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Conifer blown down on Western Park during January winds

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Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the first Western Park Gazette of 2015 and we're back to business now that the New Year festivities are done and dusted.

It's been a quiet start to the month, unless you were standing under the tree that got blown down in Western Park, but the fight is definitely on to rescue the Western Park Golf course from closure. Although it's one of the best laid out in the county, the council still wants to close it to save money however local golfers have other ideas. Inglehurst Junior School in Newfoundpool want to forge better links with the local community and Upstairs at the Western, Leicester's only pub theatre launches their Spring Season.

All our normal contributors have sobered up (More or less) and have put pen to paper: Roger Blackmore has the story of Laurie Wright, a Leicester born composer, who won an Ivor Novello Award for his work. Helen Knott remembers what it was like celebrating New Year from the top of a hill in Western Park and Tony Huxley wonders what increasingly warm all year weather can do our gardens. We also have the latest local policing update from Rod Smart at Hinckley Road Policing Unit and the Crossword, Sudoku and Brain Tazers lurk at the back.

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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, Meridian. 1-3.30pm.
Thursday Club: From 5th Feb. 2-4pm. Robert Hall, 147 Narborough Rd.
Mammoth Cake Sale: 30th Jan. St. Anne's Church Hall at 3.00pm.
Thrill of Love: 2-7th Feb. Little Theatre. More info at www.littletheatre.net
Dave's Comedy Festival: 4th-22nd Feb. Full details at www.comedy-festival.co.uk
COMEDY UPSTAIRS AT THE WESTERN
 Details at: www.upstairsatthewestern.com
Peter Antoniou's - Happy Medium: 6th Feb.
Graduated & Still Gaggling: 7th Feb.
Pariss-Political Incorrectness Gone Mad: 7th Feb.
Yours Desperately, Dan & Lydia: 13th Feb.
Find the Right Words: 18th Feb.
Those Magnificent Men: 20-21st Feb.

It Could Be Any One of Us: 11-14th Feb Ratae Co-operative Players. Leic Coll of Performing Arts. LE1 3UA. Tickets from 01664 420 147.
Woman in Black: Until 23rd Feb. Curve Theatre. w.curveonline.co.uk

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CHANGE YOUR MIND SIR PETER!

Over 270 people have signed an online petition to save Western Park Municipal Golf Course as campaigners mount a last ditch plea to halt the closure.

Petition organiser Martin Cobb said: "Valid arguments have been made to the Council and to the Mayor that would allow Western Park Course to stay open as a viable business. However, they are not listening because the decision has already been made. That's not good enough!"

Leicester City Council plans to shut the historic Scudmore Road site in October and pump some of the saved cash into the Humberstone Heights course instead. City Mayor, Sir Peter Soulsby, says Leicester can't afford to run two large golf courses as he looks for ways to cut the city's £2.9 million sports budget.

Campaigners point out that the majority of 3450 people who responded to two consultations were in favour of keeping both courses running.

The closure was talked through at a full council meeting and again later at a scrutiny committee after several councillors used the "call in" process



to challenge the Mayor's decision.

There are no current plans for the golf course land and it will be left as a park in the immediate future but Sir Peter admitted that building could eventually take place on some of it.

Petition at: <http://chn.ge/1KdPY5v>

LOCAL POLICING CHANGES

In February, Leicestershire Police will be undergoing a large restructuring leading to an enhancement in their neighbourhood services.

Many of the investigative staff will be moving from Hinckley Road police station to work from dedicated custody suites elsewhere in the county. They will be replaced by a number of additional local neighbourhood officers. These experienced PCs will be working alongside existing Beacon Officers and PCSOs to concentrate solely on neighbourhood issues, antisocial behaviour and crime prevention.

Hinckley Road Policing Unit will also welcome Inspector Nicky Preston back to the station. She was a Hinckley Road PC earlier in her career and following time as a sergeant in the city centre and as an Inspector running a response team, is returning to her roots. The team are also being joined by Sergeant Chris Brown, who will be taking over the Westcotes Ward.

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And Another One Down...

A forth ticket machine, part of the extension to the Westcotes Residents Parking Scheme, has been uprooted.

The machine was pulled out of the ground over the week-end of 10th January but has now been repaired by council engineers. This follows the vandalism of other machines in December.

The controversial scheme has proved unpopular with many who resent paying £25 a year for a parking permit, but Westcotes resident Joraber Sahota says many local people are in favour of the scheme and has received 18 signed endorsements from neighbours: "It's very popular and the residents would like it to be made permanent once the experimental stage has run its course".



Even a protective cover has been vandalised

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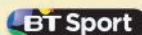
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Lawrence A Wright Tunesmith

It is surprising how many well known figures in the music world from Hugh Aston to Engelbert Humperdink, Kasabian and Sam Bailey are associated with the City of Leicester. Also ranking high on any list of musical worthies must surely be Leicester-born Lawrence Wright.

Lawrie Wright was born in 1888 into a musical family. Not only did his father run a music business in Conduit Street he soon taught his young son to play the banjo, mandolin, guitar and violin in addition to the piano. As a teenager, Lawrie borrowed money from his mother to set up a music business of his own, initially based on a stall in Leicester Market. Before long he expanded his enterprise to include a presence in other markets such as Hinckley, Loughbrough and Coalville. He was famous for singing aloud the songs for which he was selling the sheet music.

At the age of 17 he wrote his first song "Down by



the Stream" and it was not long before he was off to London establishing a shop in Denmark Street which was in time to become known as Tin Pan Alley.

Many of the songs which Lawrie was to write were penned under the pseudonym of Horatio Nicholls. Amazingly he is said to have written no fewer than 500 different titles, including such much loved favourites as "Old Father Thames" and "Among My Souvenirs." In 1926 he founded the music magazine "The Melody Maker" which many years later, in 2000, was to merge with the New Musical Express. He also published "The Pianoforte Tutor", a teaching aide, which sold over a quarter of a million copies.

In the 1920's Lawrence Wright became increasingly focussed on Blackpool, the town where he was to spend most of the rest of his life. Between 1924 and 1956 he presented his own summer show at Blackpool, where in 1964, at the age of seventy six, he died and was buried. Two years before his death he won an Ivor Novello Award for outstanding services to British popular music.

You can see the blue plaque honouring this great composer and publisher on the wall of the house where he was born in Conduit Street. Many of his songs are still performed all over the world.

© Roger Blackmore

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West Leicester based journalist and broadcaster
Helen Knott takes an uncharacteristically benevo-
lent view of New Year celebrations...

KNOTT'S LANDING

New Year's Eve is a strange time. It always looks so good on the TV. People having a great time, parties, kissing, music and fun right? Reality is a bit different and there are phases to it.

Kid – being allowed to stay up late thinking, “What on earth is all the fuss about. I get to drink Coke and eat snacks.”

Teenager – going to an overcrowded pub – getting drunk, maybe getting kissed, being disappointed that it's not more...

Before Kids – not going to a proper New Year's Eve party – getting drunk, maybe getting kissed, being disappointed it's not more...

After kids – asleep in your pyjamas and not caring because you've taken this long realising New Year's Eve is just disappointing.

Elder – knowing it's disappointing and either ignoring it or making it more exciting because you have enough cash to afford to make it fun.

I found a way of making it better years ago. Every New Year's Eve me and Mr. Helen stay home, then, depending on the weather, at about 11.30pm we would sling on our coats, wrap up warm, take a bottle of fizz and some plastic party glasses. Then we climb. We climb up onto Western Park, as high as we can get, and from our vantage point we watch the 360 degree firework display. We raise our glasses and toast the New Year and say hi to the handful of people who are up there in the dead of night. Over the years there were more and more fireworks and then just as it was getting really good we had a baby.

So now New Year's Eve is about pyjamas and sleep. Maybe I'll watch the Hootenany, maybe I'll get a few glasses of wine but mostly I spend it running from one side of the house to the other trying to catch a glimpse of the fireworks. They've gotten really good. Yes they go on a little late, start a little early, but they are good and getting better. It's a brilliant way to start the New Year, tiny sparkly beacons that light the way to the future, bangs to chase away the demons of the past, but I know that in a couple of years I'll be able to take all my family up to the park and climb until we can all watch the fireworks. Long may they continue.

Helen Knott



The Robert Hall Community Church on the corner of Narborough Road and Upperton Road in South West Leicester is locally famous for the big posters each month, amusing or provocative. If you travel on a bus, stopping at the cross-roads, you can't have missed them.

Minister Pam Bryan commented: "We have a versatile building with all sorts of community group activities, from Kick-boxing through African Drumming and Amateur Dramatics to Mums-and-toddlers groups, there's something going on.

EMBA COMMUNITY GRANT

With the aid of a start-up grant from the EMBA (East Midlands Baptist Association), **Robert Hall Community Church** is to launch a weekly **Thursday Club**. "The emphasis will be on a warm and welcoming environment where any members of the community on a Thursday afternoon can just come in, relax, chat and make friends," said Rev. Bryan. "With ample supplies of tea, coffee and homemade cakes, plus internet access, card and board games, art and crafts, music and films, newspapers and magazines, there should be something for everyone."

FEBRUARY 5th LAUNCH

The Robert Hall CC **Thursday Club** will launch on 5th February, from 2 pm to 4 pm. "There will be a Grand Opening at the first meeting of the Club at 2 pm," commented Rev. Bryan. "Watch this space!"

For update information go to www.rhmbc.org.uk
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Despite having lived in Western Park for over forty years, I only noticed this week that the numbering of houses on Letchworth Road starts not at 1 and 2 but at 51 and 52.

I have been doing some research and I know that the Ashleigh House estate wasn't sold until 1946. Having looked at numerous old maps, it seems that Letchworth Road has always been the same length. The bottom end of the road, closest to town, stopped where it is today virtually at the edges of the Ashleigh House estate. It does not look as though it was ever intended to go any further.

I know that numbering would normally start from low to high with the low numbers being closest to town. So why start at 51? I did think that perhaps when the larger houses were built, they were not numbered but had names, and when the houses the other side of Glenfield Road were built, numbers were needed. But again why start at 51?

I am sure one of your readers will have the answer. This is really getting to me now and several other friends who live in the area are also very intrigued.

Shirley Barnes

Email Comments to:

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Image from *Those Magnificent Men*, Fri 20 & Sat 21 Feb, 7.30pm

Including events from



If you're still making New Year's resolutions why not make a promise to visit Upstairs at the Western this year? Situated above popular pub *The Western*, Leicester's one and only pub theatre begins its Spring 2015 season on 6 February, bursting with comedy, drama, spoken word, music and workshops.

UPSTAIRS AT THE WESTERN

February in Leicester means only one thing these days: Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival and Upstairs at the Western features five very different shows: as well as stand up and sketches there'll be performances from *Peter Antoniou's Happy Medium* (a psychic comedian) to Pariss and her late night foray into *Political Incorrectness Gone Mad*. It's chocks away with *Those Magnificent Men* as the team that brought *Big Daddy* to the festival last year return with a comic play about a daredevil dash across the Atlantic in a converted Vickers biplane.

If you're inspired by the fun and want to try stand up for yourself, why not sign up for our Stand Up Comedy Workshops? Over four sessions you will have the opportunity to turn your gags into a polished, five minute routine with opportunities to perform at two special comedy nights.

This season we have teamed up with the Coping with Cancer Centre on Westleigh Road and will be running a series of Writing Poetry workshops as well as a special puppetry workshop for children. Mark your diaries for 11 May for a very special fundraiser for Coping with Cancer when participants from the Stand Up Comedy and Writing Poetry workshops will perform their work and raise money for this important local charity.

If drama is your thing then between March and May there's a temptingly eclectic range of performances, from *Altamont*, an exploration of the 1969 Rolling Stones vision of free music to *The Rise and Fall of a Northern Star* chronicling the story of The Manc Madonna in the '80s Madchester music scene.

We are honoured to host an appearance by Charles Darwin and his riotous family show *Darwin, The Origin of Species*. And watch out for *Manuelita* on 1 May, the story of the revolutionary, proto-feminist underground Columbian spy Manuela Saenz.

With sax star Gerald McChrystal, local folk hero Pete Morton and loads more there just isn't the space to cover everything here so head over to www.upstairsatthewestern.com

Sally Jack (Sponsored article)



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Woodgate Under-5s Music Club

Since 2005 the Woodgate Residents Association has been running music lessons for children aged 5-18 and currently teaches almost 150 children in classes throughout the week. Increasingly we've had enquiries from parents of little ones – children who are not yet at school, and the siblings of primary-aged children.

In consultation with Music Therapist and local mum Davina Wilson, the team at Woodgate applied to the Youth Music Foundation for funding to set up new classes to accommodate these children, and to specifically cater for their needs.

Led by two qualified early years specialists the new sessions at the Woodgate Resources Centre take place in the afternoons on Thursdays (0-18 months) and Fridays (18 months – 5 years). The sessions include around an hour of music-making using voices, instruments and toys like a giant parachute and large sea drum; followed by a cup of tea for parents and carers while the children have free play time.



Founded on music therapy techniques the children benefit from the class not just by improving their musical skills, but also by developing their engagement with other children and with adults, their language and literacy development, and their physical dexterity and coordination.

And on top of that it's a lot of fun for the children to join in with the class, as well as exciting for parents to see their children enjoying themselves and engaging in the activities in this way.

Once children turn 5 the children can continue their musical development through one of our regular classes, run throughout the week after school in guitar, keyboard, violin, singing, drums, flute and music theory; while parents can join our new adult classes in singing, mixed band and music theory.

The Early Years Music Club takes place at the Woodgate Resources Centre, 36 Woodgate (opposite Aldi) on Thursday and Friday afternoons and costs £3 per child and £1.50 for additional siblings. Call 0116 253 0717 or email woodgateresidents@hotmail.com for more information. (Sponsored Article)



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For 5 to 17 year olds. Guitar, Keyboards, Violin, Flute, Recorders, Drums and Singing. Lessons in groups. Various times depending on instrument and ability. £25.00 for a five week half-term.

Childrens' Music Taster Day

Saturday 7th February from 10.00am to 1.00pm. Guitar, Keyboards, Violin, Flute, Recorders, Drums, and Singing. Ages five to seventeen. Must ring or e-mail to book. Free entry.

Music for Under Fives

Under eighteen months. Thursdays 2.00 – 3.30pm. Eighteen months to five. Fridays 2.30 – 4.00pm. Both cost £3.00 per session. £1.50 for a second child with same parents. See article opposite.

Music for Adults

Singing: Fridays 6.30 – 7.30pm. Band: Tuesdays 6.00 – 7.00pm.
Possible other instruments if sufficient interest.

Senior Citizens Lunch Club

Mondays and Thursdays, 12.30pm. Cost £2.50 for two course meal plus tea/coffee.

Senior Citizens Club

Mondays 2.00 – 4.00pm. Cost £1.00.

Senior Citizens Keep Fit

Thursdays 11.00am – Noon. Cost 60p.

Our Co-op Friendship Group

Tuesdays 10.00am – Noon. Cost £1.00. Learn craft skills and make new friends.

Yoga

Mondays 6.00 – 7.15pm and 7.30pm – 8.45pm. £4.00 per session, unwaged £3.50.
Must book in advance.

Computer Classes

Wednesdays. 1.45 – 2.45 pm and 2.45 – 3.45pm. 60p per session.
Contact Centre for further details or to book.

Tetsudo

Martial Arts. Sundays 11.00am – 1.00pm. Cost Adults. £4.00, Under 12s £2.50.
Ring 01509 260875 for further information.

Narcotics Anonymous

Tuesdays 7.30 – 9.00pm. Ring NA helpline 0207 7300009 and ask for Woodgate – Leicester meeting.

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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January Police Update

The Smart View with Sgt. Rod Smart

Following the recent spate of burglaries across the Western Park and Fosse wards, a 43 year old man from the city centre was arrested on 9 December for a burglary on Dulverton Road. He has been charged with this offence, possession of drugs and fraud. He was remanded in custody and recalled to prison due to breach of his licence conditions. Investigations continue, but the number of burglaries has reduced dramatically since his arrest.

On 5 December, during an argument between housemates at an address on Bruce Street, one of those involved threatened another with a chair leg and the victim had to use a crutch to defend himself. A 58 year old man has been charged with racially aggravated assault.

On 10 December a 29 year old New Parks man was arrested for smashing several windows at Hinckley Road Police Station. He was subsequently sectioned under the Mental Health Act and remains in secure accommodation where he is receiving treatment and support.

On 12 December, a 33 year old man from Beaconsfield Road was sentenced to three years and nine months in prison following a ten hour armed siege which took place at his home in November. This took place following officers attending to arrest him for a number of burglaries across the county, including one on Braunstone Avenue.

On 19 December, a twenty nine year old local man was stabbed in the street on Henley Road following an altercation at a local pub earlier. The victim is beginning to make a recovery and a twenty eight year old local man has been charged with *Wounding with Intent*.

On Christmas Day, a local woman was grabbed and groped by a man who wished her "Merry Christmas" on Hinckley Road. She was able to fight him off, then followed the man until the Police arrived and arrested him. A 38 year old New Parks man has been charged with sexual assault.

During the early hours of New Year's Day, four youths attacked a group of five inebriated teenagers walking home along Hinckley Road. Four of the teenagers escaped but the fifth was robbed of his mobile phone.

Please do not leave cars unattended with the engine running to defrost the window. As well as being an offence, this puts owners at risk of becoming victims to opportunist car thieves and most insurance companies will not cover thefts where the owner has left the keys in the vehicle. In frosty weather, please get up a few minutes earlier and clear the windows with de-icer or an ice scraper rather than risk becoming a victim of crime. Additionally, clear the entire windscreen. Visibility is poor enough in winter, without having to look out of a cleared area the size of a letter box.

Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



Goodbye 2014, officially the warmest year on record. Nothing to do with the contentious issue of global warming of course, that's just hippy nonsense, isn't it?

The Met Office say the 8 warmest years on record have occurred since 2002, mere coincidence! Those records only go back 120 years. The Central England Temperature series has been checking its thermometers since 1659 and they say...oh darn, warmest year ever!

Forget the rising seas and droughts, what does that mean for us gardeners? The prognosis of mild wet winters and dry summers has proved too simplistic. Extremes and unpredictability seem to be the result, at least in the short term. Many plants are flowering earlier which is bad for native species and the wildlife that depends on them. Bluebell woods may become rarer. They rely on cold winters suppressing other plants that would out compete them.

Fruit trees like traditional apples and pears benefit from a hard winter to promote a good crop.

Certain fruits may only flourish progressively further north. Some wine producers are already investing in new land in more northerly areas to ensure supply. Traditional ornamental plants like lupins and delphinium will struggle should things heat up, as will alpiners. Prolonged droughts will mean brown lawns in the summer, but you'll be mowing in a mild January, if you aren't already! Weeding will be a year round task, as will pest control.



In the vegetable patch expect brassicas and root veg to suffer, while species like beans, peppers and tomatoes should grow aplenty if kept adequately watered. Maintaining soil quality will be important. Adding masses of well rotted compost allows soil to retain moisture during droughts yet drain easier when we have the biblical floods.

But hey, it's not the end of the world. Next month gardening after a mass extinction asteroid strike. Have a Happy New Year.

Tony Huxley

Martin Page

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INGLEHURST JUNIOR SCHOOL

Inglehurst Junior School on Ingle Street in Newfoundpool is involved with a number of activities in Leicester but wants to find more initiatives closer to the school. Assistant head teacher Emily Harvey said: "We have to have strong links with the immediate community and our secretaries do a great job of making these links. "We take the kids to places a lot, just today they went to Leicester Cathedral, but there's not a lot really local to us." The school already has close ties to De Montfort University that offers a range of opportunities for school children to get involved in. Tech Club, where children visit the electronics department at DMU, runs once a month and gives real hands on experience to around 20 pupils interested in technology.



Year 6 teacher Martin Callan said: "It's fantastic, lots of hands-on work and it teaches skills that we cannot teach. During their first session the children made radios from scratch – the kids love it."



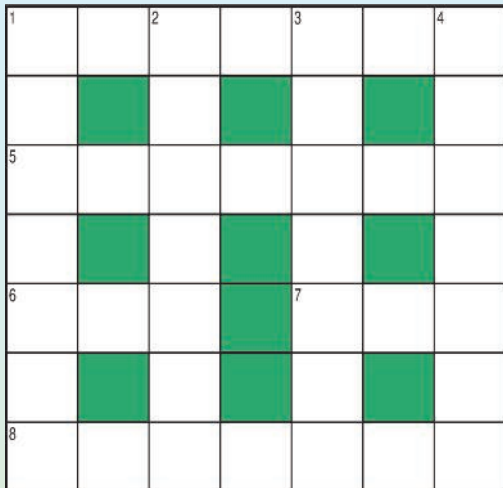
The school also has links with Fosse Arts on Mantle Road where the children recently made Canopic Jars that they then painted. Ms. Harvey added: "Going to places like Fosse Arts lets the children do things that we'd never be able to do with them in school."

As well as these sort of educational opportunities the school also feels children need to be provided with more extra-curricular leisure activities.

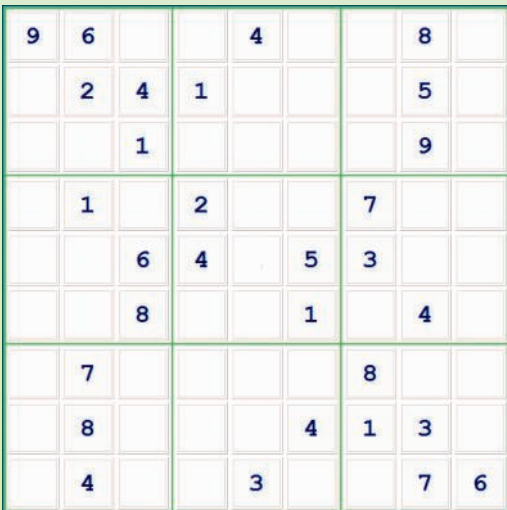
Head secretary Jean Morris said: "There's not really a lot for children to do around here. There's Hand in Hand but that's not open all of the time and there's New Parks adventure playground but that might close do to a lack of council funding." Inglehurst Junior School is always looking for more links to assist with their pupils' development.

If you feel you could provide such an opportunity the school can be contacted on 0116 262 4598 ideas or visit www.inglehurstjunior.org.uk
Jacob Jarvis, Sam Morris and Tom Simpson

BRAIN *TAZERS*



1 Across: Start of a new year. 1 Down: Lotto win
2. Atomic energy 3. American Sign Language 4.
Produced 5. Squint 6. Use for leftovers 7. Cap 8.
Majestically seated © Paul Towers



1. What are the next three letters in this sequence: **WATNTL---**
2. What can you hold without touching or using your hands?
3. Why is this number unique **8,549,176,320**?
4. Find a number one third of the distance between **1/3** and **2/3**.
5. I've got four feet and ten hands. What am I?
(Solutions at www.westernparkgazette.co.uk)

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