in a cool place ready for the saucepan! If you want to keep your good carrots for longer, bury them in a well drained hole about 6 inches deep resting on a layer of horticultural sand with another layer on top.



This is just the tip of November's gardening iceberg. Have fun!

Emma Greasley



Martin Page

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6				█	7	
	█		█	8		█
9						

1 Across: Fireworks **1 Down:** Helpful hotel staff member
2D: Self fascination **3D:** Engrave with acid
4D: Non metallic element **5A:** Effusive **6A:** Frozen rain
7A: Carbon copy **8A:** All right **9A:** Halloween food
Paul Towers 2020

Answers at w.westernparkgazette.co.uk

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

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