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# Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the September edition of the Western Park Gazette.

We're still running behind schedule compiling the magazine but hopefully it can be pulled around before we hit the Christmas period - really don't want our deliverers ruining their Christmas Eve by working! Another production issue might be a second major Lockdown, which we'll deal with if/when it happens.

This month, on the centre pages, we take to the Western Park Scarecrow Trail, There were some truly amazing efforts on display. Roger Blackmore looks back at the many WW2 airfields dotted around Leicestershire and there's a green theme to Helen Knott's article as she enjoys the delights of growing her own veg as well as having a few choice words for the old bloke who nicked her poppy seeds. Keeping to the green theme, Tony Huxley discovers that now he quite likes hydrangeas. We also meet the Lockdown Haiku King of Western Park and have the latest local policing update.

And the ever annoying Sudoku and Crossword lie in wait on the inside back page.

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# CORONAVIRUS

1: You still can't meet family or friends from other households in homes or private gardens unless you have formed a support bubble

2: Stay overnight in another person's home, unless you've formed a bubble with them.

3: Meet up with anyone you don't live with inside a café, bar or restaurant.

4: Limit your contact with other people.

5: Stay 2m apart from anyone you don't live with.

6: Wash your hands regularly.

7: Work from home if you can.

8: Wear a face covering on buses, in shops, when dropping or collecting children at school and in any space where distancing is difficult.

9: Don't meet up with people in their homes or in any indoor space, or in private gardens.

10: Book a test and self-isolate if symptomatic.

11: If you test positive, stay at home for at least 10 days and until you feel better. Members of your household should stay at home for 14 days.

**TESTING SITES:** Jubilee Sq, Birstall Park & Ride, Evington Leisure Centre, Spinney Hill Park, Victoria Park, the Highfields Centre, the Shree Prajapati Community Centre, the Overton Road Ball Court and the Belgrave N/hood Centre.

**Tests can be booked by calling 119**

**Go to [leicester.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://leicester.gov.uk/coronavirus)**

Advice and rules may change

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# KNOTT'S LANDING

Gardening is great. It's the gift that keeps on giving. You can garden anywhere, any place, any time. You don't need an actual garden. You can do it inside on your windowsill. Perhaps you garden the herbs you buy from the supermarket or you could go proper posh and buy mini orchids and trap them in copper cages suspended from your walls. You could just have a hanging basket. The good thing about indoor gardening is the lack of extra rubbish and bitey insects.

Having actual outdoor space reminds you that having a garden is really hard work. There are rewards though. I am inundated with runner beans at the moment. Foot-long green sticks of fibre are on every plate in our house. I've been giving them away as fast as they grow. I've been the happy recipient of apples and courgettes from other friends and the local WhatsApp group. Sharing is half the fun. There have also been flowers. Beautiful blooms tended with my own fair hands have graced my house all summer. I have shared my flower bounty gladly. One of my friends had beautiful poppies with gorgeous big heads on them. They don't do well in vases so I asked her if maybe I could have some seeds... to cast on my borders with gay abandon and hope for massive

heads next year. She agreed. I watched and waited for her seed heads to be ripe and bursting with promise.



The summer moved along and finally I got a text to say come and pick up my bounty. I got there with my brown paper bag ready to collect. The door opened and my friend appeared. She did not look happy. It turns out some old bloke had, in broad daylight, come onto her front garden and cut every last one of the seed heads off of her poppies. He had come toolled up for his crime with a bag and secateurs and was spotted by a neighbour in the act. Sharing is one thing. Nicking all the seed heads from someone's garden is quite another. It's theft.

The annoying thing is now there will be no new plants next year AND she would have shared if he'd asked. So if it was you be warned, she's having CCTV installed. Try it again and prepare to have your collar felt!

**Helen Knott**

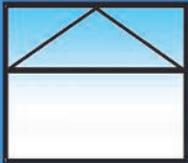
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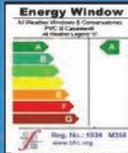
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# LEICESTER'S RUNWAYS

When I was a teenager learning to drive I got a lot of practice on a disused aerodrome, near to my parents' home.

During World War Two, many such airfields were to be found all over the country. Locally, the RAF took over the Braunstone Aerodrome which had been opened in 1916. The Air Force finished operations there in the early 1950's.

There was a nearby hostelry, off Ratby Lane, appropriately named The Airman's Rest. A distinctive building, it was demolished a year or two ago.

The naming (or renaming) of a local pub is often the sign of an airfield nearby. A good example of this is the Flying Lancaster at Desford. The airfield at Desford was situated on the site now occupied by Caterpillar Tractor, and was used, amongst other things, for the maintenance and servicing of aircraft.



Martin Addison

North of the city, it was decided to build a residential development on a former airfield. Thus was the village of East Goscote born, now home to over two thousand souls.

To the east of the city, well before WW2, the beginnings of Stoughton Airport had been carved out of land owned by Co-op farms. This has, of course, grown into today's Leicester Airport. It was also known to thousands as the site of the ever popular Leicester Air Show.

Altogether during and around the time of the Second World War there were about a dozen such airfield in Leicestershire, including the famous proving ground at Bruntingthorpe near Lutterworth. Apart from Stoughton, most of those around the city have moved on to become part of industrial estates such as at Braunstone Frith. East Goscote, as we have seen, became a residential village.

A number of those airfield runways carved out between 1940 and 1945 were never in fact used. Others reverted to farmland, others to industrial use. Some became posts for the Royal Observer Corps. Each forms a distinctive part of our wartime history.

And when my elder son began to learn to drive he also found a disused airfield near his grandparents' home where he too was able to practice his driving skills in an off-road environment.

**Roger Blackmore**

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# PROJECT Update

hive *wwwce.org.uk*

Project Hive is run by the WWCE, a group of local residents raising funds to redevelop the former Eco House into a community space.

We have just finished tidying up and totalling the taking from this year's Western Park Scarecrow Trail. All of those involved in putting this event on would like to thank everyone that built a scarecrow and everyone who came out in the sunshine over the weekend of the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> September and took a walk around the trail. While hunting down our 61 entrants you bought copious amounts of ice cream, cake and raffle tickets, your appetite for sweet treats never fails to astound us!

The buzz around the Western Park area over the event was something truly special and we think that we can all agree it was much needed after the 'challenging' year we have faced so far. Positive comments from so many of the trail goers who spoke to us around the route make our efforts feel completely worthwhile.

WWCE would also to extend special thanks to the local ward councillors who helped cover the cost of running the event.

We are delighted to announce that we have raised another £2121 towards the project.




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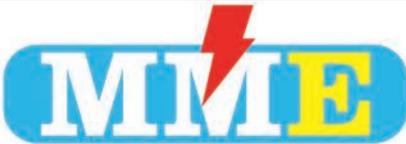
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## LOCKDOWN HAIKUS

**A Western park man who spent the lockdown writing haiku poetry is on the road to getting his work published.**

David Pepworth from Dorchester Road spent the lockdown writing these short poems and he's still busily composing.

A haiku is a three lined unrhymed verse usually of five, seven and five syllabus and is traditional Japanese style of poetry which has become increasingly popular in the West.

David said: "A friend on Facebook suggested that Lockdown needed a haiku. I wrote one which I didn't really like, and thought I could do better. I have spent the last five months or so trying to do just that.

"I pick ideas up from everywhere from the news to overheard conversations. Annoying most of fully formed haikus appear at night - forcing me to go to the spare room with phone in hand to capture them, so to not annoy my wife".

David says there have been so many different angles and tangents over the last few months, he's never felt sort of material. Sometimes the subject matter is hard to approach. He has written suites of haikus about mental health, suicide and domestic abuse - all things that have flourished in lockdown.



But What makes a good haiku? "One that achieves higher aspirations than the number of words suggest it should. To me, the best haikus are ones that really involve the reader - where the seventeen syllables give them some of the outline, and then they get to finish the picture and colour it in.

"It's hard to pick a favourite one - it's like asking someone to chose their favourite child. However, one I like, but haven't shared before is -

**Each poem planted  
with a silent prayer for those  
who did not make it**

David continued: "It pretty much sums up what The Lockdown Haikus are about - capturing and memorialising the most unexpected and bizarre months of our lives".

Now he's finished a successful Kickstarter campaign to push his work out to a wider readership.

To read more haikus search Facebook for 'thelockdownhaikus'

## Do you have a local story?

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## NEW COLLEGE FLIES THE FLAG

New College Leicester is celebrating achieving Flagship school status for their Inclusion Quality Mark Centre of Excellence review.

The IQM inclusive school award recognises the ongoing commitment by schools to provide the very best education for all children irrespective of differences.

The assessor, Mr Barry Carney, from the Inclusion Quality Mark Award, concluded in his report 'New College Leicester is vibrant and serves its students and community exceptionally well. There is a strong ambition with a heart and soul that marks out this truly inclusive school. The professionalism of leaders, governors and staff is palpable'.

This review took place during the Covid-19 pandemic and was conducted remotely using Zoom video conferencing. In addition Mr Carney had previously visited the school during a IQM cluster group in November 2019.

Karen Simpson, Director of Learning for Inclusion, commented; 'We are absolutely delighted to receive IQM Flagship school status. The report encompasses the hard work and dedication of our staff to ensure that our young people receive the best support and opportunities. As the Assessor confirmed within the report 'A truly inclusive school'.

## FOODBANK APPEAL

Over the last three months the community in Western Park has rallied around and supported the foodbanks in New Parks and Braunstone. Every Thursday Volunteers open up St Anne's church hall between 2.00 and 3.00pm and the community never fail to amaze us with their generosity. This was initially just for a few weeks but the need created by the Covid pandemic has seen the food collected become essential for those who've become vulnerable during the last six months.



Before Corona virus hit us about 150 families accessed our foodbanks in mid August 700 families accessed food in our ward. With the support of St Anne's we would like to continue our collections and would like to appeal for anyone else who wants to make donations that we will be there every Thursday. We are so proud of how Western Park has been so supportive and generous.

**Western Ward Councillors George Cole, Gary O'Donnell and Lindsay Broadwell**

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**Sept Police Update**

As we brace ourselves for what seems to be an inevitable second Covid-19 wave, we are for the time, subject to the 'Rule of Six'. Our Policing style has always been one of engage, explain, encourage and enforcement as a last resort. Whilst the vast majority of the public wish to support the drive to control this virus, there will always be a few who choose to ignore public health advice. The public patience is waning, and it is likely that the use of fines will start to increase if the rules are not being adhered to.

Our children have been back at School now for a couple of weeks. I am thankful to all the head teachers and their staff, for the tremendous effort they have made keeping our children safe, whilst maintaining a nurturing learning environment. Unfortunately we see an increase in reports of inconsiderate parking, particularly at school drop-off and pickup times. We ask parents to be patient and have due regard to the environment they are in. A few still think it's okay to park on the zig-zag lines, even for a brief moment. These are open spaces for a good reason. Your teams have been working with the schools and advising parents of the obvious and inherent dangers. The Police will not hesitate in issuing tickets to those who repeatedly ignore this advice

Your teams focus upon 'County Lines' drug activity. We have been targeting our main arterial routes into the county, conducting stop checks upon those we suspect to be involved in the distribution of drugs. We have executed a number of drugs warrants, sought to disrupt known or suspected trap houses and have run a number of online workshops within our schools. County Lines criminality encompasses all the elements that cause significant harm to our communities, including child exploitation, modern day slavery, drug dealing and knife crime. It remains one of our main policing priorities.

Your teams continue to enforce upon 'cannabis factories'. I thank the public for their vigilance and encourage you to keep reporting your suspicions to us. If you happen to rent out properties then I would urge you to conduct regular inspections. An inspection every 3 months would probably eradicate such factories within suburbia, since it becomes economically unviable for offenders to grow the cannabis before detection.

A big thank you to those who donated to the Woodgate food bank and to those volunteers, without whom this could not happen. Don't forget, if you have not already done so, to register with neighbourhood link in order to keep up with policing news in your area and to receive crime prevention and community safety advice relevant to where you live. Keep safe, keep healthy and be a good neighbour.

**Sgt Ed Jones**

## Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



**In the rock and roll world of gardening I don't think I've ever considered hydrangeas as a headline act.** In fact, to continue the analogy, I'd go as far to say that I'd consider them the plant equivalent of a Val Doonican jumper, and I don't mean one of the bright patterned Christmas ones either! My lack of appreciation has obviously been affected by all the underwhelming hydrangeas I've encountered over the years. Weak-flowering, spindly specimens that go dishcloth-limp at the first sign of sunshine. Like certain politicians, they're often promoted beyond their ability and stuck in a focal position.

But my opinion of hydrangea fraternity has softened in recent years. Newer varieties have come onto the market which repeat-flower, are more compact and have more vibrant flowers instead of the default insipid pink or the washed out old-lady blue rinse. I've also seen planting schemes that play to their strengths and don't rely on a few oversized specimens to carry the whole show.

My appreciation of these shrubs took a massive boost recently after I saw collection of lace cap

and mophead varieties that had been grown into a magnificent display of hydrangeas. The owner had planted them in the ideal spot. An East-facing wall that gave them just enough morning sun and shelter to provide their light and heat needs but shaded them from the intense afternoon rays that so often makes their foliage wilt. They were set in a planting hole filled with a bale of peat. This keeps the soil pH low, which improves the colour of the blooms and stops the blue flowers turning pink. To keep them in tip-top shape they were well-watered and fed with a regular dose of seaweed fertiliser.



I've now found myself wondering if I could create something similar in my own garden, but then I've also been hankering after some warm slippers and a rocking chair. Maybe I'm just showing my age?

**Tony Huxley**



# Martin Page

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1		2		3		4
5						
6						
		7				

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