

## STRUCK BY LIGHTNING!

### Hello From The Editor

**Welcome to the August issue of the Western Park Gazette.**

This month a local family escape a devastating lightning strike on their home by the skin of their teeth. (The front cover picture is a montage in case you thought we were hanging around waiting for it to happen. We're not that good...)

Roger Blackmore has the story of Leicester's warrior poet, Helen Knott rages at people in pants and a local cancer researcher, Stewart Hale, plans to ride his bike from Leicester to Amsterdam in aid of Hope Against Cancer. Shopkeepers on the Hinckley Road Row set up a traders association to improve the area and Aarti Thohani heads off to Simon Says at the De Montfort Hall to sample the best of Leicester's music.

Sergeant Rod Smart from Hinckley Road police station has their news round up and it looks like they've been fairly busy; our gardening expert, Tony Huxley says, "Beware of the peach leaf curl." And Richard Perry wonders if artificial intelligence is just around the corner.

If you fancy getting really frustrated, we have more nasty Brain Tazers on the inside back cover as well as the chance to win a DVD of the new Jack the Giant Slayer movie,

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### Western Park Gazette



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# Struck by lightning!

**A Western Park family had a narrow escape when lightning hit their home during one of the overnight storms at the end of July.**

Emma Lowe and Dan Lockton were in bed at 4.30am with their daughter Darcy, 4, whilst 11 month old Jett was in another room, when the roof of their detached home off Letchworth Road exploded.

Emma's mum, Eunice, who lives nearby, heard the huge bang: "I thought - somebody's got it. A few minutes later my daughter, in her night clothes and the children arrived, banging on the door saying the house was on fire."

The family have since moved out and have taken a holiday, but Eunice said: "It was traumatic for the children."



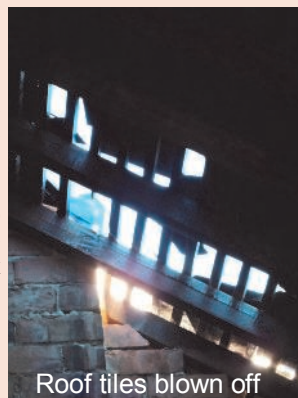
Eunice surveys the damage

"There was a weird humming sound, then a flash and a loud explosion as the lightning hit the chimney and went down the aerial, blowing holes in two bedroom ceilings and throwing rubble, dust and tiles onto the beds. The loft hatch blew out and went down the stairs and the loft window shot off towards next door's roof."

"Everything in the house is filthy, it looks like a blast. The structural engineer even said the roof's moved. The chimneys unsafe, in fact the whole house is, so they've had to move out for at least six months while it's all fixed."

The lightning strike was so powerful that the resulting thunder rattled windows and set off car alarms across Western Park.

The house was one of three Leicestershire properties struck during the storm.



Roof tiles blown off

## Butterfly Flutterby

**If you have a buddleia bush, at the beginning of August, you might have spotted a flurry of butterfly activity around these plants.**

With over 70% of British butterflies slowly heading towards extinction, it's just as well that red, pink or lavender buddleia is a magnet for them.



Peacock Butterfly

It's thought this is because butterflies can see red wavelength colours, unlike most insects, which is why buddleia bushes are so popular.

So go on - keep our West Leicester butterflies thriving and plant a butterfly bush or two!



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# Leicester's Warrior Poet

With next year marking the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War, it is likely that much attention will be focussed on the writings of Britain's war poets such as Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon.

Interesting therefore to reflect that our very own Leicestershire Regiment, The Tigers, actually appointed their own official war poet and that not surprisingly he was a Leicestershire man.

Arthur Newberry Choyce, the son of a local miner, was born at Hugglescote in 1893. In his early twenties he joined the Leicestershire Regiment becoming a Second Lieutenant in the 9th Battalion. He saw active service in France and was badly wounded at the Battle of Arras in 1917, the same battle, incidentally, in which another war poet, Edward Thomas, lost his life.



Choyce was chosen by his Regiment as its official war poet and one of his best known collections of poetry was 'Crimson Stains' published under the subtitle 'Poems of War and Love'. He also wrote under the pseudonym of Thurce Crayne, in which guise he wrote a book of Love Poems.

Altogether Choyce was to publish seven volumes of poetry and one novel, the latter being entitled 'Lips at the Brim'.

In 1918 Choyce was sent to tour America in his capacity as soldier poet of the Leicestershire Regiment and lectured to huge audiences, garnering great critical approval. This tour obviously made a considerable impact on the poet, who was to go on to compose the epitaph sent by the mothers of the British Empire to America's unknown warrior.

His last volume of poetry entitled 'These Slender Larches' appeared in 1924. He later became Headmaster of Snibston School and died in 1937 at the age of 43. It is almost certain that complications arising from his war wounds contributed to his early death.

Copies of a number of his works are kept in the Newarke Houses Museum which also displays, in the regimental section, a picture and short biography of our county's soldier poet.

*Roger Blackmore*

## Events Diary

**Zumba Class** Tues. 7.15 - 8.15 at New College. Call Sarah - 07810 307 113.

**Fosse Camera Club:** Fridays. St. Peter's Church Rooms. 7.45pm. 0116 299 2230.

**Leic' Ladies WI:** Meets monthly on 3rd Mon. 7.15pm Upstairs in The Almanack, 15 Bath House Lane.

**Fosse Singers:** Fosse N'hood Centre. Weds. 7pm.

**Gorse Hill City Farm – Summer Fun Day:** 4th Aug. 10-4.30. Tickets from £1.

**Richard III Family Afternoon:** 22nd Aug. Leic Cathedral. 3-5pm.

**Summer Fun Fair:** Until 23rd Aug. City Centre.

**Ride Leicester Festival:** 25th Aug. Main cycle ride – city centre. 11-4pm [www.goskyride.com/leicester](http://www.goskyride.com/leicester) &

**Sports Fest** also at City Centre and **Our Leicester Day** in the market place. All free.

**Leic Old Town Festival:** 26th Aug. City Centre. 11-5pm. Free.

**Belgrave Mela:** 26th Aug. City center. 11-6pm. Free.

**Leic Horticultural Show:** 26th Aug. Aylestone Leisure Centre. Free.

**The Short Film Festival:** 28th Aug. Phoenix. 8pm. Locally produced movies. £4.00. [www.phoenix.co.uk](http://www.phoenix.co.uk)

**Bands in the Park (Praise in th Park):** 1st Sept. Western Park bandstand. 4-5.15pm. Free

**Fashion Charity Night in aid of Small Pet Rescue:** Sept 16th. West Leic Cons Club, Westcotes Drive 7.30pm. Tickets £5 from 07799 427 058.

## Western Park Gazette



Yes, that's right... 10,000 copies a month

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# Trading Group Launches

**Business owners on the Hinckley Road parade of shops have joined together to start their own trading association.**

The Western Park Row Trading Association will represent the row of shops between Mostyn Street and Kirby Road.

Fed up with litter, rubbish and unsocial activity on their doorstep they have banded together to improve the neighbourhood and general shopping experience.

Set up after several shop owners got together in July, the aim is to improve the area by approaching the council and other funding bodies as a single group whilst creating enthusiasm for the business that exist there.

Nicola Coleman from the Sunshine Studio one of the organisers said: "We want to improve and promote the area, working together as a team with local residents to make the Row a nice place to do some traditional shopping."

Treena Hallam who runs Monty's Deli hopes the trading association will prove popular with traders and shoppers: "Originally we wanted something done about the sacks of rubbish and wheelie bins outside, but then we thought we could band together and really make a difference."

Many of the traditional shops like the butchers, greengrocer and wool shop have long since disappeared as supermarkets became more popular but that could change if the Western Park Row Trading association gets its way.

Local Councillors Susan Barton and George Cole are supporting the campaign. Susan said: "George and I really happy to be working with this enthusiastic group. We're endeavouring to facilitate some positive developments; some funded through the Western Park Community Budget to make the row a pleasant places to shop and for traders to do business. We're working with Council officers to restore the shopping area of Western Park to reflect its position close a lovely part of the city."

The trading association hopes to hold outside events to encourage local shoppers. Nicola Coleman already has some ideas: "We're looking at holding a balloon day, meet the business events and even get the Christmas light back up."



*Journalist and broadcaster Helen Knott likes gardening; it's just people doing it in their underwear she has a problem with...*

## KNOTT'S LANDING

**When is it OK to garden in your pants? I ask because the recent hot weather has caused some people to shed clothes at an alarming rate.** The hot sticky weather demanded that we wear loose, cotton clothing that does not cling or dig in anywhere. I obliged by digging out all my holiday gear and waffing around in a set of cut off joggers and various t-shirts and tunics.

It was while dressed like this that I came across my first gardener wearing nothing but underwear! Walking along with my little boy we saw the lady in question and he pointed and said loudly 'Mummy that lady is wearing her pants and bra!' What followed was a conversation about how sometimes people get hot and take their clothes off but grown-ups shouldn't really walk around in their underwear.

My second gardener in their pants was clearly just in their back garden and had popped out for a moment to put their weeds (bush trimmings) in the bin. Our eyes met. They looked away quickly and

ran full tilt through their back gate. On this occasion I was alone.

I can see the appeal of gardening in your pants, it is just like wearing swimwear and indeed once or twice I have done a bit of weeding in my pyjamas early in the morning, when it's just me and the milkmen around, but in the heat of the mid-day sun I think I would be terrified of being spotted. Indeed it is not so much the fact that people are gardening in their pants that disturbs me, it is more that they are doing so out in public!

Naturists have no problem with gardening naked of course, there is even a garden owned and opened by a naturist couple who wander around with tool belts, hats and boots tackling brambles and nettles with vigour. The difference being if you visit them, seeing a gardener in the buff would come as no surprise at all!



## Tony Huxley's Garden Tidings



**After a spell of real summer the fruit in the garden is now beginning to look edible.** Apples and pears are fattening nicely, although this time last year they were already filling the fruit bowl! They've also put on masses of leaf growth, but I've kept them in check with a summer prune. This keeps the crop manageable and improves quality. It also allows more light to the plants below. Plum trees can also produce too much fruit which can cause limbs to tear, so don't be afraid or too greedy to thin the crop.

My peach tree has made a full recovery after its annual attack of Peach Leaf Curl. This fungal infection can defoliate infected plants. The fungus likes damp Spring conditions. Using a waterproof sheet to cover small specimens for the first five months of the year can reduce infection. You can also spray

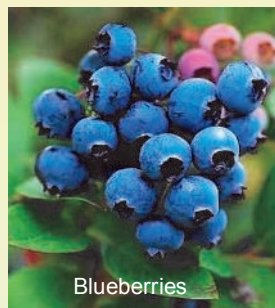


Peach Leaf Curl

with a copper based fungicide in winter and early spring.

Currants and gooseberries should now be ready for harvesting, this is also a good time to prune back the new growth. On the other hand blackcurrants should be pruned when dormant, trying only to remove old wood as the fruit is produced on the new growth.

Blueberries are attractive plants that don't look out of place in ornamental borders or planters. They are ericaceous so for best results grow in lime free soil and apply an acidic mulch such as



Blueberries

composted pine needles or conifer clippings. Their berries are claimed to be a "super food" and should be plump and ready for picking.

Fruit trees and shrubs can give a great return for a small investment of time and care. Most fruit can be easily frozen, bottled or turned into jams and puddings, and nothing beats the taste of a home grown dessert.

*Tony Huxley*

## Doctor on the Go!

**Western Park resident Dr Stewart Sale is a lecturer and cancer researcher at the University of Leicester.** He was approached by a local cancer charity, Hope Against Cancer, to be an ambassador for them - in order to raise the profile of the charity. It is a big year for the charity as they are celebrating their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Over this period the charity has raised over £3 million and funded 29 cancer research projects in the East Midland area.

In order to fulfil this role Stewart has set himself a year of challenges which include numerous half and full marathons throughout this year. One of the highlights of the whole year of fundraising will be a long distance bike ride organised by the charity where a team of around 50 cyclists, including ex-England World cup rugby winning captain Martin Johnson, are riding from Leicester to Amsterdam and back in 5 days this September.



But Stewart has decided to make the finale of the year a 24h solo endurance run at Equinox24. He says: "I see this as one of the ultimate endurance challenges both physically and mentally. I have competed in numerous marathons and I see this as the next step up. I wanted to make the final event of the year something that I would always remember and how would you forget a 24h endurance race especially when held in such a scenic location as Belvoir Castle".

Stewart is still looking for sponsorship for his year of events and people can donate through his virginmoneygiving site:

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/ayeareforhope>

## COUNCILORS SURGERIES

**Fosse Cllrs Surgery:** Monthly, 2nd Sat, 10.30-11.30, Fosse Neighbourhood Centre & last Sat 10.30 -11.30am at Woodgate Residents Association.

**Westcotes Cllrs Surgeries:** Westcotes Library, 1st Sat each month, 10.30 - 11.30am and 4th Fri each month, 10.am-11am. Manor House Neighbourhood Centre, 2nd Friday every month, 10-11am.

**Western Park Cllrs Surgery:** Monthly-2nd Weds St. Paul's Church Rooms, Kirby Road. 7-8.00pm.

## Sq. Mile Fun Day

A fun day and film festival organised by De Montfort University's Square Mile (mile2) programme drew more than 2,500 people to the Rally Park near Tudor Road in July.

Students and staff, working with residents of Woodgate, Newfoundpool and Fosse areas, hosted bouncy castles, a play area, stalls and pop-up cinema.

The event was part of the university's Square Mile programme which aims to connect the community with DMU and share academic expertise.

As well as the activities, residents had the opportunity to learn more about the many free opportunities the Square Mile programme offers, like IT training, English lessons, choir singing and stand-up comedy coaching.



Mum of three Cassie Stevens, 26, of Woodgate, said: "It's been great. The best thing about it all was it was all free - it was such a nice surprise. It's been great to see all the families coming down to the park and enjoying themselves."

Volunteers from the community, including members of the local residents' panel Fosse Forum, staff at the Tudor Pub and students from DMU helped to set the event up and picked litter throughout the day. Students even took time to blitz the graffiti on the signs surrounding the park during the event.

Square Mile manager Mark Charlton said: "We have had such a lovely day. Residents have come to the park in huge numbers to enjoy the fun activities."



## Jack the Giant Slayer Competition

Here's your chance to settle down with a family friendly DVD!

Jack the Giant Slayer (Cert 12) has just been released on DVD and Blu-Ray and we've got a copy to give away.



It's a new action packed retelling of the classic tale where Jack, the poor farm boy, accidentally reopens the gateway between the human world and a realm of fearsome man eating giants!

Originally banished for destroying the kingdom and eating a lot of people, the angry giants are on the way back and they're very, very hungry!

To win the copy of Jack the Giant Slayer just answer this question:

**What created the giant beanstalk?**

- A. Magic apples
- B. Magic leaves
- C. Magic eggs
- D. Magic beans

**Answers by email only by 24th August 2013 to: [editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk](mailto:editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk)**

*T&Cs: Only 1 winner. 1 entry per person. No cash alternative. Judge's decision is final. Correspondence only entered into with the winner.*

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*Computers are just big dumb calculators that can't think for themselves. But soon they might...*



**Question: How big would a computer have to be to be able to replicate the thought processes of the human brain?**

**Answer:** Absolutely massive.

The brain is a fiendishly complicated electro-biological machine thousands of times faster per second than even the biggest super computers tied together. Now somebody's had a go at trying to replicate one second of brain bower in a computer. Researchers at the Okinawa Institute of Technology Graduate University in Japan and Forschungszentrum Jülich in Germany have managed to do it using the world fourth largest supercomputer – The K.

They were able to create an artificial neural network of 1.73 billion nerve cells connected by 10.4 trillion synapses. That's the equivalent of



around 2% of a human brain's.

The K's 83,000 processors churned away for 40 minutes to generate that one second of human brainpower and used up over a million gigabytes of system memory as it individually modeled each neuron.

Although currently the practical uses of this research are zero since we'd need a machine the size of Western Park to simulate a human brain; it proves it can and probably will be done.

Bundle enough processors together, let them get on with it and you have the start of artificial intelligence, indeed, Google's Deep Learning project succeeded in building a system that could recognize a cat on YouTube. That may not sound like a big deal, but it's a start.

It shows that biological systems can now be modeled in a computer. Yes it was a massive computer and it took ages but with the speed of development always increasing, it's only a matter of time before your iPad is smarter than you are.

**Western Park Gazette**

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## August Police Update

*The Smart View with Sgt Rod Smart*

During the past few weeks we have had an increase in the number of burglaries around the area as a result of the victim leaving their windows open. This makes it easy for burglars to get into properties. You are strongly advised to make sure that they keep downstairs doors and windows (and upstairs windows near to flat roofs) secured, even when in the house or garden. It only takes a criminal a few seconds to get in through an open window and escape through the window or door with valuable items (or even a double bed in the case of a burglary on Tudor Road!) Door chains and window locks are relatively inexpensive and easily available.

On 22 June, a local man reported an attempted robbery on the Rally Park during the early morning. The following evening a local man was robbed of his phone and ID card on the park. Such incidents are rare and there has been a reduction in crime since the redevelopment of The Rally, but you are still advised to be vigilant, especially late at night, keeping phones and money hidden and avoiding secluded or dark areas.

On 26 June, a drunken nineteen year old youth from Coalville attacked a number of cars before throwing property around and racially abusing members of the public at a Hinckley Road filling station. The youth has since been charged with criminal damage and a racially aggravated public order offence.

Over a week during July, a large amount of lead has been stolen from St. Anne's Church on Letchworth Road. The Police would like to hear from anyone who heard or saw anything suspicious between 10 and 19 July.

In the early hours of 13 July a 37 year old local man was attacked and beaten in the street in the Fosse Road North area by a group of six men who accused him of being a burglar.

On 18 July, a cannabis factory was found in a terraced property on Harrow Road.

Over the past few weeks, there have been reports of devices being attached to bank ATM machines on Narborough Road. Such devices record card details which are then used in frauds. You are advised to be wary of anything unusual attached to cash machines (not just on Narborough Road) and should inform the bank and police immediately if they spot anything suspicious.

# SIMON SAYS SUCCESS!

The last weekend in July gave a kick-start to the summer, showcasing Leicester's local music scene at De Montfort Hall and Gardens at the Simon Says festival.

The sold-out event attracted over two thousand people with its eclectic mix of soul, jazz and blues to rock bands entertaining a crowd of all ages.



Simon Says replaced the Summer Sundae festival, which ran at De Montfort Hall for 10 years, and proved to be a big success with the packed audience inside the hall and outside in the garden, where festival goers were treated to food stalls, a real ale tent and picnics in the Sun.

The talented West End musical duo Mia and the Moon wowed the crowds with their many musical influences by giving a soulful rendition mix of Stevie Wonder's 'Signed, Sealed, Delivered', the Troggs 'Wild Thing' and the Black Eyed Peas hit 'Where is the love' and even got the audience singing along to their song 'Midnight in London'.



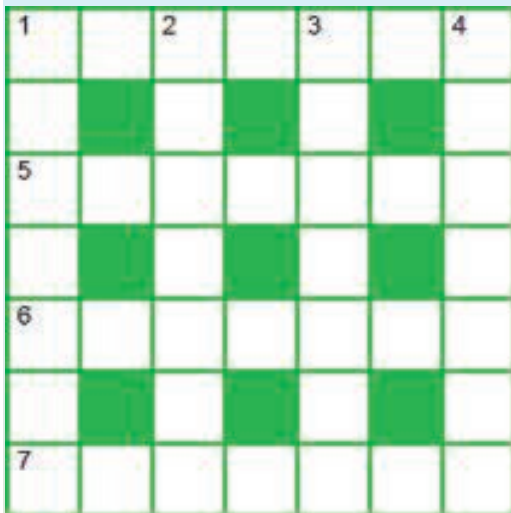
Following the performance they said: "It was absolutely fantastic, the sound was good, the crowd were awesome, everyone was rocking and it was great to feel Leicester's support".

The two-day festival featured a whole host of local artists including Young Knives, The Simple Tones, Jersey Budd, By The Rivers, Mahalia, Codex Leicester and many more.

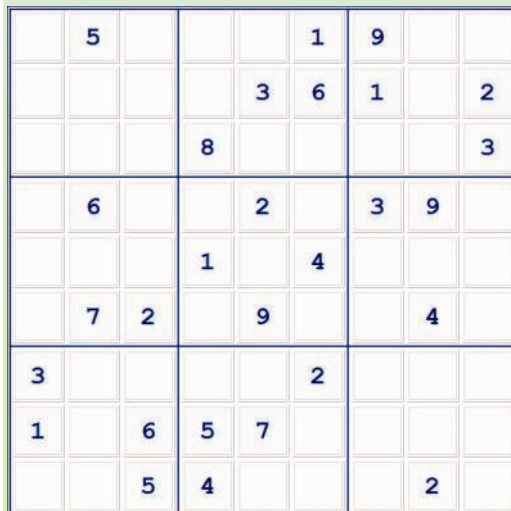
The Uncle Frank band, a fixture on the Leicester music scene rocked the main staged, dressed in white suits and black shirts, with the crowds dancing and singing along.

A fabulous weekend of musical talent enjoyed by many festival goers, supporting great local bands and artists. *Aarti C. Thobhani*

# BRAIN *TAZERS*



**Across:** 1. Of general appeal 5. Excel 6. Ring-shaped 7. Misprint **Down:** 1. Section of text 2. Spouse 3. Pamphlet 4. Dais



1. Take 9 from 6, 10 from 9, 50 from 40 and leave Six.
2. When can you add 2 to 11 and get 1 as the right answer?
3. How can a man go 8 days without sleep?
4. At a party, everyone shook hands with everybody else. There were 66 handshakes. How many people were there?

Answers on line: [www.westernparkgazette.co.uk](http://www.westernparkgazette.co.uk)