

# The Gazette

Western Park

No. 95 Sept 2017 [www.westernparkgazette.co.uk](http://www.westernparkgazette.co.uk)  
News & Views for Western Park • Westcotes • The Fosse

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# FUN IN THE SUN!

More on Page 4

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## Hello From The Editor

### Welcome to September's Western Park Gazette and in this packed edition...

As the sun shone across West Leicester on the final summer Bank Holiday of 2017, we toddled off with a camera to what has become West Leicester's party central, The Crows Nest, as people enjoyed their last day of freedom before the long haul to Christmas.

We have all the regular features from Helen Knott, Roger Blackmore, Tony Huxley and the police update plus a look at what's on at the city's theatres. A local poet and filmmaker searches for a star for their next mini-movie, the Western Park Beer Festival gears up, a local pensioner has developed his own music reading app and our tame archaeologist has been digging up Beaumont Leys. And if you feel like a wander, a new towpath walking guide for Leicester has just been published.

Once again The Square Mile Project hogs the centre pages with the huge list of events they have planned over the next few months.

And yes - the Sudoku and crossword silently lurk on the inside pack page ready frustrate you!

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If you've got a local news story then email:

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# Events Diary

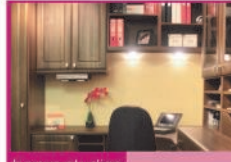
**Fosse Co-op Camera Club:** Fri. St Peter's Ch Centre, West Holme St. 7.30pm. [fossecoopcameraclub.co.uk](http://fossecoopcameraclub.co.uk)  
**Peter Crebbin's Cool Swing Band:** 1st Sun Monthly. at the Hilton Hotel, Meridian. 1-3.30pm  
**Thursday Club:** 2-4pm. Robert Hall, 147 Narb' Rd.  
**West End Pay As You Feel Café:** Thurs 7-8.30pm.  
 Tues, Fri & Sat 11-3pm. WE Centre. Andrewes St.  
**Coffee Mornings:** Fridays 10-12 noon. St Anne's Hall.  
**Relaxed Dru Yoga Sessions with Emma:** Sunday's 7.15 - 8.30pm. St Anne's Hall. 07393 811150.  
**Mercury Queen Tribute:** 14-16 Sept. Concordia Theatre Hinckley. 7.30pm.  
**WP Beer Fest:** 15 & 16th Sept: Hall at St Anne's.  
**Sunset Boulevard:** 16-30 Sept. Curve.  
**Arsenic & Old Lace:** 11-16 Sept. Little Theatre.  
**Upstairs@Western in Sept:** 16<sup>th</sup> - **All My Mad Mothers & The Hill** 17<sup>th</sup> - **Bad Art Protest Showcase** 18<sup>th</sup> - **Uncle Armando** 20<sup>th</sup> - **Find The Right Words** 24<sup>th</sup> - **Comedy Workshops.**  
**Les Miserables:** 18-23<sup>rd</sup> Little Theatre.  
**Texas:** 19<sup>th</sup> Sept. DMH. 7.30pm.  
**De Jah Vu - Reggae, Roots & Dub & Helping Homeless Donations:** 22 Sept. Polonez Bar. 8.00pm.  
**Greg Davis:** 22 & 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct. 8.00pm.  
**Pink Sari Revolution:** 27<sup>th</sup> Sept - 7<sup>th</sup> Oct. Curve Th.  
**Family Newspaper:** 1st Oct. Westcotes Library. 1-3pm. Free family activity.  
**Live Wire (AC/DC Trib):** Fri 13<sup>th</sup> Oct. Y Theatre. 9.00pm.

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# FUN IN THE SUN!

Bank Holiday Monday fever gripped West Leicester as hundreds of people descended on the Crows Nest pub on Glenfield Road East to enjoy the last blast of summer.

Landlord Ray Cooper and partner Yvette Jays have built up a considerable reputation over the last decade for holding huge family fun days at key times of the year, but the last Bank Holiday in August is always a biggie!

Ray, dressed in his traditional Bank Holiday Hawaiian shirt and Stetson said: "Today we're the busiest pub in Leicester. We make it bigger and better each year. We had six hundred people here. It was monster - just non-stop".

With temperature hitting 25C, families from across West Leicester relaxed in the sun while the kids romped in the small swimming pool and clambered over giant bouncy castles. The children had the chance to be photographed with Peppa Pig and other famous cartoon characters, while Chef Khalid dished out hundreds of hotdogs, burgers and tons of chips.

The entertainment, disco and child wrangling was provided by Leicester based performers Kelly Jenns and Dave Mazzei who ended up singing to a more grown-up audience into the night.

"It was massive", said Ray, "But you should see what we're doing later this year...".



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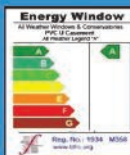
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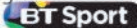
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Red (Covers)

THU 28th SEPT

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SAT 1st OCT

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SAT 7th OCT

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THUR 5th OCT

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## GHOST VILLAGES OF THE SHIRE

It may be surprising to learn that there are at least fifty villages in the county which have become deserted over the years.

In the 1300's there were numerous outbreaks of the Black Death plague which devastated various settlements in the county. The result was often a community reduced to a series of humps and bumps signifying where houses and other buildings had once stood.

In Tudor England and earlier, it was enclosure of land for sheep pastures, often by rich and powerful abbeys and monasteries, which led to similar depopulation. You can still see the remains of these deserted villages in many places throughout Leicestershire. A good example is at Ingarsby near Houghton on the Hill, once complete with watermills and even a small castle overlooking the site.



Site of Ingarsby village

At Knaptoft, out beyond Wigston, only a ruined church and isolated farm survive.

Closer to the city, just beyond Fosse Park, was once the little village of Alderby. Today the site of St John's church is just a mark on the map. Even so the settlement of St John's, just beyond the police headquarters,

takes its name from the former parish.

The long deserted village of Hamilton on the eastern outskirts of the city even boasts its own ghost. A ghostly horse and rider is said to have roamed the village, once enclosed as sheep pasture (probably by Leicester Abbey) and its inhabitants turned out on to the streets. Today of course Hamilton has been turned into a brand new suburb of the city.

Glen Parva is another example of a village once completely deserted but now a new settlement on the borders of the city.

So if you come across a series of humps and bumps whilst out exploring the Leicestershire countryside you may have uncovered a place where once our ancestors raised their families and lively folk celebrated the seasons in what were often thriving agricultural communities. Sometimes you can trace the outlines of individual houses and streets in the ground although the metal detectors have probably got there before you!

Just as some villages disappear from the map over the years so new settlements are created.

Many readers will recall a time when places such as East Goscote and Thorpe Astley simply did not exist as places of human habitation.

One village which disappeared recently was Nether Hambleton which now buried underneath Rutland Water. This was still a living village when W.G Hoskins published his famous description of the deserted villages of Leicestershire.

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# KNOTT'S LANDING

**Hot tubs are in. They are hot. They are frothing with potential. It seems as if everywhere you go there is an advert for a tub of bubbly goodness.**

You can watch the cinema sitting in a hot tub, every holiday cottage worth its salt comes with a hot tub, you can rent them for kids parties and you can even buy one yourself from Tesco. That's what I did.

It arrived in a giant cardboard box that had to be hauled in on a trolley it weighed so much and it changed my life! Seriously. It took a couple of hours to fill and then a couple of days to heat up to temperature but after that, nothing was ever the same again.

Had a rough day? Get in the hot tub. Kids being a pain? Get in the hot tub. Mother in law harassing you? Get in the hot tub. It is the answer to everything. The minute you step into the warm water it's like entering a womb, a safe place where the world can't get you. Turn on the light and soft colours will engulf you and turn it into a disco pool. Turn on the bubbles and every bit of tension will be swooshed out of you. Can you tell I like my hot tub?

I did have some environmental concerns? Yes. It's weird to have a bath outside and it costs money to keep it heated but as there are no geothermal pools nearby for me to use. I'm going to have to suck up the environmental cost and offset my carbon some-

how. Once I climbed in to the warm water I was sold. The night I lay in the pool watching the meteor show above my head, well let's say I never looked back.

It's not just me either, my pool has been full of kids all summer. They come and sit like tiny Gods in the warm water and shriek loudly when the bubbles start. Then they put on goggles and watch fascinated as the bubbles arrive around them.

The only downside is that we have to take the pool down for winter..... we'll definitely be putting it up again next spring as soon as we can. Unless we've had a permanent one installed by then!

*Helen Knott*



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**Dust off your best sixties outfit – the Western Park Beer Festival is back and this time with flower power!**



**The 50th anniversary of 1967's Summer of Love will be the theme for this year's summer shindig on September 15-16 at St Anne's Hall on Letchworth Road.**

Over the weekend there'll be a huge variety of beers to try, as well as gin, prosecco and wine. There will also be sixties sounds, live music, face-painting, a bouncy castle, fresh pizzas, cheese cobs and those delicious vegetable samosas. And did I mention the beer? There's 16 casks and six kegs of the stuff.

The two main sponsors for the charity event are Everards and Brewklopedia on Welford Road, and money raised will go towards local hospice LOROS. Matt Pearce, chairman of the Western Park Beer Festival committee, said "Last year we managed to raise thousands of pounds through our events during the year. Thanks to our sponsors, volunteers and the

Western Park crowd, we're hoping we can do even better this year for LOROS."

Sponsors of the beer festival are being treated to a special tasting session led by Matt Baker from main sponsor Brewklopedia, ahead of the festival opening at 5.30pm on Friday, September 15th.

Adrian Walker, LOROS's fundraising manager, said "For us, the beer festival is not just about raising money, it's also about helping us raise awareness of our work. Most people know what we do, but we can't be complacent, particularly for the younger generation, we want to make them aware of what LOROS is all about."

For those joining us on Saturday night, it will be free entry if you are dressed up like it's 1967. Otherwise it's £5 entry, including your very own souvenir glass.

Children are welcome at the family session between midday and 5pm on Saturday, September 16th. Both evening sessions finish at midnight.

Among the nationwide breweries involved, there are plenty of Leicestershire representatives, including Charnwood, Dowbridge, Everards, Framework, Langton, Market Harborough, Tres Bien and West End Brewery.

**Email [info@westernparkbeerfestival.org](mailto:info@westernparkbeerfestival.org) or contact us on Twitter (@WesternParkLeic) or Facebook (search for Western Park Beer Festival). Find out more at**

**[www.westernparkbeerfestival.org.uk](http://www.westernparkbeerfestival.org.uk)**



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# IT'S 1979 AGAIN

Ray Marlow has just bought a house on Bolton Road, West Leicester, having saved up a deposit from wholesaling Commodore F4146R programmable calculators. With a personality like a bad dose of scabies, Ray has no redeeming qualities and even his brother Carl would see him dead.

Getting under your skin is Ray's thing and he is very good at it.

Ray inhabits a world where iPhones are Trimphones and iPods are made of wood, three feet long and called radiograms. Entertainment was typing 71077345 into your calculator and showing it upside down to your mates whilst listening to bands with offensive names. In 1970 Ted Heath's government decreed that everything in the UK be either brown or orange and the miners went on strike in protest. Ernő Rubik invented the Rubik's cube in 1974 to give people something to do on the Three-Day Week but tragically that boat sailed before he got the marketing in place. Trousers were designed for people with extraordinarily fat ankles and some even thought patchouli oil smelt good. Those were the days...



After accidentally constructing a time machine and transforming a spare room into how it looked in 1979, when occupied by Ray, Leicester poet Mark Cooper and filmmaker Tom Knight are now making a short film about the last 24 hours of Ray's life. They need your help...

## ACTRESS NEEDED

Or female actor, we're not sure which but if you're taking this linguistic dilemma seriously rather than enjoying the subtle mockery then you're probably not for us. We're looking for someone to play Kathleen the female lead and you will be between 25 and 40 or an exceptionally youthful 50 year old. You don't necessarily have to have acting experience.

We're not looking for a professional because we won't be paying you but we are looking for someone who can put in 100%. Learning lines and delivering them in character is hard work but help can be on hand. Interested? Contact:

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NO session on Mon 16th Oct (Half-term)

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## HITTING THE RIGHT NOTE!

**A West Leicester pensioner is taking on young app designers at their own game.**

70 year old Julian Wright from Braunstone has just released his first app after seven years of hard work.

His dream of getting us all to read music with his iReadGuitar Pro app didn't strike a chord with young and trendy wunderkind developers so he flicked his plectrum at them and decided to go it alone.

A few coding-for-dummies tomes and a short course in computer studies at Leicester College meant he could produce a working prototype himself. This led to help from a local IT professional, David Chan, who mentored him over the finishing line. Now it's on Google Play and the Apple App Store.



Like a touch typing course, iReadGuitar Pro treats the skill of reading music as something which can be learned step by step, simply and with no fuss.

For just £2.00 the full app will take you through the mechanics of learning. Julian said: "If you want to learn music, now you can. If you can read and write - Why not follow music too?"

A taster version is available for download for Apple and Android devices. Look for iReadGuitar Pro.

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# BEING HUMAN

## RESEARCH FESTIVAL

### **LIVE BRITISH WRESTLING: HISTORY & RESURGENCE**

Attenborough Arts Centre

Sunday 19th November (6pm-8pm)

A celebration of British professional wrestling with a chance to watch some wrestling with talks about gimmicks, chair shots and top rope flips.

### **LOST & FOUND: THE REDISCOVERY OF STATUES IN EARLY MODERN FRANCE**

Hugh Aston Building 0.10

Monday 20th November (6:30pm-9pm)

Professor Elizabeth Tingle will explore a number of lost statues in early modern Europe followed by the creation of pilgrimage sites.

### **OLIMPICK GAMES & OLYMPIAN GAMES: LOST & FOUND**

Hugh Aston Building 0.10

Tuesday 21st November (6:30pm-9pm)

Professor Martin Polley will give illustrated talks on the Cotswold Olimpicks and Wenlock Olympian Games

# BEING HUMAN

## RESEARCH FESTIVAL

### **LOST & FOUND SHAKESPEARE**

Hugh Aston Building 0.10

Wednesday 22nd November (6:30pm-9pm)

Professor Gabriel Egan will explain how it is that scholars are now able to detect Shakespeare's writing within larger works.

### **FINDING JAMIE: AN IMAGINATIVE JOURNEY THROUGH THE JAMES WATT ARCHIVES**

Clephan Building 0.01

Thursday 23rd November (6:30pm-9pm)

Professor Kathleen Bell will speak about her discoveries in her archival research and read from her work in progress, provisionally titled Jamie's Book of Ingenuity.

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## ON STAGE IN LEICESTER

Once again Leicester is spoilt for choice when it comes to cultural gluttony.

Our three main theatres, Curve, De Montfort Hall and The Little Theatre are crammed full of delights for the eyes and ears between now and Christmas

Curve has, as usual, a mixed bag of productions, both in-house and visiting, to suit all tastes. September starts off with the annual offering from LAOS. This year it is Parade, a 'daring, gritty and bold' story of miscarried justice. Further highlights are The Railway Children in October and my all time favourite movie translated to the stage, Sunset Boulevard, yet another Curve co-production prior to touring. Making a welcome return, for a third visit, is Paul Kerryson's production of Hairspray. Watch out for Curve Young Company's Oaklahoma after their awesome Midsummer Night's Dream. Once again Curve spoils us at Christmas with Scrooge and George's Marvellous Medicine taking us into the New Year.

DeMontfort Hall, has a well stock festive cupboard for all tastes. For pure musical fans there is Willy Russell's Blood Brothers, to my mind the perfect musical theatre production. Christmas is taken care of with the now traditional pantomime. This year it is Beauty and The Beast with Leicester's own Sam Bailey. Between now and then there is the usual eclectic mix of stand up comedy, musical acts and headline bands.

Not to be outdone, The Little Theatre has the usual mix of thrillers, farces and musicals. All at affordable prices. Where else can you get to see Les Miserable, (performed by youngsters from The Leicester Theatre Group based in Newfoundpool) or Annie for less than £15? Alongside the visiting productions there is the annual pantomime. This year it is Dick Whittington.

Just up the road from The Little, the 117 year old Y Theatre is home to a wide selection of one nighters ranging from comedians to bands to ballet.



Of course we mustn't forget our very own Upstairs at The Western, Leicester's only pub theatre. This very popular venue, now in its second season under new management, has a wide range of shows, many running for more than one night or on a monthly basis. Find The Write Words is the immensely popular poetry nights. This season there is a new regular comedy night, Jestin' at The Western hosted by local legend Dan Nicholas. There is also the return of the well respected comedy workshops.

Full details of all the above venues can be found online at their individual websites. **Paul Towers**



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## POTTERING ABOUT

Castle Hill Big Dig returns this September for the second year of archaeological excavations - and this time it's even bigger.

Throughout September from Saturdays to Wednesdays, the local community will be excavating the Knights Hospitaller's preceptory at Castle Hill Country Park in Beaumont leys. The dig will be run by the University of Leicester on behalf of the Story of the Parks project and attracts many amateur archaeologists.

Gazette reader and amateur local historian Rob-in Matthewman, from the Castle Hill Archaeology Project, said: 'Our excavations last year uncovered well preserved evidence of medieval buildings and yards. Large quantities of pottery suggest occupations of the 13th century which fits with the Knights Hospitallers. This year we hope to not only expand the number of trenches we are uncovering, but also to look more deeply at the features that we find'



Pot shards & ridge tiles

The site comprises a ditched and banked enclosure containing the remains of a preceptory, a monastic complex formerly belonging to the Knights Hospitaller, and buildings designed to provide for the knight's domestic and religious needs, including hospice accommodation for travellers and pilgrims. In later years, the site probably functioned as a monastic grange or sheep farm; the receipts from which funded the Knights Hospitaller's campaigns in the Holy Lands. The site was in use from around 1240 until 1482 and later went on to become a deer park for the Kings of England before being sold off. It eventually was used by Leicester Water Board Corporation as a sewage works from 1891 and 1965.

The excavation last year found remnants of possibly two timber buildings which have been dismantled in later years when all the timber support beams were removed. And on the last afternoon the corner of a stone building was found. During follow up work in the lab there was found to be large amount of hammerscale which is...

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small bits of metal, that fly off from the hot metal when hammered) from smithy workings. So lots of metalwork seems to have been happening there, but only nails were found. The success of finding this has delighted archaeologists as many thought it had all been destroyed by the sewage works.

There are plans for an open day at the end of September but visitors are welcome over the weekends.

The park can be found in Beaumont Leys off Astill Lodge Rd and information about it can be found on the City Council's website.



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## GUIDES GO THE EXTRA MILE

Guides and Rangers from Braunstone are celebrating after successfully using gymnastics to cover a mile to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Members of the 3rd Braunstone Guides and Rangers, who are aged between 10 and 15 raised around £200 and were supported by family and friends as they completed the Mile for Macmillan challenge at Braunstone Park.

The group are one of over 4,000 Girlguiding Midlands units to join forces with Macmillan as part of a new charity partnership to raise £72,000 for people affected by cancer this year.

Mayella Rye-Holland, aged 11, a member of the 3rd Braunstone Guides said: "Doing gymnastics for a whole mile to help raise money for Macmillan was really fun. We did it as a group relay and all supported each other. I'm really proud of myself and the other girls for completing the challenge as it was very tiring!"



Cathryn Parsons, Leader at the 3rd Braunstone Guides said: "We had great fun supporting Macmillan in this way and getting the local community together for such a good cause. All money raised will help fund vital Macmillan services in local communities right across Leicester, so that no one has to face cancer alone."

Pippa Lock Partnership Manager at Macmillan Cancer Support says, "I'd like to thank all the girls from the 3rd Braunstone Guides and Rangers for taking the time to support Macmillan. We hope everyone involved enjoyed Mile for Macmillan and will keep supporting 3rd Braunstone Guides as they try and raise much needed funds for people affected by cancer throughout 2017."

Girlguiding is the UK's leading charity for girls and young women, giving all girls the opportunity to grow in confidence and discover their potential. Every year Girlguiding Midlands offers a host of exciting opportunities for girls and young women to go on an adventure – from international trips and art extravaganzas to sleepovers in zoos and theme parks and science investigation days.

For more information about how to join Girlguiding – the leading charity for girls and young women in the UK – visit [girlguiding.org.uk](http://girlguiding.org.uk)

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(The song writing and choir are free if child is learning an instrument at the Centre)

### Music for Under Fives

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18 months to 5: Fridays 1.30 – 3.00pm. Cost £3.00 per session. First Lesson Free

### Senior Citizens Lunch Club

Mondays and Thursdays, 12.30pm. Cost £2.50 for 2 course meal plus tea/coffee.

### Senior Citizens Club

Mondays 2.00 – 4.00pm. Cost £1 per session

### Senior Citizens Keep Fit

Thursdays 11.00am – Noon. Cost 60p per session

### Our Co-op Friendship Group

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

### Computer Classes

Wednesday afternoons. 60p per session

Contact Centre for times, further details and to book

### Salsa Classes for Beginners

Tuesdays 7.30 – 8.30pm. Cost £6.00 per session or £40 for eight sessions

No need to bring a partner. Ring 07414 596 481 for further details

### Yoga

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

Must book in advance

### Tetsudo

Martial Arts. Sundays 11.00am – 1.00pm. Cost £4.00, Under 12s £2.50

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### Narcotics Anonymous

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

Woodgate – Leicester Meeting

### Abbey Social Club

Monthly: 2nd Weds of month. 1.45 – 3.45pm. Members 75p, non-members £1.00

**The Centre is also available for bookings.** There are two rooms. The main room is particularly suitable for children's parties and other family events. The small room is suited for meetings and training events. Contact Centre for rates and availability or visit [www.woodgate.org.uk](http://www.woodgate.org.uk)

**For more information contact the Woodgate Residents Association**

**Woodgate Resources Centre, 36 Woodgate, Leicester LE3 5GE**

**Tel. No: 0116 253 0717 e: [woodgateresidents@hotmail.com](mailto:woodgateresidents@hotmail.com)**

The Woodgate Resources Centre is funded by Leicester City Council.

The Youth Music Programme is funded by Youth Music, the Arts Council and the Council.

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## WALKING THE TOW PATH

If you only venture to the banks of the River Soar and the Grand Union Canal during the Riverside Festival, you're missing out on a lot.

A colourful new guide has just been published by the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Partnership which showcases many walking and cycling routes along the length of the river and canal.

The River Soar Trail is a 39-mile route of the river and canal through city and county and is easily accessible from West Bridge, Bede Park and Woodgate.

The trail, which mostly follows the route of the canal towpath, is highlighted in the new walking and cycling route map, which also includes ideas and activities along the river.

The River Soar Trail includes urban and rural landscapes in the city and county, from Foxton Locks in the south to Loughborough and Kegworth in the north.

Sites of interest along the way include the city's National Space Centre, Abbey Pumping Station, Abbey Park and the Great Central Railway, while in the county, attractions listed include the picturesque Foxton Locks, Wistow and Watermead Country Park.



The new guide is available from the Visit Leicester centre in Gallowtree Gate, libraries and community buildings across the city and county.

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## Sept Police Update

Police in West Leicester spent a day in August disrupting criminality in a special targeted campaign.

The operation, overseen by Sgt Andy Parkinson, saw a number of resources including the Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) team positioned on key routes into New Parks, Beaumont Leys, Braunstone, Rowley Fields, Western Park and Westcotes stopping vehicles believed to be involved in criminal activity.

Fifteen vehicles were stopped, four cars were seized, three people were given traffic offence reports (TORs), an amount of cannabis was confiscated and two people were arrested.

Inspector Rob Randell is the West Leicester neighbourhood policing area commander and was in charge of the operation. He said: "We know from information received and from local officers' interaction with the community that there are individuals who continue to commit crime in the area and may not necessarily live locally.

"The aim of the operation was to target those travelling criminals who commit offences and cause the most harm in the local area.

"We will continue to carry out operations of this nature and reassure the local community that their concerns are not going unheard. If anyone has any concerns about crime in the local area we could encourage them to call 101 or speak to local officers."

**A local man who was arrested after homophobic comments were made at the recent Leicester City v Brighton football match has been charged with chanting indecently under Section 3 of the Football Offences Act.**

The 44 year old from Mossgate will appear at Leicester Magistrates' Court later this month.

A second 21 year old man who was arrested on suspicion of making obscene gestures, was given a conditional caution.

**If you drive a works van you're asked to think about its security after an unprecedented run of thefts from vans during the last three months.**

Since the beginning of the year, police have received more than 800 reports of commercial vehicles broken into where tens of thousands of pounds worth of tools have been stolen.

Police executed warrants at addresses in Golf Course Lane off Hinckley Road and another in the city, recovering more than 300 power tools in the process. Officers are currently trying to reunite the items with their rightful owners.

Eight people were arrested on suspicion of theft and officers are hunting others involved in such crimes.



# Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



I've been comparing our fig shrubs with my new neighbour, no innuendo intended, honest! I was quite frankly jealous. Mine had taken nearly five years to produce a crop of any worth, while my neighbour's new home came with a large and prolific fig factory. But I was gobsmacked when she told me about she was throwing away "bags of fruit" because she'd "no idea what to do with them!"



But I had a cunning plan:  
"Well you eat them of course!"  
"But how?"

My neighbour had come armed with a selection, freshly-picked from her fig tree. I chose the ripest. They should be sweet smelling, almost brown and the texture soft and doughy without being mushy. Another a couple of days and it would be squiddy fly and wasp food.

"You put it in your mouth and chew it."

"What, even the skin?"

"Yes." And to prove my point I washed and halved

it, then ate my piece first, to prove no harm would befall her. Her sceptical first bite was met with surprise and delight.

She's now begun avidly scrumping my apples, after realising fruit can be safe to eat, even if doesn't come in plastic packaging.

We recently holidayed in France with several other families. One evening we enjoyed a communal dinner. Our contribution was a big pot of ratatouille. Our friends commented on its fabulous flavour. I explained that it was the wild marjoram I'd picked from the hedgerow. I then pointed to an unhappy looking pot of mint dying outside a friend's tent and mentioned how that also grows wild, and by the barrow load, just a minute's walk from the campsite.



Wild  
marjoram

I am always amazed that most of us chose to buy commercially-grown, heavily-packaged, and often imported food, when there's often a bonanza of fresher, tastier and free fruit and veg, literally within easy reach. Or maybe it's just me who knows how to show a girl a good thyme?

**Tony Huxley**



# Martin Page

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5						
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7						

**1 Across:** Not artificial **1 Down:** Child carers  
**2:** Medication **3:** Italian relief work **4:** Pasta dish  
**5:** A small morsel **6:** Lettuce **7:** Papal Chapel  
 © Paul Towers

3			2			7	8	6
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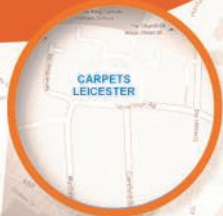
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