



SECOND'S OUT LET THE COMEDY COMMENCE!

Big Daddy & Giant Haystacks
Knock Out Upstairs at the Western!

More on Page 4

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Hello From The Editor

Here we are in February and what a miserable start to the year it's been.

The only thing putting a smile on our collective faces is the Comedy Festival which has been battering out gags and guffaws left right and centre across a few West Leicester venues. We have seen several of the performances and you can read our reviews online.

This month's magazine is a bit thinner than usual since we've had some time off (Mainly to enjoy the comedy festival!) but will be back to normal in March. In the meantime, Roger Blackmore, indulges himself with a look at the local connection to the long running radio soap 'The Archers'. Helen Knott dips her pen into a local flooding issue and somehow gets onto fish and chips. Rod Smart from Hinckley Road Policing Unit has the latest on their crime busting successes, Tony Huxley plays with something sharp in the garden and we ask could there be a big problem with parking in Western Park?

We also offer our congratulations to two local women who are taking the hair and beauty world by storm. It seems the West Leicester is the place to be for stylish hair and nails!

If you have a local story, please drop us a line at: editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk

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Copy Deadline March 7th 2014

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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

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.

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

International Folk Dancing: Monthly 2nd & 4th Fri. St. Anne's Hall. 2-4pm. T: Geoff on 0116 285 8352.

Peter Crebbin & his Cool Swing Band: Café Cino at Hilton Hotel Meridian. 2nd March. 1pm-3:30pm.

Leic Farmers Market: 1st Thurs of the month. C-Centre.

Ultimate Beatles Tribute: 1st March. Y Theatre. 8pm. w. leicesterymca.co.uk

Pricilla Queen of the Desert: Until Sat 1st March. DeMontfort Hall. 7.30pm. w. demontforthall.co.uk

Boeing Boeing (Comedy): Until 1st March. 7.30pm.

Gondolliers: 3-8th March. 7.30pm. Both at The Little Theatre. w. littletheatre.net

Hairspray: Until 5th Ap. Curve. w. curveonline.co.uk

Ultimate Rhythm & Blues (Classic 60's Rock Acts): 7th March. DeMontfort Hall.

St. Patrick's Celebration: 16th March. From 12 noon. City Centre. FREE.

Holi Festival: 16th March. Spinney Hill Park. Free.

St. Anne's Centenary Spring Fair: 15th March. 11.30-1.30pm. Church Hall. FREE

Big History Quiz: 19th March. Jewry Wall Museum. 7.30pm. Entry £1.00.

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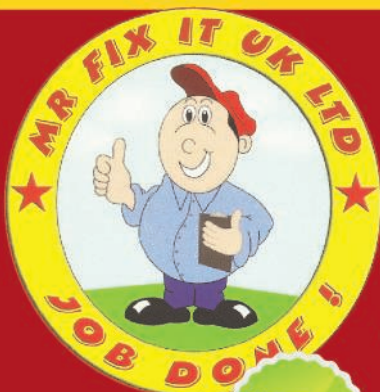
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SECOND'S OUT LET THE COMEDY COMMENCE!

Officially it is the longest running comedy festival in Europe and has just celebrated its 21st birthday with over 600 comedy acts strutting their stuff across many Leicester venues over 17 days.

Now given added oomph by some serious backing from the Dave satellite channel, the festival has grown over the last few years into a giant undertaking. It is attracting professionals, talented amateurs, the triers, the experimental, some future big names perhaps and occasionally the terribly unfunny.



West Leicester has again been at the centre of much of the fun. The Looking Glass on Braunstone Gate has played host to a comedy spectacular virtually every evening through the festival. Bar owner Josh Gray says: "The comedy festival has been fantastic this year with a varied range of acts and a great audience following for all shows. And next year will be even bigger."



The other major local venue which has made a massive contribution to the festival's success in west Leicester is Upstairs at the Western. This is Leicestershire's only theatre built in a pub and they have included some class acts on their unique stage above the Western.

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Media manager Sally Jack said: "We have been delighted with the season, bringing quality performances and new audiences to Upstairs at the Western and the West End area."

Highlights this year included Big Daddy taking on Giant Haystacks, Gordon Ramsey having a swearsy tantrum at a broken plate and a look back at the life of Stan Laurel with Hi-Di-Hi star Geoffrey Holland. All good fun, so here's to next year!



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The Archers of Ambridge

Popular with over 5 million listeners today, the Archers started off as very much a Midlands radio programme. Its five pilot episodes in 1950 were only broadcast in the Midlands region of the BBC.

One of the original cast members was June Spencer who last month, at the age of 93, received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the BBC Audio Drama Awards. June today plays Peggy Woolley whose fictional husband, Jack Woolley, has recently passed away with Alzheimer's Disease.

June herself was born in Nottingham the daughter of Billy, who was a sales manager for Crawford's Biscuits, and his wife Rosalind. From an early age she always wanted to become an actress. Her earliest role in the Archers was as the wife of Jack Archer the landlord of the Bull Inn in Ambridge. Jack Archer was played by a Leicester man, Dennis Folwell, whom I well remember as being a customer of the Old Horse on London Road,



which I also visited occasionally during my student days. Dennis also featured in the radio adaptation of *Worzel Gummidge*.

Jack and Peggy Archer ran the Bull for many years and had three children Jennifer, Lillian and Tony all of whom have prominent roles in the programme today. However it was Peggy's mother, Mrs Perkins, born in the East End of London, who became one of the most formidable characters in Ambridge, forever being propositioned by the equally memorable Walter Gabriel played by another Midlands actor Chris Gittins. Walter was always famous for his "ey up me old pal, me old beauty" greeting. Her firm handling of Mr Gabriel over the years became a firm feature of the programme but wedding bells there were never to be!

And Mrs P, as she was always known, will be familiar to a number of Gazette readers for another reason. For Pauline Seville who played Mrs Perkins was a local Leicester lady. The actress died in 1990.

As an Archers Addict myself I suspect that over the past sixty five years there may well be other Leicester actors who have featured in the cast of Britain's longest running radio soap. Perhaps Gazette readers may be able to come up with a name...or two? *Roger Blackmore*



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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.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

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Western Park

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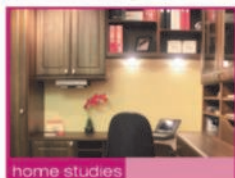
Tues 25th March 2014 at the East West Community Project. 7.pm.

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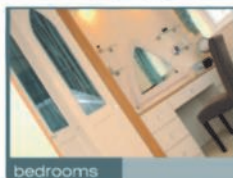
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KNOTT'S LANDING

The rain keeps falling and the gales keep blowing. At times like this the only way to go is to remain calm, eat deep fried food and stay in your house and look online at property in foreign parts.

Recently, accompanied by a bag of hot chips with salt and vinegar, I followed the saga of a house sale near me which was on, then off, then on again all because of flood water. As all of the following came second or third hand through various interested parties, it's probably best to take it all with a pinch of salt... sea salt maybe?

The house was for sale for a while and suddenly, a sold sign appeared, and we rejoiced for the person who had, in crushing economic times, managed to get someone to pay money for their house. Our joy was short lived though because not long after we discovered the buyer had dropped out of a sale because a report showed the house was at risk of flooding. We treated this news with some interest, not least because we live quite close by and we know people who live even closer. If they are to be submerged in an inundation of Somerset Levels proportions we wanted to know about it. So we checked, online, with the Environment Agency to assess our risk.

Well it turns out that if

you live at the junction of Hinckley Road and Wyngate Drive then you may need to have a flood plan and keep all your valuable photographs and mementos in the loft because

the Braunstone Brook is your nemesis and it flows REALLY close by you. It travels all the way from Braunstone Park, through those big ponds, along the inner ring road, round right next to the Sir Charles Napier and into the Fosse Road Recreation Ground. However, the Environment Agency did make it clear that if the house near me were to flood then there would be some pretty serious problems for the rest of the city. Ark style problems, problems that would keep us from our fish and chips and that will never do.

So what have we learned? Well, the Environment Agency website really does tell you where it might flood, but more importantly on the deep fried front, I've discovered that if you order a kids meal of fish bites at the chippy, you get more fish than if you order a small cod and chips. Result!

Helen Knott



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Local Hair and Nail Awards

West Leicester is the place to be if you are in need of a stylish hairdresser or some first class pampering. Two National competitions prove our salons are up there with the best.

A hair stylist from a leading West Leicester salon has just won a top industry award.

Shelley Manley who works for Malcolm Murphy Hair on Hinckley Road was selected as one of the six winners of the Clynol Protégé team competition.

She beat thousands of other entries that culminated in a

live hairdressing face off at the ASK Academy in London in January. The Clynol Protégé Team are the very best of young hairdressing talent from leading Clynol salons across the country.

With a judging panel of industry-leading names, they whittled down a promising long list of hopefuls to a select team who represent the best cutting and styling work in the UK. Shelley will now represent Malcolm Murphy Hair in the Protégé Team for a year, during which she will get valuable professional experience and opportunities including special seminars, photo shoots and a high level of industry media coverage.

And another popular salon is also in the running to win a prestigious industry award. On Hinckley Road - The Sunshine Studio's Nicola Coleman has been nominate for Scratch Magazine's Services to the Nail Industry Awards. Nicola is a finalist in the national competition run by one of the industries biggest magazines and will be attending the London Award ceremony in May.

Nicola is taking on some stiff competition from some of the top artists from the world of nail technology. Nicola has developed quite a reputation with her work appearing in magazines and online.



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February Police Update

The Smart View with Sgt. Rod Smart

The past few weeks have seen a few staffing changes across the three police teams that cover the area of this publication. PCSO Karen Mason (nee Milner) has left the Western Park Ward to become a Public Protection Officer, managing the dangerous and unpleasant people of this City. Karen has been replaced by PCSO Steve Jackson, who has moved over from the Westcotes Ward. I have handed over the responsibility of the Western Park and Fosse Wards to Sgt Julie Strong, to take over the Westcotes Ward from Sgt Simon Barnes who has left the force. Sgt Strong was responsible for the Fosse Ward in 2009 and 2010 and is delighted to be coming back to the beat.

Overnight on 5 January a number of garages were broken into on Dennis Close. Some of the garages had been left insecure by the owners and bolt croppers had been used on others. Local residents are urged to ensure that sheds, garages and outbuildings are properly secured, especially those in secluded areas. Your local policing team can be contacted on 101 for crime prevention advice.

Over two days from 10 to 11 January, four homes on the Westcotes Ward were burgled due to the occupants leaving the doors unlocked, three of them overnight. The following night, there was a small spate of burglaries on the Fosse Ward, north of Groby Road. It may seem obvious, but please make sure that you lock doors and windows to make life more difficult for the criminals out there.

On 13 January a shop on Woodgate was burgled during the evening. Thanks to an observant member of the public, the police were able to catch the offender as he ran off. A 43 year old New Parks man has been charged with burglary. In the early hours of 19 January, a taxi driver was abused by his passengers on King Richards Road. A passing police vehicle intervened and two women were arrested. As a result of this a twenty four year old New Parks woman was charged with assaulting a police officer and being drunk and disorderly and a twenty six year old New Parks woman was issued a fixed penalty notice for disorderly behaviour.

On 31 January a fire broke out in a flat on Fosse Road North. Fire fighters attended and found a cannabis factory containing approximately two hundred and fifty plants. It is believed that the fire was caused due to the offender's electrical skills. This is a timely reminder of the dangers of cannabis factories and we would ask member of the community to be vigilant and to let us know if they see or smell anything suspicious.

Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



What's the most dangerous thing in the garden? I am often asked to identify toxic plants in the gardens of anxious parents and the odd disgruntled spouse. But in my opinion the thing most likely to maim or injure is pruning. Worryingly, now's the time to finish winter pruning fruit trees and cutting back plants, like *Cornus alba* and *Buddleja davidii*, before the spring forces them back into life.

Pruning requires sharp tools, often in combination with a ladder and sometimes motorised equipment. Another frequently asked question is "What's wrong with my chainsaw?" The usual answer is "you!" Few chainsaw owners realise the fastest way to blunt a blade using it near soil. Even fewer know how to service or sharpen their machine. And what about protective equipment? Kevlar trousers, boots



and combination helmet? How is it in today's health and safety conscious environment anyone can buy a chainsaw without any training? I'm amazed there aren't more backyard amputations. Want to buy a chainsaw? Then first book a training course, it'll be an education that might keep your limbs located in the right place.

Things aren't always safer without an engine. You're much more likely to land in A&E with a thorn injury gone septic than accidentally ingesting Wolfsbane. I know, that's happened to me-twice! Plants have other defences as well. The leaves and stems of *Viburnum rhytidophyllum* are covered in irritating white fibres.

So when I recently had to reduce a large specimen I wore a dust mask, but still had to stop and wash those tiny sharp hairs from my eyes half a dozen times. It could have been worse, I did hear of a tree surgeon who had a week off work after pruning a *Umbellularia californica*, also known as the Headache tree!

Pruners, be careful out there!

Tony Huxley



*Viburnum
rhytidophyllum*

Martin Page

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PARKING CHAOS

Western Park residents say they are finding it harder to park outside their own homes following the introduction of restricted parking in Westcotes last year.

The scheme which aims to improve parking in the Westcotes area has had the effect of pushing cars into Western Park which does not have a residents parking scheme. One resident on Sykefield Avenue said: "Parking wasn't brilliant around here but now it's worse. People who work in town park up and walk in or get a bus from here instead. It was a bit of a problem - now it's a nuisance. People who parked in Westcotes now park up here. I think these parking plans are just a way of forcing people onto public transport and making up a couple of extra traffic warden jobs... It's going to creep up here just to thin out the parking which was caused by the Westcotes scheme in the first place. And I'm going to have to pay to park outside my own house."

City Mayor Sir Peter Soulsby said he would ask Western Park residents if they wanted a permit parking scheme after local councilor Susan Barton contacted him. She said: "As a local resident this affects me too. I've been warning about the negative, knock-on impact the new scheme would have for the last year. I've persuaded the Mayor to ask people on Western Park side of Fosse Rd South about the problems this is causing. He has agreed to do this as soon as possible and not wait until the end of the 18 month experimental period."



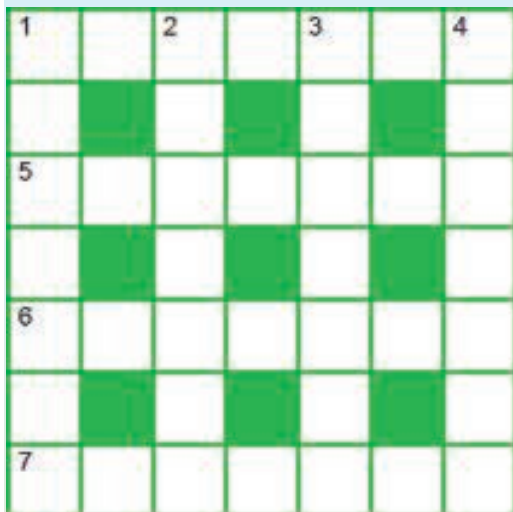
Councillor Susan Barton

"I have had letters both for and against residents parking. I do hope everyone will respond to any survey or consultation as what happens next will depend on their views."

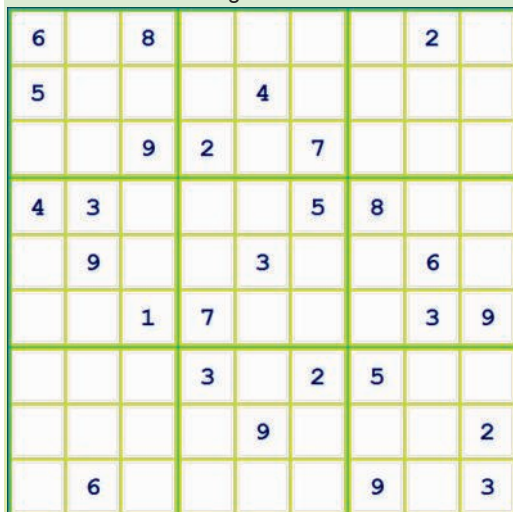
The Western Park Gazette

editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk

BRAIN *TAZERS*



Across: 1. Reciprocal 5. Defeat 6. Feed 7. Himalayan mount **Down:** 1. Infuriate 2. Speculation 3. Mundane 4. Hearing distance



1. Add a four letter word to make three longer ones. Rate, Sty, Ration.
 2. Data Crypt Kiss is an anagram of which celebration?
 3. Which two letters follow next? A B E F I O P ??
 4. Dad is in Jail, Mum is bankrupt, their son had to sell his hotel & their daughter is delighted. Why?
 5. No flesh, feathers, scales or bone but fingers and thumbs of my own. What am I?
- (Answers at www.westernparkgazette.co.uk)



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