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Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of the Western
Park Gazette!

This month, the axe finally fell on the old Empire Hotel. It stood for 184 years, outlasting kings, queens and world wars to be replaced by a Lidl discount store which will last maybe 20 years if it's lucky. Good for local choice and regeneration, certainly, but a kick in the teeth for the uniqueness of our area. Even though a massive amount of consultation was done, it seems that most residents aren't really bothered about losing this major West End Georgian building.

Roger Blackmore rambles through Leicestershire's National Forest history, Tony Huxley, the Garden Guru, discovers the delights of prehistoric ferns, Helen Knott "Sticks it to the man", as she calls it, in her ongoing battle to popularise doorstep milk deliveries, Rod Smart from Hinckley Road police station has the update on local crime and their latest arrests, our local 43rd Scout Group go camping at Ullesthorpe and a local hairdresser has won one of the country's top awards.

Of course, the Brain Tazers lurk at the back.

If you have a local story or event to publicise drop a line to: editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk Visit www.westernparkgazette.co.uk or follow us on Twitter @mygazette and Facebook by searching for the Western Park Gazette.

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To Contact - Call 07939 115 724

e: editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk

e: sales@westernparkgazette.co.uk

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Events Diary

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's Cool Swing Band: 1st Sun Monthly. Café Chino at Hilton Hotel, Meridien. 1-3.30pm.

17-20th Sept: Leic International Music Fest. New Walk Mus & Gallery. W.musicfestival.co.uk

20th Sept: T-Rextacy. Y Th. W.leicesterymca.co.uk

24th Sept: Lets Hang on. De Mont Hall. 7.30pm. 0116 233 3111.

27th Sept: St. Anne's Autumn Fair. 11-2pm. Church Hall. Free entry.

27th Sept: How to Read a Poem. Westcotes Lib. 12-2pm. **Death & Some Poems.** Fosse Lib. 1.30-3.30.

Both Free but book. W:leicester.gov.uk/libraries

29th Sept-4th Oct: A Taste of Honey. Little Theatre. W:littletheatre.net

3rd Oct: Westcotes History Group. Westcotes Lib. 10-12 Noon. Free.

5th Oct: The Princes in the Tower. Guildhall. 2pm. 0116 253 2569.

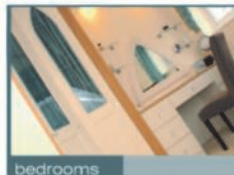
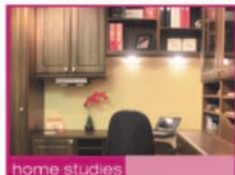
6-11th Oct: Singing in the Rain. Little Theatre. W:littletheatre.net

12th Oct: Diwali Lights Switch On. Cossington St. Rec. Free.

25th Oct: 50/50 Auction in aid of St. Anne's Hall. Viewing -11.30-1.30. Auction 2.00pm.

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GONE BY CHRISTMAS

Plans to save the historic Empire Hotel on Fosse Road North have failed as Leicester City Council Planning Committee gave a 6-2 go-ahead for its demolition.

Leicester Civic Society had hoped to save the Georgian building from being bulldozed making way for a new Lidl supermarket by persuading the German retail giants and city council planners to incorporate the former hotel and spar into their designs.

Lidl's plan which also includes the demolition of the fire damaged St. Augustine's Church is to build a modern discount store providing up to 40 local jobs. They say the development will help regenerate the local area and add to consumer choice but incorporating the Empire building is untenable since it did not conform to their retail model and any other plans were far too costly.



While there is clear and proven support for Lidl's proposals, many local residents and the Planning Committee would have preferred to retain the Empire's facade, however Lidl have been unwilling to change their plans to that extent.



The Empire was built as a spa/hotel and later became a home for the family of Leicester property magnate Isaac Harrison, who originally constructed it in the 1830's. The building and St. Augustine's Church are on the council's list of heritage sites so the Leicester West MP, Liz Kendall, sent out over 1200 survey forms to gauge local opinion but less than 10% responded.

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Out of those that did, 76% were in favour and 24% against. City planners received 158 objections and 68 supporting comments. Lidl's own public consultation on their plans were heavily endorsed by 394 out of 420 responding.

Additional work has still to be carried out to assess and plan traffic flow around the new store following concerns over potential bottlenecks along Fosse Road North.

Lidl intend to start clearing the sight as soon as possible and should be finished by the end of the year with the new store open by summer 2015.

Email your comments to:

editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk



COUNCILLORS' SURGERIES

Fosse Cllrs Surgery: Monthly, 2nd Sat, 10.30-11.30 at Woodgate Residents Association. No surgery in August.

Westcotes Cllrs Surgeries: Westcotes Library, 1st Sat each month, 10.30 - 11.30am and 4th Fri each month, 10am-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

Meet your local councillors and find out what's going on in our area.

Western Park

Tues 7th Oct 2014 at 7.pm St. Paul's & St. Augustine's Worship Centre, Kirby Road.

Westcotes

Date to be confirmed at 7.pm. The East West Community Project, Wilberforce Road.

Fosse

3rd Dec from 6.00pm. Venue To be confirmed.
More details at: www.leicester.gov.uk

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National Forest

It is now almost twenty years since the formation of the National Forest Company.

The sizeable suburb of Leicester Forest East is well known to many - more so than its tiny near namesake: Leicester Forest West - a couple of miles further out on the A 47. Of course, motorists using the M1 are well acquainted with the LFE Motorway Services, but what is the history of the Leicester Forest which gave its name to these parts?

The original extent of Leicester Forest lay roughly between the valley of the River Soar to the south and that of the Rothley Brook to the North. It actually appears in the Domesday Book as "Hereswode". By the 14th century it had passed into the hands of the Earls of Leicester and was a favourite hunting ground of John of Gaunt. In all the forest extended to over 5000 acres.



Obviously, there were many more trees in the forest in those days and Leicester folk had gained the right to gather wood in the "frith" - a name which readers will recognize from many local names such as Braunstone Frith and Glenfrith.

Over the years the area of woodland declined and by Tudor times various parts of the Forest had been enclosed as hunting parks. The topographer John Leland writing in about 1540 mentions several of these by name including "Bellemontes Leye", Barn Park between Desford and Kirby Muxloe, and Tooley Park near Earl Shilton. Another such enclosure, the Frith Park, became known as the New Park, which eventually gave its name to the housing estate built in the twentieth century. In 1628 King Charles 1st sanctioned the deforestation of the area and since then large areas of the forest have been sold off for farming and more recently for housing. So all over the area may still be found moated farmhouses and other farms with traces of old masonry in their houses and outbuildings.

Thus here on the western outskirts of the city we live on the fringe of an area, rich in history, where our forebears foraged for wood to keep the home fires burning.

© Roger Blackmore

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KNOTT'S LANDING

Four pints of milk costs around a pound at most supermarkets all year round and I'm struggling to understand how it is possible.

It costs a lot to look after a cat or a guinea pig so it must cost quite a lot to look after a herd of cows properly. In winter and spring you need supplementary food for when the grass isn't good, bedding when the cows are inside, there are vets bills to pay, the farmer has to earn a living, cows need 'servicing' with a bull to get them pregnant to keep the milk supply going. I'm sure there are lots of other costs involved that I can't even imagine right now. So how can a supermarket charge 95p for four pints?

When I visit my mum in Somerset I see milk tankers going all over the place picking up milk and taking it back to big processing plants. It seems there are very few ways of ensuring you get local milk. For years I have had my milk delivered by the milkman from Kirby and West on King Richards Road and back in the day it was local milk. They had a herd and everything. Now the milk comes in Dairy Crest bottles and it is bought in. This is a shame on so many levels, not least because now you don't get to read the names of the companies from far away on the bottles. It was a huge treat to find a bottle from Wales or Manchester amongst our Kirby and West bottles. We should probably get out more but sometimes it's the little things that make you smile.

Habits change, people buy food in different ways now to 20, even 10 years ago, and the cost of everything has increased, except milk is getting cheaper in the supermarkets. It's called a loss leader I'm told. A product is priced to produce little or no profit to ensure you go to the store and buy other stuff you don't need. You know, the quick stop for milk and bread that costs you £30 and includes a pack of sushi, 'naice' ham, a bottle of wine and two for one boxes of cereal you don't normally eat.

The supermarkets are manipulating us with their prices and I don't like being manipulated so I'm sticking it to the man and buying my milk on the doorstep in the hope that a farmer somewhere will get paid properly, a milkman will still have a job and I don't have to go to the supermarket for an emergency shop!

You should try it. It's loads cheaper in the long run. © Helen Knott



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Malcolm Murphy Scoop Awards

Hinckley Road Salon Top in the Country

The Malcolm Murphy Hair salon on Hinckley Road has been recognised for their outstanding work serving the Leicester community by winning the Best Local Salon title at this year's Creative HEAD magazine's Most Wanted Awards.

The salon picked up its award from one of the hairdressing industry's major creative and business talent competitions earlier this month at the final hosted by comedian Jack Whitehall at Tate Modern in London.

An audience of more than 700 VIPs from the worlds of hair, fashion and the media saw Malcolm Murphy Hair impressing the industry judges with their Ten Acts of Hope initiative, including skydiving, abseiling and even tattooing the charity's logo on a salon member, raising thousands for cancer research in the process.

In addition to the coveted Most Wanted Best Local Salon trophy, Malcolm Murphy Hair will now enjoy a year-long run of publicity in the Creative HEAD magazine and their additional media, making sure that the local name of Malcolm Murphy becomes a nationally recognized brand.

Creative HEAD publisher, Catherine Handcock said: "Hairdressers are famous for their generous natures, but Malcolm Murphy Hair took community spirit to new heights. This is a salon that genuinely believes in giving back".

Joe Causier from Malcolm Murphy Hair who has also won the Leicester Mercury Young achiever award in 2012 said: "This is the best thing that has happened in my whole career. We have such an amazing team, it's the pinnacle of everything.

"Beating out competition from all over the UK; it has really raised the style stakes for Leicester".

After the Most Wanted awards-giving, hairdressing's coolest names partied the night away at Tate Modern – a fitting venue to celebrate the accomplishments of these thrilled and very local industry stars.



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A New Season Upstairs

With my favourite intimate theatre space closed for the summer I was excited to be invited to Upstairs at The Western for the launch of their Autumn 2014 season and the unveiling of the refurb of the theatre itself.

During the recent heat wave the Western elves have been busy putting in raked seating, lowering the stage and resiting the stage lights to enable improved lighting design.

This is all in preparation for the new season of original plays, visiting performances and a host of community artistic projects and workshops.

Off The Fence's very successful in house productions of England Expects and Clamber Up The Crucifix, both created to commemorate the start of World War One a hundred years ago, are back prior to extensive UK tours.

Alongside tried and trusted genres Upstairs is mixing in some new ideas. Leicester Rugby legend George Chuter is doing a Q&A session with anecdotes from his illustrious career on 16th Sept.



Conversation Garden

Dan Nicholas' hugely popular Conversation Garden returns from this year's Edinburgh fringe for a final round of chaos on 31 October and Blanchard's Balloon capitalises on the success of last season's puppetry workshops for the young with performances aimed at the 8-15's and the over 16's on 15th November.

There are also the regularly popular poetry evenings, open mike nights and writing workshops encouraging both amateurs and semi-professionals to have a go and entertaining an audience

In between all that there are a myriad of visiting companies covering a wide range of subjects from Alzheimers (from Robert Gee on 2 October) to Stockholm Syndrome (Inside on 25 October) to homelessness (Bag Lady 23/24 October) and many more.

All listings can be found on the Western website: www.upstairsatthewestern.com

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A Camping We Will Go!

During the August Bank Holiday weekend, the 43rd Scout Group based out of St. Peter's Church Hall off Hinckley Road, took 60 beavers, cubs, scouts, explorers, parents, siblings and leaders to Ullesthorpe Scout Campsite for their annual Family Camp.

The Friday night was spent putting up the tents, some of the young Beavers had never slept under canvas before so were very excited! Cubs, Scouts and Explorers were responsible for their own tents and must have done a fantastic job as all were still standing on the last morning.

7am Saturday morning saw many Cowboys and Indians running around the campsite as everyone went all out in fancy dress for the Wild West themed weekend. Purchasing what they needed from the Trading Post, all the different sections and parents worked together in teams to complete a range of challenges, earning the young people some of their activity and challenge badges along the way.



Some of the traditional scout activities enjoyed were; backwoods cooking, pioneering, bivouacking and map-reading. The group were also very lucky to have the Leicestershire County Scout Leaders comes out to the site to run the Kelly

Kettle challenge and to safely show the Beavers how to use a froe to create wood shavings for the fire.

No Scout Camp would be complete without the traditional campfire and Saturday night was spent around the fire, which had been expertly built by the explorers and scouts, with everyone singing as loud as they could! After the

camp fire, whilst some played capture the flag, others went on a walk with the Bat detectors to see what they could hear.

Sunday morning saw many tired Cowboys and Indians fill themselves up with pancakes and syrup, giving them the energy to put all the tents down and pack up the site in order to go home for a well deserved rest.

The 43rd Scout Group meet regularly at Saint Peters Church Hall, and are all about fun and adventure. They are always happy to accept new young people into their sections, or willing volunteers who may be interested to help out as a leader or as a member of their executive committee.

For more information please email:

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Abbey Social Club

Monthly second Wednesday of month. 1.45 – 3.45pm. Members 75p, Non-Members £1.00.

The Centre is also Available for Bookings

There are three rooms. The main room is particularly suitable for childrens' parties and other family events. The smaller rooms are ideal for meetings, small training events or teaching musical instruments. **Contact Centre for rates and availability or visit our website.**

For further information contact the Woodgate Residents Association, Woodgate Resources Centre, 36 Woodgate, Leicester LE3 5GE Tel. 253 0717 e: woodgateresidents@hotmail.com

Please visit our new website. www.woodgate.org.uk

The Woodgate Resources Centre is funded by Leicester City Council

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September Police Update

The Smart View with Sgt. Rod Smart

On 5 August, a 14 year old Braunstone youth was charged with theft and motoring offences, after a moped was stolen from outside an address on Tudor Road.

On 10 August a Mercedes was taken from outside of a house on Sykefield Avenue. The following day the vehicle was involved in a pursuit in the County where several police vehicles were damaged. Four men (one nineteen and three in their early twenties) from various areas of the city were arrested and have been charged with aggravated Taking a Vehicle Without the Owner's Consent.

At about 1am on 17 August a police officer on patrol spotted a man on the ground being kicked to the head and body by another on Glenfield Road. The victim declined to cooperate with the police so the twenty two year old offender from New Parks was charged with threatening behaviour.

On 18 August a twenty nine year old local man was arrested and charged with attempted burglary, following an incident at a local business on Fosse Road South.

On 24 August intruders were disturbed in the rear of a house in the Anstey Lane area. After a chase involving Hinckley Road and Beaumont Leys officers four people were detained nearby. We are grateful to a number of members of the public who assisted officers, including helping to detain one of those involved. Enquiries are continuing.

In August, eighteen year old Leon Williams (of no fixed abode) was sentenced to two years and nine months imprisonment for robberies on the west side of the City, including one where a twenty year old student was beaten and robbed on the canal towpath near St Augustine Road.

We are pleased to report that a twenty three year old Braunstone man has received a five year custodial sentence for a spate of robberies across the area. The offences took place in the Fosse Road area and involved necklaces and other items of jewellery being snatched from victims.

For more information about policing in your area visit www.leics.police.uk/local-policing. Alternatively follow us on www.facebook.com/leicestercitypolice or Twitter on @LPWesternPark, LPFossePolice or LPWestcotesCops or email us at hinckleyrd.lpu@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk

Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



Our summer holiday proved that Cornwall is a great place to see what tropical plants can actually survive in England. This most southerly county is awash with stunning gardens, and in most of them you'll find tree ferns. They're incredible plants with woolly trunks and parasols of long lacy fronds that evoke rainforests and dinosaurs.

It's purely by chance that tree ferns established themselves in the most climatically welcoming part of the country. Tree ferns come from the southern hemisphere, and are native to Australia and New Zealand. During the early 20th century they were felled in large numbers and their logs used as ballast for ships returning to England. On reaching "Blighty" the logs were tossed onto the nearest beach. To the amazement of the locals they began to take root. Owners of



local estates like Heligan and Trengwainton had their gardeners drag them back as horticultural salvage. Many of the larger specimens seen today date back to that period and are now happily self seeding.

Dicksonia antarctica is the species usually seen for sale as it is the hardiest. Whilst fairly easy to propagate its slow growth, often only an inch an year, is reflected in the price tag. Because of illegal logging, it's important to make sure you buy one which is certified as sustainable sourced. They're usually sold as sections of fibrous trunk, which is actually a rhizome. This needs planting into moist, compost rich soil. Only the bottom few centimetres need to be buried so it's worth giving the trunk some support until the roots establish themselves. In hot weather, tree ferns benefit from having their trunks watered. They can be hardy down to -15c but will need their crowns insulated with straw and trunks wrapped in fleece.

That's all fern now - see you next time!

©Tony Huxley



Dicksonia Antarctica bud

Martin Page

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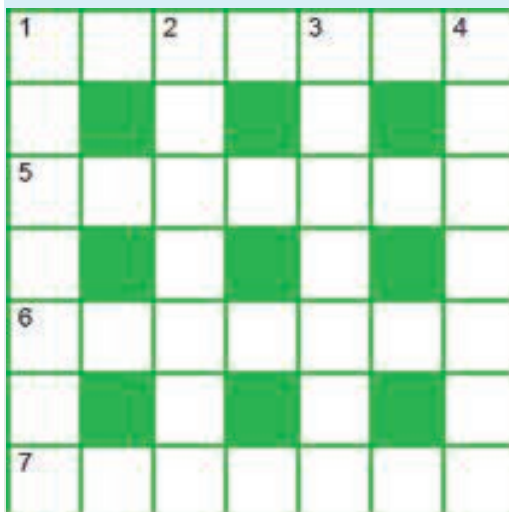
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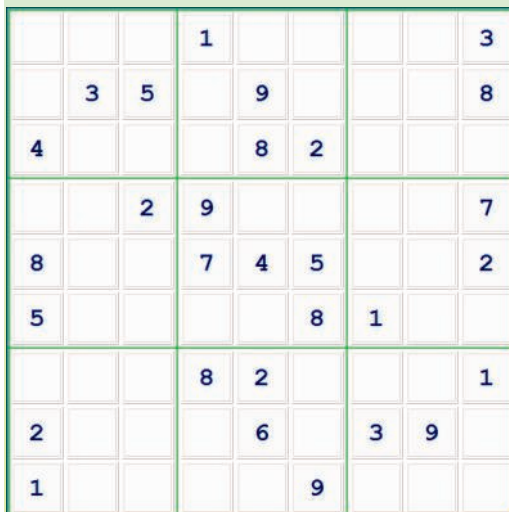
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1 Across. Staple of vegetarian dishes 1 Down. Campaigned 2. Jo Frost's step 3. Disco in hell? 4. Fairy drinks 5. Call a liar 6 Succeed as heir 7. Male non boarder © Paul Towers



1. What is this good advice? SPbeIRED.
 2. If it's raining at midnight will it be sunny in 72 hours?
 3. What is X? 16 06 68 88 X 98.
 4. You must choose between three rooms. The first is full of burning fires, the second of insane blood-thirsty assassins and the third of man eating tigers that haven't eaten in 3 years. Which room is the safest for you to go into?
 (Answers at www.westernparkgazette.co.uk)



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