



Cyclo-cross Returns to Western Park Page 4

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Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the October edition of the Gazette.

The nights are certainly now drawing in, and with the clocks going back, appropriately enough on Halloween, 2021 is nearly spent. Frankly, we're glad to see the back of it and its predecessor.

Talking of Halloween, we take a look at some of the more haunted areas of Leicester, only a headstones throw off our doorstep, Paul Towers has a rundown of some of the Christmas shows in Leicester and beyond (Yes, it's that time again!) and we feature the return of cyclo-cross to Western Park for the first time in 20 years. Project Hive has their update, and Western Park's Pop-up Pub returns.

We welcome Tony Shelley on board as our local history contributor and Shauna Ashton from the Fosse policing team, will keep us up to date with their work across West Leicester.

As always, Carey Tunstall has the month's gardening, advice and Helen Knott loses it over midnight fireworks. And the ever present Braintazing sudoku and crossword lurk on the inside pack page.

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Events Diary

Free Thurs Club: 2pm. **Meet & Eat:** Weds 5pm. Robert Hall, 147 Narborough Rd.

Hall @ St Anne's, Letchworth Rd: Knit & Natter: 1.30pm, 4th Tues. **Tues Drop-in:** 1.30-3.00pm, 3rd Tues. **Weds Club:** 2.30pm, 1st Weds. **Musical**

Memory Box: 1st & 3rd Tues 10.15am **Pram Club:** Weds 9.30-11.00am. **Fri Coffee Morns:** 10.00am.

Free Tea/Coffee @ Community Hub: Weds, 2- 4pm. **Finding Friends:** 4th Mon. St Paul's & St Augustine's Centre, Kirby Rd.

Free drop-in Coffee Morns: Tues. 10-12 noon. St. Andrew's Methodist Church, Glenfield Rd East.

Perfectly Edible UK's Community Shop. Fri & Sat. Fri 11-2/3pm. West End Centre, Andrewes Street.

Pumpkin Roll: 30 Oct, 2pm, Western Park

Upstairs @ Western: Improv Upstairs - 27th Oct. **Quintessence - 29 Oct, Flinch - 19 Nov.**

Diwali Light Switch-on: 24 Oct, 5.30, Golden Mile

Abbey Park Firework Night: 6th Nov.

Curve: The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe 2-13 Nov. Who Cares - 8-10 Nov, Harpy - 11-12 Nov.

@DM Hall: Joel Dommert -28 Oct, John Lydon -29 Oct, River Dance - 31 Oct, Collabro - 4 Nov

Little Theatre: Private Lives 18-13 Nov, Made in Dagenham 16-20 Nov, Cinderella - 10th Dec-2 Jan.

Y Theatre: Slim King - 27 Oct. Jean Toussaint 6tet - 28 Oct, Tez Ilyas - 29 Oct, Desi Comedy - 31 Oct

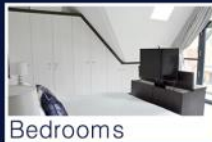
Snowman & The Snowdog: Newark Houses Museum, 13 Nov-20 Feb.

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3-2-1-GO!

Cyclo-cross returned to Western Park on Sunday 10th October for the first time in over 20 years.

Around 300 riders joined in this Leicestershire Road Club organised event, with category races for ages and abilities, as part of Round 2 in Leicestershire Cyclo-cross League's showcase autumn season, taking place in parks and stately homes across the county.

The Western Park event was organised by Gary Coltman who remembers winning races on the park back in the 80's. Followed by a successful career as a professional rider with both British Cycling and most recently as Cycling Scotland's Head of Performance.



Bringing cyclo-cross back to the park was supported by Ride Leicester who organised a free bike try-out with disability cycling charity Wheels for All, British Cycling's Go Ride team and Soar Valley Cycles who provided a free bike-fix for park users and residents. All part of the City Council supported programme to promote cycling as active travel for health, access and fun.



The Area Parks Team helped to design a course showcased our fabulous park and to provide an event promoted to local schools, community groups and families from surrounding neighbourhoods. New College provided car parking facilities for riders arriving from further afield.

Alongside Leicester Cycle Circuit at New College, Western Park Trails the park is an increasingly popular destination for cycling, walking, cricket, football, petanque and bowls. If feedback from the event is positive, future cyclo-cross events are planned in 2022. The views of park users and residents are welcome, and all offers of support, sponsorship and additions for future events are welcomed by the event organisers via cycle-city@leicester.gov.uk **A. Salkeld**

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KNOTT'S LANDING

We'll soon be lighting up the sky. Diwali, Bonfire Night and New Year, are just around the corner, and I love it! I love fireworks. I love the joy of those little points of light in the night sky. I love the smell of a freshly detonated Roman Candle. I love the chest thumping boom of a big one going off in the sky. I love the slightly naughty feeling you get when you have a box of fireworks at home, entirely legally purchased for Bonfire night. It feels so grown up!

Fireworks are an artform and a joyous celebration of human ingenuity and chemistry, dating back over twelve hundred years, to a time when people in China threw bamboo stems into a fire to hear them explode during festivals.

What I don't love, is people who set fireworks off at midnight on a weekday in the summer. We don't celebrate July the 4th, so what level of self-ish arse have you unlocked to think you can wake up babies, upset dogs, freak out cats and terrify pensioners miles from your home because of what is, at best, a family celebration and at worst you



prattling about with fire? It's not even a reasonable time. Midnight is not a time for you to be creating the kind of noise that requires ear defenders. It wakes people up and upsets them. I mean it's pretty bad having to try and get a grumpy baby off to sleep again at 10pm but midnight? That's actual torture of a parent who has to trudge off to work the next day.

Lets talk about ex-servicemen too. I know we don't have too many around here, but the area round my Dad's house is full of them. Lots have PTSD in some form when it comes to loud bangs for obvious reasons. Your cheeky midnight firework has got some poor bugger hiding under their bed, sweating and experiencing flashbacks.

Did you know there are silent fireworks? I didn't, Wikipedia did. Apparently, they're the same as normal fireworks, but don't tear you a new earhole when they explode. The Italian town of Collecchio switched in 2015.

I would never seek to ban fireworks, but we need to start being less selfish when we use them outside of the traditional celebrations. Everyone needs rules – these are mine - in addition to anything a firefighter says to you.

Only use fireworks before 10pm.

Warn people in homes around you if you are going big with the fireworks.

Don't be a knob.

Helen Knott

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FADING WITH TIME

On a recent delve into my photographic archives, I came upon a series of images that were made in one of Leicester's old hosiery districts - Watling Street, just south of Abbey Park.

Over a 100 years ago, and until the last decades of the 20th century, Leicester was at the centre of a huge, world-wide hosiery industry. Corahs, Benteleys, Wolsey and the others have long since faded into the past, but some of their buildings are still in use like Monfort Knitting Mills on Tudor Road which was repurposed into flats.

Others have not been so lucky, but walk along Watling Street and look beyond the graffiti and there, literally carved in stone, was the signs of the old Robinson and Pickford building, which began operating in 1928 and finally came to an end in 1972, with the loss of over 200 employees, as the company made a loss

in excess of £104,000, a small fortune in those times. What struck a chord with me when I saw the signs, was that this company was on a list I was given in 1969, as a possible employer for a school leaver. Hosiery, shoes, or printing were the three prominent trades back then. I chose the latter, but that industry also went into steep decline in the late 1970's.



After Robinson and Pickford closed, the building was occupied by another hosiery company, but it eventually closed for good in the late 1980's, becoming another nail in the coffin of one of the city's prime industries.

It's such a shame that carved signs like these can't be saved. For they are signposts of our industrial heritage, and the hosiery trade has been synonymous with the city of Leicester for many, many generations.

Tony Shelly

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A HAUNTING WE WILL GO

As Halloween draws ever closer our thought can drift towards things that go bump in the night. And Leicester, with its long uneven history, has quite a few of those.

There are apparently haunted spots only a few minutes walk from the West End, so do you fancy a spooky stroll into the unknown?

Friars Mill, one of the oldest wool mills in Leicester, on the bank of the Soar, was built over the site of an old 13th century Dominican priory known as The Black Friars. The question is, has the regeneration into smart office spaces made the Phantom Friar homeless?

There are dark tales dating back to at least the 1970s, when early morning cleaners could catch a shadowy, dim figure out of the corner of their eye; wooden cotton bobbins mysteriously clatter across the floor and, as the temperature drops to freezing in a store room, a cowed, transparent figure lurks in the gloom.

If the current tenants of Friars Mill have bumped into the mysterious monk, they could always make the short hop to Wygston's House on Jubilee Square for a quick revive to steady their nerves, or for another



trip into Leicester's Twilight Zone.

Built in 1490, some of the original building still stands with many extensions bolted on over the next 300 years. It became a costume museum in 1974 and it was then that something nicknamed 'Jonathon' makes its appearance.

The museum was popular with school parties. The kids would dress up to experience the life and times of days gone by. Sometimes, they would be joined by a young boy of about 10 dressed in Georgian clothes. The kids would play hide and seek with 'Jonathon', not realising he wasn't actually there.

Staff said 'Johnathon' could be quite stropky at times. On one occasion, witnesses say, a large chair swung around in a complete circle, untouched by human hands and that sometimes the sound of a sobbing small child echoed around the building.

Wygston's House is now a busy and popular venue, but the strangeness hasn't stopped. One evening during the covid restrictions, staff member, Elliot Hornby, glanced to his left into a side room. He said: "I saw a man leaning over the fireplace smoking a cigar. I looked back down before it occurred to me that everybody was meant to be outside and there's no smoking indoors."



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"A second later I looked back up and the room was empty".

Another historic building which has found new life as a restaurant is Braunstone Hall which dates back to 1775. Once the home of the Winstanley family, the hall has gained a reputation for supernatural events.

One evening in 1922, an ethereal figure in white robes was spotted quickly entering a bedroom. It was suggested that the figure was the ghost of novice nun, 18 year old, May Winstanley who died of consumption in 1899. There were ongoing stories of silent black horse drawn carriages vanishing into the dead of night and odd feelings of being followed. At one point, when the hall became a school in the 1930s, the tales continued with reports of poltergeist phenomena. Pencils flipped in the air, girls pigtailed were yanked by a mysterious force and workmen's tools disappeared. It also seems that the Lady in White didn't go away either. She was spotted by the caretaker on a regular basis to such an extent that he got quite used to seeing her.

This Halloween, as the children dress up to go trick or treating, it's just possible that when they knock on a door, something might knock right back!



POP-UP PUB RETURNS

Western Park Beer Festival's Pop-Up Pub will return to St Anne's Church Hall on Saturday 13 November.

This will be the festival committee's first event since September 2019, after their regular PUP in March 2020 was cancelled due to the national lockdown.

Selina Conroy, the festival chairman, said: "We're really looking forward to seeing our friends and neighbours to help us raise a few glasses for local causes."

"This year, with certain restrictions in place, we'll be holding a ticketed event, just for adults. We're hoping that once things are more settled we'll be able to hold a full festival in September 2022 with a family session."

The November event will be divided into two sessions. The first will be from 5pm to 8pm, and the second from 8pm to 11pm, with a maximum of 150 people per sitting. People can pay to attend both.

With a minimum of 16 beers on cask and keg, plus cider, wine and soft drinks, there will also be crisps, samosas and bhajis.

The hall's windows and doors will be open throughout the event, as requested by the hall management. And while people will not have to wear face masks, they're encouraged to do so if queuing or walking around.

Search for Western Park Beer Festival on Facebook for more info.

 **BACK FOR 2021!**

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HELP THIS WINTER

Deputy city mayor and Westcotes Councillor, Sarah Russell, has welcomed £3.4million allocated to the city through the government's Household Support Fund. The hope is that it will help ensure that 26000 of those on the lowest incomes will be able to pay their winter fuel bills.

The funding will support the city's most vulnerable households by paying for top-up cards for pay-as-you-go meters or used to make payments directly to energy companies.

"There's been lots of publicity about the huge increase in energy prices this winter, and we know that this will have a significant impact on the most vulnerable families and individuals in our city," said Cllr Russell.

"People are already in a tough situation, and many families on low incomes are only just about getting by, so bigger fuel bills will push some people into crisis."

The funding came too late to help during the half term break, due to the amount of time it takes to organise a food scheme, so each eligible child will be given a £15 food voucher which can be used in a selection of supermarkets.

Cllr Russell added: "We're already working on a food and activity programme for the Christmas break and February half-term, which we hope will

support all the families on low incomes who are just about managing to cope in these challenging times."

WOODGATE COMMUNITY FOOD

Woodgate Community Food continues to operate a foodbank for anyone who is struggling and needs a little extra help. You can collect a top up food parcel on Saturdays between 11am and 12.30pm from Rally House, 125 Bonchurch Street, Leicester, LE3 5EG. If you are isolating due to covid please contact the foodbank.



The foodbank always welcomes volunteers and donations, so if you can help, please contact them on woodgatecommunityfood@gmail.com

They always welcome donations of long-life foods such as: tins (baked beans, chopped tomatoes, spaghetti hoops), tinned meat, tinned tuna, pasta, rice, pasta sauce and breakfast cereals.

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CHRISTMAS IS CENTRE STAGE AGAIN

We all missed a traditional theatrical Christmas last year, so Leicester's theatres have really pushed the boat out for 2021.

Curve has, as usual, programmed two festive shows for the holidays. First up is the hotly anticipated revival of a classic of musical theatre, *A Chorus Line*, starring Adam Cooper, Carly Mercedes Dyer (Shug in the recent Curve production of *The Color Purple* and Anita in *West Side Story*) and directed by Nikolai Foster with choreography by Ellen Kane. This runs from 3-31 December. Especially for the younger members of the community is *The Smeds and The Smoos*. Adapted from the book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler this is a nice bite sized 55 minutes running from 1-31 December. Full details curve-online.co.uk

At **De Montfort Hall**, last year's panto, *Sleeping Beauty*, has been rescheduled. If you had tickets from last year, then they are valid for this year. Full details are on the website. The panto runs from 11 December to 3 January and stars Wendi Peters (Coronation Street), Mar-



tin Ballard, returning illusionists Matthew Pomeroy and Natasha Lamb and a whole host of Leicester favourites. For tickets and times demontforthall.co.uk

The Little Theatre also has its annual pantomime back this year. Devised and directed by John Bale, the ever-popular *Cinderella* will grace the stage in Dover Street from 10 December to 2 January. More info thelittletheatre.co.uk

The Y Theatre, in amongst its usual bands and comedians, has a special family show, *Santa's Best Ever Christmas*, on 10 & 11 December. Tickets at leicesterymca.ticketssolve.com

If you yearn to travel a little further afield for festive fun, **Loughborough Town Hall** are hosting *Aladdin* from 22 November - 2 January. Info at: loughboughtownhall.co.uk

In Coventry, **The Belgrade Theatre's** panto is *Beauty and The Beast* from 24 November - 8 January. This runs along side David Bradley as Scrooge in Simon Callow's adaption of *A Christmas Carol* from 13-23 December.

belgradetheatre.co.uk

In Nottingham, Robin Hood takes on the evil Sheriff at the **Theatre Royal** from 11 December - 9 January. trch.co.uk And *Beauty and The Beast* is the festive treat at Nottingham Playhouse.

nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk

Paul Towers

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**Oct Police Update**

The Fosse Ward has had a change of staff, and I've replaced PS Ed Jones who has moved onto a new role. Let me introduce



myself. I'm PS 4438 Shauna Ashton. I joined Leicester-shire Police in 2003, starting my service at Braunstone Police station before moving to Hinckley, performing a variety of roles from uniformed front line and as a Detective Constable. In 2019, I moved to Mansfield

House as a response Sergeant and earlier this month I took over on the Fosse Ward.

The Fosse team executed a search warrant on Marshall Street on Monday 4th October. Inside of the address Police found 276 cannabis plants with a street value of £193,200. A male was arrested, charged with production and is currently on remand awaiting a court date.

I want to highlight the dangers posed to the public from cannabis factories. They are a huge fire risk with by-passed meters, numerous cables liable to over-heat and unfortunately, there have been 3 house fires in last few months due to these cannabis factories.



Additionally, the team have been proactive; stopping and seizing 7 uninsured vehicles in the last month.

Court results, in October include 47 year old Kevin Johnson of Kate Street, who was sentenced to 3 years & 5 months at Leicester Crown Court on 5th October for sexual offences against a teenage girl. He was served with a lifetime Sexual Harm Prevention Order.

Four men have been sentenced to a total of 59 years behind bars for their involvement in a series of aggravated burglaries across Leicester. Lee Heane, Sonny Brogan, Paul Bray and Duncan Winklass will serve between 11 and 19 years each. A fifth man was found not guilty.

The convictions relate to serious incidents at 7 address including ones at Wentworth Road and another on Narborough Road South.

During the aggravated burglaries, the men forced entry into the properties, threatened occupants with weapons including metal poles, knives and screwdrivers and assaulted them, including a pregnant woman and a child.

Sgt Shauna Ashton

CAREY'S COMPOST CORNER



October already! and as the leaves are starting to fall, it's best to keep clearing them up as they can harbour fungal spores, snails and slugs. Some leaves can be collected in bags and stored to produce a rich mulch/leaf mould. The bags need to have holes in them to help with drainage, but if the leaves become dry, they do need to be dampened periodically which helps to speed up the breaking down process. Chestnut, Sycamore and Walnut leaves should be shredded, if possible before adding to the bags, as these take longer to rot down compared to Hornbeam, Oak and Beech, alternatively they can be picked up and shredded by your mower and added straight into the compost bin. If the bags of leaves are stored for two years or more, you get a good nutrient rich product which can then even be used for seed sowing. Otherwise, leaf mould of less than two years can be used as a good soil conditioner. I always store conifer needles separately as they take longer to break down but can be used as soil conditioner on acid loving plants (ericaceous) such as Pieris, Azaleas, Camellias and Blueberries.

Whilst the soil is still warm, I'll continue to split and divide perennials that have become too large or are

simply in the wrong place. This is best done after removing top growth and splitting with a sharp spade. I'm also continuing to tidy other perennials by removing dead leaves and top growth but (and it's a big but) I'm not doing this everywhere, as I like to leave a few areas with dead leaves on to provide much needed shelter through the winter for wildlife.

Additionally, I like to re-use my aged bamboo sticks by sawing them up into approx. 15 cm lengths, tying them in bundles and placing them around the garden for extra shelter for invertebrates. Remember those leaves that we diligently gathered? Another option (although it does take longer to break down) is an open compost heap. This can be created in a less windy corner of the garden surrounded by twigs and small branches, which stops the leaves blowing straight back onto your lawn and can provide shelter for a wide range of wildlife like hedgehogs and invertebrates. And finally, I'm cleaning out my birdhouses, removing any debris and giving them a scrub to remove any pests and diseases. On cold nights birds such as wrens do take shelter in them, and the birds will repay your kindness by removing pests from your garden throughout the year.



Carey Tunstall

Martin Page

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BRAIN TAZERS

1		2		3		4
5						
6						7
8						

1 Across: Eight sided **1 Down:** King of Thebes **2D:** Capacity of a vat **3D:** Units of volume **4D:** Neither **5A:** Something that hangs loosely **6A:** Seaman's wool jacket **7D:** 2000 pounds **8A:** Blended family offspring © Paul Towers 2021

Answers at www.westernparkgazette.co.uk

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

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