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Local Bikers Resolve Brexit Deadlock? Page 4

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Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the April edition of the Western Park Gazette

We're featuring something a little different on the front page this month. As Brexit gets shuffled off to an alternative timeline, a group of hairies on hogs may be proof that even if it does ever happen - it may not make a lot of difference to friendships and shared interests across Europe.

In our regular features; Helen Knott forensically dis-assembles the difficulties parents face when getting their children into secondary school. Roger Blackmore remembers the time when Leicester ground to a halt due to arctic conditions just after the end of WW2, Tony Huxley has an unusual solution for your garden care and Mark Brennan from Hinckley Road police has their regular update. We also catch up with recent Pop-up Pub and Project Hive activities.

The Gazette has also got together with Takeover Radio and Glastonbudget to offer the chance for local musicians to get their work played on the radio.

As always the crossword and Sudoku squat menacingly on the back page.

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Published by Rapsallion Media

**62 Ainsdale Rd
Leicester LE3 0UA**

Printed by **Flexpress Ltd**

6 Coal Cart Road, Interchange,
Birstall, Leicester, LE4 3YB



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.

West End Pay As You Feel Café: Thurs 7-8.30pm. Tues, Fri & Sat 11-3pm. WE Centre. Andrewes St.

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

Women's Taekwondo. Fridays. Brite Centre. 10am & Thurs, 8pm. St Anne's hall. 07951 426386

Walking Group: Sundays. 2pm. 96 Deg. B-Gate.

Dru Yoga Sessions with Emma: Sundays. 7.15-8.30pm. St Anne's Hall. 07393 811150.

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

Upstairs @ Western in April 24th - Between Us, 26th - Rhymes Against Humanity, 30th - End of Year Showcase, 3rd May- Hannah Swings 2nd - Gothic Film Night, 6th Comedy Workshop.

Little Theatre. 29th April - 4th May Jane Eyre.

Y Theatre: 24th April - Once Upon A Time (Kid's) 27th April. Still Marillion (Tribute) 4th May - Mickey P Kerr Z List Celebrity (Comedy).

DM Hall: Until 21st April - Horrible Histories 30th April - 10cc 11th May - UB40. 14th May - Katherine Jenkins, 20th May - The Vamps.

Curve: 23rd-28th April. We're Going On A Bear Hunt, 24 April- Jasper Carrott's Stand up & Rock

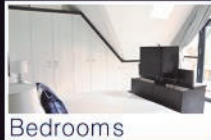
Haymarket Theatre: 30th April - 4th May - Rotterdam, 5th & 6th May - Mrs Kapoor's Daughter's Wedding, 20th May - King of Pop.

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West End residents may have been a little alarmed to witness a large snake of powerful motorbikes turning onto Hinckley Road and gently throbbing their way up the hill. It's not as scary as it might seem at first.

Revving in Harmony

So I was nibbling tentatively on a spicy Polish sausage at Hinckley Road's PoloneZ Bar on its 9th birthday and a biker gang roared up. Then I peered inquisitively at their leather clad backs and realised they were actually two gangs: The Outlaws and the Black Pistons (they might prefer motorcycle clubs).

In case you were wondering; both clubs were polite, charming and not in the least intimidating. One of PoloneZ's braver or more foolhardy denizens even called a six foot five biker "shorty", challenged him to an arm wrestle and all he got in rebuke was a smile.

So you might think biker gang rivalry and conflict would result? If I told you they were from different EU countries you might be wondering, in the current climate, how they hadn't slaughtered each other already? Yes, despite the Black Pistons sporting England proudly on their jackets, because that's where they live, the members here tonight are actually Polish. Rumour has it if you can get one of them to unbutton their leathers

they fly a Polish flag on the inside lining. I was going to ask them to prove it but I chickened out.

As I watched them mount their shiny steel steeds, or possibly aluminium but that doesn't alliterate, through the window - I couldn't help but notice how their exhaust notes all seemed to be singing the same tune; albeit at a slightly different but gratifying pitch.

Reassuringly this apparently subversive solidarity is nothing to do with Brexit politics but more just a mutual love of throbbing bikes, throaty exhausts, leather and oil. Nice to see people getting on. Shame our politicians can't oil up, don some leather and spread some love around. Now that would be interesting...

Mark Cooper



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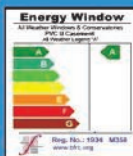
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The Coldest Day

The weather has always been a favourite topic of conversation among the British. We study the forecast from day to day, in addition to commenting at length on spells of weather which defy the seasonal norms.

Rarely has an unusual pattern of weather had such an impact as that which started with a snowfall in Leicester on 6th January 1947 and lasted well into March. The winter of 1947 was to become legendary. For the snow went on, and on, and on as the weeks went by.

Temperatures recorded at the Towers Hospital in the east of the city reached -23 Fahrenheit (-30.5C) over the next few weeks and by the end of the month it was recognized nationally as the coldest winter for at least sixty years. Forty Leicestershire villages were cut off, roads were closed, railways disrupted and canals frozen over, bringing barge traffic on the Grand Union canal to a halt.

Five thousand building workers were laid off in the city including 300 men working on the New Parks housing project. 500 people locally, including some 200 remaining German prisoners of war, were employed clearing snow.

Things went from bad to worse and by the second week around eighty thousand factory workers had been laid off. Queues formed at the Aylestone Road coke depot, many schools were closed and often pupils were unable to make it, even to those which remained open. Shops were forbidden to heat their premises and cinema matinees were cancelled.

Temperatures dropped to as low as -13 Celsius along with the lowest March temperature recorded last century of -12. By the end of February, 783 tons of sand and gravel had been spread on city streets in efforts to keep at least part of the city moving.

A number of readers will have their personal memories of that winter. It is one that is not likely to be forgotten in a hurry.

Roger Blackmore





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KNOTT'S LANDING

Secondary education has always been a bit of a lottery in our bit of Leicester but there is a problem on the horizon, a baby boom which started with the financial crisis in 2008. It's always been a truth universally acknowledged that when recession hits, lipstick sales go up, women's skirts get shorter and people go to bed and make children. This was as true in 2008 as it has ever been and now there are a generation of kids packed into primary schools like sardines in a tin, who are looking for secondary places. This is not news to the City Council. They've known about the bulge since they had to make more space in all the primary schools five years or so ago. Unfortunately, primary schools are numerous; secondary schools are like hens teeth in this area.

In some places it's simple. Children from the primary school all go up to the local secondary school together. In Western Park that's never been the case. Kids from Dovelands, Christ the King and other primary schools are scattered to the four winds. It's been the same this year but maybe it's the last time. I have intimate knowledge of the process this year because we went through it with our munchkin. We went to glossy presentations from schools from near and far. Schools who used to come and put on a show were nowhere to

be seen. Bosworth College didn't even take siblings from this area last year. Unless you live in LFE it's a pointless exercise. Fullhurst Community College came and did a very slick presentation. They are going places and claimed to want our kids. The Martin High School in Anstey took a lot of kids last year and made a decent pitch for this year's leavers. Castlemead Academy came with an incredibly good looking offering tied to Rushey Mead Academy. We looked around other schools but the message was the same. Unless you are in catchment, forget it. So we picked the schools we thought would work and crossed our fingers.

Yet again when the results were in, chaos reigned and no-one got into the schools they expected. Fullhurst, which made a big play for our kids, was full from catchment, even though they have built an entirely new building for years 7 and 8. It turns out the catchment ends at the railway line and unless you have a sibling there, the 440 odd applications from in the catchment for 280 places will keep you out. New College accepted a few kids, The Martin High has enough to keep the bus running and South Charnwood took a handful. Castlemead Academy is the new great hope and it looks good. They are opening in August on the old Kirby and West site and quite a few kids have been placed there. The trouble is, it has a city wide catchment and its parent school, Rushey Mead

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Academy has a really good reputation, so competition for places is going to be stiff, especially with the looming baby boom. Will Castlemead finally be the school that an entire year-group of our kids go to? I'd like to think so but I suspect next year we'll be back in the same situation because there are too many children and not enough school places for them on this side of the city.

Maybe the city council is on it? Maybe they can expand another secondary in the area? Maybe they are going to ask another Academy group to build another school? The Lionheart Academy Trust (think Beauchamp College in Oadby) have got a nice plan, we saw it two years ago but it got rejected. Ultimately the city council don't have much choice because the next three or four years of intake are going to be big. They have a duty to provide school places and they are running out of existing schools to expand! It's a shame that as always, while we wait for this to be sorted, it is families and kids who cope with the stress of sending kids miles away to school.

Helen Knott



Calling Local Bands

The legendary Glastonbudget Tribute & New Music Festival near Wymswold is gearing up for its annual shenanigans.

GLASTONBUDGET

24TH - 26TH MAY 2019

Not only is the biggest tribute band festival in the world it also focuses on giving young up and coming musicians a taste of playing a big event.

The Gazette has got together with Glastonbudget and Takeover Radio 103.2 to offer, those Leicestershire based bands taking part, the chance to have their original tracks played on the radio in the run-up to the festival.

All you have to do to be considered is send a link preferably through We Transfer, SoundCloud, or equivalent platforms along with a brief biography to:



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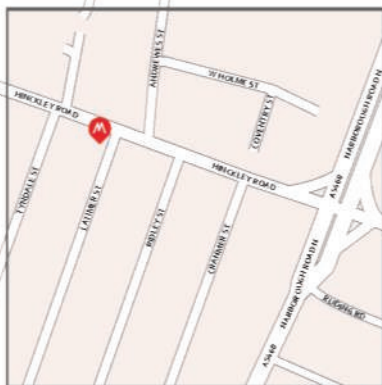
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econcannon@newcollege.leicester.sch.uk

Pop-up Pub

Western Park's drinking classes were out in force for the Pop-Up Pub at St Anne's Church Hall.

The March event was organised by the members of Western Park Beer Festival and saw hundreds enjoy a range of cask and keg beers, plus cider, wine, cocktails and soft drinks.



"It was a great night," said WPBF chairman Selina Conroy.

"We look to have made a profit of £1,000 which will go towards putting on our September festival and supporting our chosen local charities."

This year's causes include the East Midlands' Coram adoption charity, based in Shepshed, Leicester Home-Start, Leicester Wheels For All and Western Ward Community Enterprise.

The two day beer festival will take place at St Anne's Church Hall on Friday 6 and Saturday 7 September. "We'd like to thank people in Western Park, and further afield, for supporting our events," added Selina. "It means a lot to us – and even more to local charities who depend upon our support. It's a bonus that we can all share a good time in making it happen."

Individuals or companies interested in sponsoring beer or other options at September's festival should visit www.westernparkbeerfestival.org

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PROJECT

hive

Update

Project Hive is run by the
WWCE, a group of local
residents trying to raise

**funds to redevelop the former Eco House into
a community space.**

The support and generosity of the local community never ceases to amaze us. Everyone at Project Hive HQ would like to say a huge thank you to those who organised, baked and consumed copious amounts of cake at the Pop-Up Tea Room on March 16th.

Another £1413.25 towards our target.



Next up; we need your support with the first Western Park Scarecrow Trail in September. We want to get a real buzz going so this event will be HUGE, there's nothing like it this close to the city. Get your creative heads on and take part in the scarecrow building competition. We will be producing a guide so that visitors can find there way around and your scarecrows can be rated by members of the community and anyone attending the event. There will be a £100 cash prize for first place and more prizes for runners up too.

You can find out all about how to enter by following the link on our Facebook page or our website. (There's an earlybird discount if you register your entry before the end of May!).

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April Police Update

Great news to start off this month, the burglary figures for the West Leicester area are at their lowest level for over 3 years! This is due to the sustained effort of your local police, partners and the public in preventing and deterring this crime.

Unfortunately that does not mean that it is the end of such issues and we will not rest on our laurels. Please continue to take the necessary precautions to protect your property concentrating on using good quality locks for your windows and doors, looking at external sensor lights and internal lights on a sensor! You can also ask your neighbour to keep an eye on your property while you are out. If you are a tenant then you can still secure your home as long as you have your landlord's permission!

Over the last month your local police have been assisting with the national police operation to target knife crime called Operation Sceptre. We have used our knife arch at some local areas and also visited local schools to educate young people about how to best protect themselves. If you have information that people in your area are carrying knives then please report this anonymously via

Crimestoppers by calling 0800 555 111. We will continue to educate people against carrying knives and enforce against those that do!

A 24 year old man from Wolverton Road off Narborough Road has been charged with four offences following a house fire. Police were called to the address and were informed that cannabis plants which were inside the property had been destroyed in the blaze.

Marek Kaminski was charged with being concerned in the production of cannabis, abstracting/using electricity, criminal damage and possession. He will appear in court on May 11th.

Finally a great result on Kate Street where Leicester City Council's crime and anti-social behaviour unit have worked with police to obtain a civil injunction to prevent a local man from entering the area where he has caused anti-social behaviour for many years!

Have a happy Easter everyone, I hope you enjoy a few days break! Like always your local police will be working through the holiday to keep you safe!

Sgt Mark Brennan



Tony Huxley's Compost Corner

Gardeners are generally a resourceful lot, often looking for simple household solutions to horticultural problems.

So, when I heard of a plant panacea that's found in most kitchens, I thought I'd better investigate. An online search of "baking soda" and "plants" reveals hundreds of articles extolling the virtues of this alleged wonder powder. A teaspoon in a few litres of water makes a rejuvenating wash for the tired and dusty leaves of houseplants. Add a couple of drops of washing up liquid and it can help control fungal diseases like mildew and maybe even insect pests. It is even touted as a fertilizer and a sweetener of fruit.

Baking soda is just sodium bicarbonate. Okay, hold on tight while I attempt to remember my CSE chemistry. Sodium bicarbonate, or as its close friends call say NaHCO_3 , is a molecule made up of Sodium, Hydrogen, Carbon and Oxygen. Individually these elements have no major effect on plants but together they form an alkali. With the addition of soap to break down the oily membrane of some fungi and insects,



it can attack their more acidic biology. As a fertilizer its effects are indirect. When applied to the soil it can raise its pH making it more alkaline. Plants find it easier to extract nutrients from soils that are slightly alkaline. Farmers spread lime on their fields for the same reason.



Acid loving plants like Camelia and Rhododendron won't be so happy if you start feeding them ericaeous Kryptonite. Baking soda should be used sparingly on all plants as it is a salt and can build up in the soil. Plants need only the tiniest amount of Sodium before it begins to poison them. It can also burn plant leaves if it's not diluted enough.

Of course, the most important use of baking soda is...baking! I for one wouldn't argue if there was an increased availability of cake in the garden!

Tony Huxley



Martin Page

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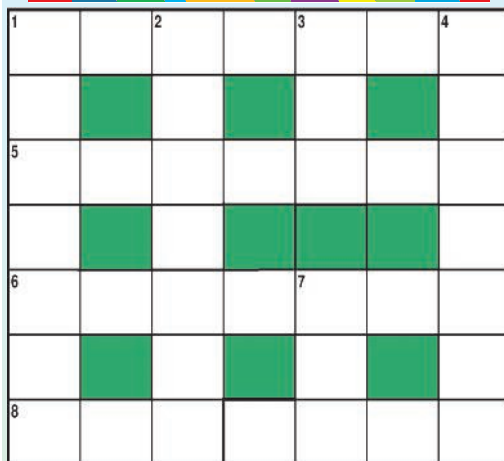


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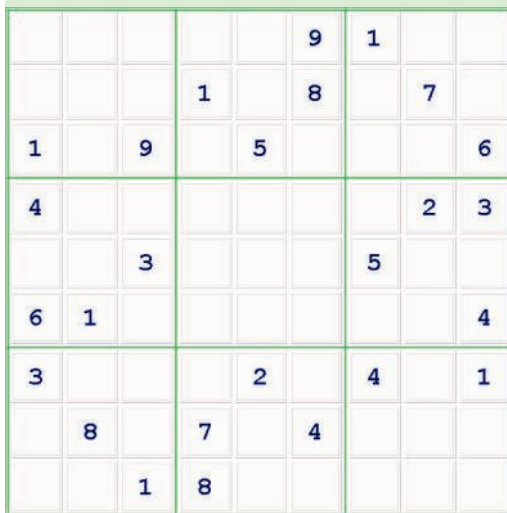
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1 Across: Overseas post **1 Down:** Greed **2:** Bur-
rowing mammals **3:** One spot card **4:** Plural of latex
5: Encompassing **6:** Stupid **7:** A terminal digit
8: Spring festival © Paul Towers



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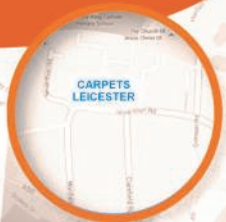
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