



ZERO-WASTE COMMUNITY SHOP OPENS



More on Page 4

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Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the February edition of the Western
Park Gazette.

In this issue we celebrate the opening of the new
zero-waste community shop run by Perfectly Edible
UK at the West End Neighbourhood Centre, there's
news from New College, Project Hive reach a mile-
stone and the Fosse City Wardens clean up in a
national competition.

In our regular features: Roger Blackmore prepares
to enjoy the forthcoming DMU Cultural Festival, Ser-
geant Ed Jones has the latest policing update, Tony
Huxley digs deep into his garden whilst Helen Knott
suffers from terminal disappointment with pretty
much everything and finally Tony Shelley sheds a
tear for terraced housing.

This issue features a letters page where we have
the answer to last month's question posed in Knott's
Landing: "Where's the henge on Western Park?" The
answer is quite surprising and harks back to WW2.

And the Brain Tazer crossword and Sudoku return in
full force to the inside back page.

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Events Diary

St Anne's Weds Club: Monthly, 1st Weds. St Anne's Hall. Letchworth Rd. 2.30-4pm.

Free Thurs Club: 2-4pm. Robert Hall, 147 Narb' Rd.

Perfectly Edible UK's Market & Community Cafe: Fri 11-2pm. West End Centre, Andrewes Street.

Coffee Mornings: Fridays 10-12 noon. St Anne's Hall.

Women's Taekwondo. Fridays. Brite Centre -10am & Thurs - 8pm at St Anne's Hall. 07951 426 386

Sun Eve Dru Yoga with Emma: St. Anne's Hall, Letchworth Rd. 7.15-8.30pm 07393 811150.

Musical Memory Box: Monthly, 1st Tues, 2-3.30pm. St. Anne's Hall. £3 donation.

Free Children's Art Club: Saturdays 10.30-12.00. Fosse Neighbourhood Centre. Mantle Rd.

Free drop-in Coffee Morns: Tues. 10-11.30am. St. Andrew's Methodist Church, Glenfield Rd.

Leicester Comedy Fest: Until 23rd Feb: Various locations. w:comedy-festival.co.uk

Curve: Phantom of The Opera 22nd Feb - 21st March, DMU Pride 24th-28th Feb.

Upstairs @ Western: Comedy Fest till 23rd Feb, The 4 Horsemen 27/8 Feb, New Work at the Western 5th March, Ad Libido 6th March.

Little Theatre: Beyond Reasonable Doubt 24th-29th Feb, HMS Pinafore 3rd-7th March.

Billionaire Boy: 4th-8th March. DM Hall.

Friends Musical Parody: 5th March. Haymarket Th.

Pop-up Pub: 20th March. St Anne's Hall. From 5pm.

4th B'day Beer Festival: W.E Brewery. 26-29 March.

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NEW COMMUNITY SHOP OPENS

If attempting to separate various pieces of plastic food wrapping and containers into recyclables is slowly sending you around the bend - the answer is at hand!

A new zero-waste community shop has just opened at the West End Neighbourhood Centre on Andrewes Street off Hinckley Road.

The shop is run by community interest company Perfectly Edible UK (formerly The Real Junk Food Project) and offers fresh fruit, veg, baked and packaged goods, toiletries and hygiene products either at a heavily discounted rate or on a pay-as-you-wish basis.

Managing Director Gemma Orton (pictured with volunteer Bryan Close on the front cover) said:

"We're bringing communities together and reducing food poverty by rescuing surplus food stock from landfill.

"We're giving everyone, especially those with food insecurity, access to fresh food they might not be able to afford".

Foodstuffs are regularly restocked in the shop and are mostly just passed their sell by dates.



Some foods may have dented packaging but are still edible.

Their zero-waste policy aims to sell goods either without wrapping or with recyclable packaging however that's not always possible says Gemma: "Food dispensers let customers buy produce in smaller amounts in their own containers as well as loose fruit and veg. It's hard to avoid some types of packaging which is how we get them from the supermarkets. If we didn't do that - the food and packaging would end up in landfill."

Opening Times: Tues, Weds, Fri & Sat: 11.00-2.00pm. Thurs: 4.00pm-7.00pm.



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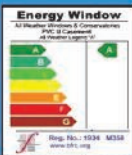
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KNOTT'S LANDING

I'm living with a lot of low-grade disappointment at the minute. I have been wandering around like Marvin the paranoid android expecting the worst and getting it! The source of this malaise stems from a number of utterly unrelated things.

Firstly, there is no henge on Western Park. Regular readers will know that I fell down an internet rabbit hole and found mention of a henge on the park. It turns out that this is not true. We know this because actual archaeologists got in touch with the Gazette to tell us that the things people in the past thought might be a henge were in fact the remains of a World War II search light bunker. (Find it in the letters on page 12) That's a big disappointment. I needed more than one cup of tea and an entire packet of Rich Tea to get over that.

Another disappointment has been with the virtual assistant in our house. She listens in to all our conversations, she can order stuff, play music when you ask, make announcements and help with spellings. The one thing she can't do is turn the lights on when I ask her to. She's sexist. She



can understand when the men in the house speak to her. She has no problems listening to them and obeying their commands. When it comes to my turn to ask her to turn the lights on I get – "Sorry, I don't know that one" or my other personal favourite, "Sorry, I can't find a device called devil's lamp." I can enunciate clearly and I speak for a living but she can't understand a word I say apparently. A simple job like turning on the lights in the building has now become a battle of wills between me and a computer but I will have the last laugh because eventually I will drown her in a bucket of water.

Finally I have been righteously disappointed by a doughnut. It promised so much. There was icing, jam, sprinkles and deep fried doughy goodness which should all have added up to a bliss blast of doughnut that satisfied my needs. It didn't. There was something missing, something fundamental to the doughnut but I can't put my finger on what it was and so I am left feeling empty. In the words of the miserable yet very wise Marvin.. "Life? Don't talk to me about life!"

Helen Dough-Knott



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GETTING CULTURAL

This year will be the nineteenth anniversary of the Cultural Exchanges Festival run by De Montfort University. Yet it started life as a one off event!

Today the week long Festival comprises some 50 events. These include a mixture of talks, discussions, performances and workshops. Students on the Arts and Festivals Degree Course are involved throughout the Festival and its run-up. During the event students gain a wealth of experience in a range of organisational skills. They learn how to plan, seek sponsorship, organise and meet and greet. Reviews of the programme events are also part of their activities.

The whole idea of Cultural Exchanges was the brainchild of Festival Director Tony Graves, an inspirational figure who has seen the Festival mushroom to become a significant feature in the city's arts scene. It is interesting that an estimated 40% of the audiences come from outside the University. Many of the events are free of charge and this gives further encouragement to the local community to participate.

Over the years, the programme has included a sizeable number of well known guest speakers. These have included Germaine Greer, Janet Street Porter, Hardip Singh Kholi, Benjamin Zephaniah, Sue Townsend, Alan Yentob and Meera Syal, as well as the Poet Laureate Simon Armitage.



One of the most amazing guest speakers secured by the project was the actress Claire Bloom. This amazing lady has performed alongside many of the famous stars of the twentieth century stage and screen, including Charlie Chaplin, Lawrence Olivier, John Gielgud and a host of others. Her talk was punctuated by clips from some of the films in which she appeared with these celebrities of yesteryear.

A recent guest lecturer at Cultural Exchanges was local author Nina Stibbe whose article on growing up in Fleckney appeared in the Guardian Review a few months ago. Nina, was supported by friends and family at the event. I wondered how many aspiring young writers of the future were in the audience.

The Festival is held annually in February at De Montfort University. Audiences for better known speakers can be packed and it is advisable to book tickets in advance.

Roger Blackmore

Festival runs from 24th-28th Feb
Brochure can be downloaded at w:dmu.ac.uk
More on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram

FOSSIE CITY WARDENS CLEAN UP

The team of Leicester Council's City Wardens who tackle littering, fly-tipping and other unsightly mess in the Fosse ward have won Outstanding Service Delivery category in Keep Britain Tidy's annual awards.

It follows a successful nine month-long campaign, which ran from March to October 2019, to tackle fly-tipping, waste, bins on streets and other waste problems in the Fosse.



It involved inspecting 117 businesses, 16 of which were issued with fines totalling £4,800 after not responding to legal notices.

The area had seen 971 incidents of fly-tipping from January to December 2018.

City Wardens attended ward community meet-

ings, distributed posters and leaflets in hotspot areas, erected street notices and met with community leaders as part of the campaign, which also saw them issuing 37 notices about bins left on streets, and using community protection notices to warn people they faced action over fly-tipping, side waste and untidy land.

The work led to an 18 percent reduction in fly-tipping and a nine percent increase in people using council services, such as bulk waste collection, compared to the same period in 2018.

The Keep Britain Tidy awards celebrate the very best councils from across the UK, highlighting those who are making significant improvements to the local environment in communities.

Leicester assistant city mayor for neighbourhoods, Cllr Kirk Master, said: "Our City Wardens team has been operating for just over 11 years in communities across the city, tackling everything from fly-tipping enforcement and nuisance parking to littering, dog fouling, graffiti and flyposting offences.

"In that time they have developed good working relationships and local knowledge of neighbourhoods throughout Leicester, working with residents on campaigns like this to help create a safe, pleasant place to live.

"It is appropriate that their work has been shortlisted for this Keep Britain Tidy award".

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Update

Project Hive is run by the WWCE, a group of local residents raising

funds to redevelop the former Eco House into a community space.

We did it! The target for crowd funding has been reached and passed! Since the start of September a massive £27,267 has been raised. Thank you! That "we" includes anyone who has supported this endeavour, you are all a part of the journey we are now on together.



WWCE

Whether you have pledged directly via the Spacehive website, bought a cake, decorated and rolled a pumpkin, made a scarecrow or walked the trail, eaten a curry, swapped Pokemon cards, not worn school uniform or danced the night away at the Christmas Party. The whole WWCE team have been truly humbled by the enthusiasm that the community repeatedly shows for fund raising events.

We have been told that Project Hive is a great example of positive community activism in action. The result will be a new space that allows even more activities that bring people together from across our whole community. We now have the funding to complete the designs and surveys to the point of formal planning going in by the middle of February.

It doesn't end here, our sights are already set on the next milestone towards the building opening its doors.

Find out more about WWCE & Project Hive at wwce.org.uk or Facebook @wwceleicester



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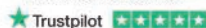
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LETTER BOX



The Gazette has received a number of emails over Helen Knott's article about the "henge" on Western Park. Many thanks to those who contributed their thoughts and knowledge to solving the mystery which has finally been laid to rest by Graham Appleby:

I read with interest your piece in the Western Park Gazette about the cropmarks. I agree that the internet can be something of a rabbit hole when researching the history and archaeology of a place or period. For Western Park, this has led to the view that there are prehistoric henge monuments there. Somewhat more prosaically, the 'ring-ditches' relate to a former WWII searchlight battery that was stationed there, the ring and ditch form representing the earth bunds or berms that provided a measure of blast protection if needed. The details of the battery are recorded on the city council's Heritage Environment Record. (www.heritagegateway.org.uk)

There is close by, however, a possible flint working site (roughly opposite Finch Close), but we lack any further information on the site as it was a verbal report made to my predecessors in 1982.

I hope the above is of interest and useful.

Grahame Appleby City Archaeologist

GROBY ROAD MUD BATH

After reading the January edition of the Gazette and the scream of rage about fly tipping. The residents of Groby Road are also screaming with rage and frustration about the state of the pavements and the verges which are just mud baths. I have been raising this issue for a number of years without success. Due to the double yellow lines all the way down the road, delivery drivers, tradesmen have no option but to use the pavements and verges. Walking up the pavement ensures your footwear is covered in mud.



I wrote to a local councillor on 20th December after walking from Fosse Road in the rain and getting absolutely drenched by passing traffic as the gutters were full of leaves and water could not get away. A further email asking for a reply was sent on 10th January, but I then had to send a further email due to a lack of any communication on 22nd January. To date I have heard nothing. I copied my emails to the residents of Groby Road down to no 53 and find I am not alone as several people have contacted the council in the past.

Pam Nutting

Write to: editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk

CHERISHED TERRACED

Back in 1975, I had the chance to buy a house in Rydal Street for £2000. It had three bedrooms, no bathroom and no hot water connection other than an electric water heater in the kitchen.

At the time I was an apprentice Litho Platemaker and worked just around the corner at Heliome Ltd. Even at two grand, I couldn't afford to buy it and left within a few months of this offer.

I have a genuine affection for the terraced house, and today many of them have been converted into little palaces. That's why when I came across this wrecker ball vision on the corner of Jarrom Street and Upperton Road, my eyes filled with tears.



It's almost like a contemporary art sculpture, showing what were the upstairs fireplaces, that at one time or another, must have warmed the bedrooms, the chimney system design, and the layout of the ground and upper floors. A history exposed to the elements, from hearth to attic.

I often wonder who lived there, who received the first keys to the property, how many souls sat around those fires at Christmas time, and who were the last tenants. This area has changed enormously in the four decades since I left. To me it's a living monument to how people lived and survived without the things that most of us take for granted, hot water and inside toilets.

Tony Shelley

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NEW COLLEGE NEWS

Peter Barratt great grandson of Leicester suffragette Alice Hawkins, spoke to a theatre full of Year 7 and 8 students about the women's suffrage movement and the struggle for the rights of women to get equal pay.

Peter's talk coincided with a visit from a life size Lego model suffragette on loan from Parliament Education Service aptly named 'Hope'. Hope is made of 33,000 Lego bricks and took 3 people over 71 hours to build.



Year 7 student Hope Easson, met Peter and had her picture taken with him in front of the model 'Hope'. Peter said 'I really enjoyed the school visit today, great theatre style setting and 300 fantastic

pupils who I felt were with me throughout'. Sera Shortland, Head of Citizenship at the College said: 'Peter's mission is to keep the memory of Alice and her struggle alive for the younger generation. "Learning about events such as the Suffrage movement is crucial to develop democratic understanding'.

TIN FOR THE TENTH

Students at New College discovered that the time after Christmas is the hardest for people who are homeless and so decided to ask for every student in Leicester to bring in one tin that can be donated to a homeless organisation. If all students in Leicester city did this, students found that they could provide a meal for over 10 per cent of the homeless population. Tin for the Tenth is their hope to galvanise the school councils across primary and secondary in the city to gather one tin of food from each child and this to be donated to a homeless charity. The campaign also wants to raise awareness of homelessness and its causes in an attempt to challenge the stigma and prejudice often aimed at vulnerable groups.

Yasmine Al Saket, a member of the student parliament at New College Leicester says: "We are the future, young people need to make a stand and say enough is enough, look what young people can do, if adults are not solving the issue, we will try".



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Feb Police Update

A belated happy New Year to all; I can't believe that we are in February already! There has been a lot happening to keep your neighbourhood teams busy. I start with a big thank you to the communities we serve, without your support we simply couldn't function the way that we do. You raised your concerns about the increase in burglaries; you helped us through your CCTV, your watchful eyes and tenacious sense of suspicious behaviour. We have responded to this in kind, through the capture, charge and incarceration of a number of individuals, whom we believed were causing the most harm to you. Consequently, we've seen a dramatic drop in these types of offences. Likewise, you raised your concerns around so-called cannabis factories. We responded and have closed these sites down. People have mixed views about cannabis use. These sites are producing on a commercial scale, and I have policed long enough to recognise the misery that emanates from the consequences of such grows.

I now ask for your help regarding an emerging threat called Courier Fraud. The unscrupulous, and I have to say the lowest form of criminal, are targeting the most vulnerable amongst us through scam phone calls. They will claim to be police officers and will convince you to take money out of the bank to assist them in their investigations. Once you withdraw the money, you will be asked to hand it to a courier who, along with your cash will never be seen again. These people are very convincing and will even ask you to ring the local police to verify their identity. In reality they have not terminated the phone call. Whilst you believe that you have contacted the police, you will in fact be speaking to another member of the gang. Genuine police officers would never ask you to take money out of the bank or to provide your card details over the phone. More information about this scam can be found on our police website. The banks are clued into this fraud and will contact us if they have any suspicions. My advice is to spread the word about this scam, which is the best defence to this particular type of fraud.

On a final note, I am pleased that your teams have been able to support the launch of the Zero-Waste Community Shop, which provides discounted foods and items for families needing a bit of extra support. The community shop always welcomes food donations, clothing and toys. Until next month, keep reporting suspicious activity and be a friend to your neighbour. If you are not already a member then please considering signing up to Neighbourhood Link.

Sgt Ed Jones

Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



Where there's muck there's brass, at least that's what my osteopath must think every time I visit her surgery. I've turned over that much soil in my life I'm considering changing my name to Doug! But now I've decided to save my back, and the planet by using my spade less.

Each spade full of muck is home to hundreds of metres of fungal roots, and billions of microscopic organisms.



It can take years or even decades for soil to reach an organic optimum, and one good digging to

destroy it and release large amounts of the carbon stored within. Digging can also make soil less fertile. That's why farmers must apply massive amounts of fertilizer to the fields they plough. From now onwards I'm going to use a no dig policy wherever possible.

To make this work properly you really need to mulch your soil annually with a layer of compost, and now's a great time to be emptying those compost bins. Just spread it on the surface, and that's it! Ok, I'm a pragmatist and do still use a fork to ease any major compaction or lift out deep rooted weeds but most other weeding is done by hoeing.

Last year I heard a lecture by Professor John Crawford. He recommended the no dig method to preserve soil. There's a lot more to muck than most of us realise, and depending on how we use it, it might just save the world. No pressure then! Soil and the organisms that live in it are the third biggest store of carbon on the planet, approximately 2,500 billion tons! This is more than all the carbon in the atmosphere, and properly maintained it could lock away even more. Sounds like hippy nonsense? John is a scientist working with BASF, the second biggest chemical company in the world. They're investing a lot of their brass into muck, and it's not because they're hippies!

So the moral is "Don't dig, for victory!"

Tony Huxley



Martin Page

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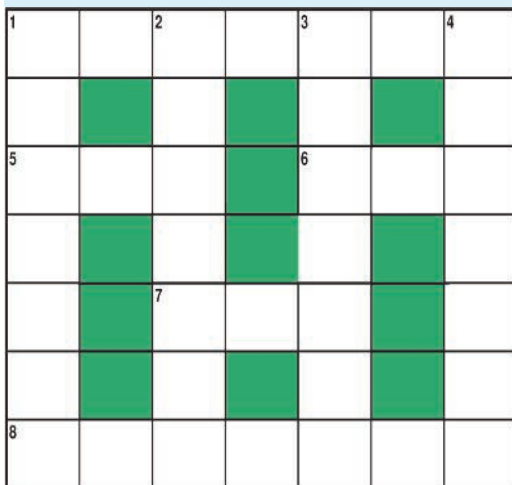
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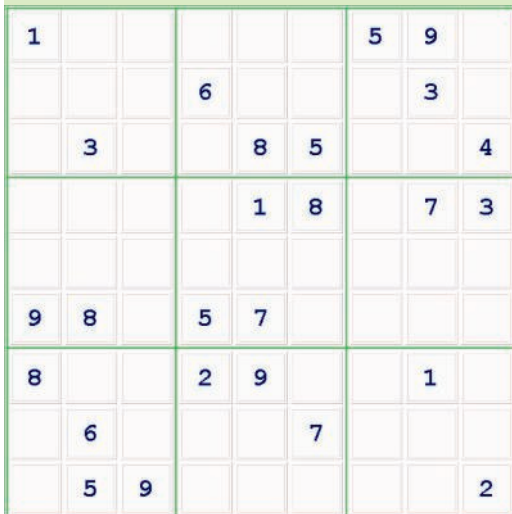
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1 Across: American ladybird **1 Down:** Game of chance **2D:** Pope's home **3D:** Grandparent's role **4D:** Tallest ruminant **5A:** Small bird **6A:** Pub counter **7A:** Type of lettuce **8A:** Chinese river. © Paul Towers 2020. Answers at w.westernparkgazette.co.uk



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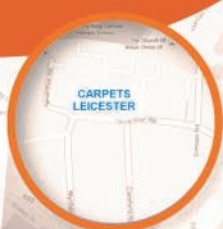
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