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Hello From The Editor

Hello and welcome to the July edition of the Western Park Gazette.

From now onwards the Gazette will reduce and eventually remove the Tudor Rd area from our distribution footprint and increase the number of copies delivered to Braunstone and Rowley Fields. Newfoundpool and Woodgate will remain untouched.

In this issue we follow the adventures of West Leicester's most intrepid cyclist as he embarks on another mammoth biking fundraiser, Carey Tunstall has very timely advice on how to deal with the evils of Knotweed, Helen Knott has a good rant at the increasing number of young balaclava wearing crims riding around our neighbourhoods causing problems for everyone, from shops to car break-ins, and we have the latest updates from our local police.

Brain feeling foggy? Keep the little grey cells busy with the Word Wang and sudoku on the back page!

As always - a big thanks to our advertisers!

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Events Diary

Hall @ St Anne's, Letchworth Rd: Knit & Natter: 1.30pm, 4th Tues. **Weds Club:** 2.30pm, 1st Weds.
Pram Club: Weds 9.15-11.30am. **Women's Taekwondo:** Thurs 8-9pm. **Fri Coffee:** 10am. **Pop-up Pub Monthly last Fri from 6pm** Susan Barton
Talk on WP Open Air School. 16 Sept, 2-3pm
Musical Memory Box: 1st & 3rd Tues 2pm. The Grove, Braunstone.
Free Tea/Coffee @ St Paul's Worship Ctr / Community Hub, Kirby Rd Weds, 2- 4pm. **T-Top sale 2nd Sat.**
@ Nat Space Centre: UK in Space Fest. 20 Sept.
Great Cent Railway: Autumn Steam Gala. 1-4 Oct
Wonderful Walks on Western Park: Monthly 3rd Sunday. 9.30am start at Hinckley Rd gates.
Ladies Pop-up Shop & Fashion Show for LOROS: 27 Sept-2pm. Tix £7. Braun Civic Cent.
@ Metal Monocle: Trisubversion 19 Sept. Sx Shop Mushrooms/ Mount Slatra /Oracular 24 Sept.
@ The International: The Jammed 19 Sept. Dressed To Kill (Kiss trib) 25 Sept. Sounds of The Lioness 27 Sept.
@ Curve: Silvia A Musical Revolution 24 Sept-4Oct. Education Rita 26 Sept-17 Oct.
@ DeMont Hall: Lee Mead – The Phantoms 24 Sept. Daniel O'Reilly 25 Sept. Alan Davis 6 Oct.
@ Little Theatre: Sweeney Todd 15-19 Sept The Elton John Story 4 Oct Jonny Cole (Stand-up) 6 Oct.
@ The Y Theatre: Chukl with Chris McCausland 24 Sept. Scott Matthews 25 Sept. Seann Walsh: 1 Oct.
Guildhall Free Tours: To 30Sept. visitleicester.info

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NO DILLY DALLYING

56 year-old Jimi Dally from Western Park, decided to cycle around the UK and the east coast of Ireland earlier this year in memory of his parents who both died between 2023 and 2024. Jimi wanted to raise awareness of the importance of hospice care after his parents, Sarah and Chris, were unable to access it themselves due to the shortage of beds.

He says: "My challenge was to cycle 3,000 miles earlier this year, starting at LOROS and heading anticlockwise mainly around the UK coastline.

"The whole ride was about remembering my parents, and I thought I could raise some much-needed funds for LOROS while also spreading a message, wherever I went, about the chronic underfunding of hospices across the country.

"The route took me along some beautiful coastline up the east coast of England before spending 18 days navigating the amazing scenery of Scotland. From Cairnryan on the west coast of Scotland, I caught a ferry to Belfast in Northern Ireland, before continuing through Ireland and finishing in Rosslare. I then caught another ferry to Fishguard in Wales and continued my adventure around the amazing UK coastline, finally finishing back home in Leicester.

"This wasn't my first long-distance challenge. I had cycled the UK coastline before in 2022 and I thought I knew what to expect. However, it's hard enough

getting mentally prepared to ride a bicycle for 50-odd days across all the different types of terrain you encounter, but you cannot control the weather.

"I started earlier this time around and had to deal with the end of Storm Dave, along with some horrendous weather conditions at the top of Scotland. The highest wind speed I encountered was nearly 40mph, and I spent seven full days in waterproofs.

"I have raised more than £8,000, but I would love to get that to £10,000, so I took part in the LOROS 100-mile cycle around Leicestershire on 5th September, followed by the LOROS Half Marathon on 11th October. Hopefully I can reach that £10,000 milestone by the finish of those events".

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More Than Meets the Eye: The Science of Eye Colour

Have you seen the iris-photography studios that have appeared in some European cities? They take a close-up photograph of your eye and transform it into a dramatic piece of art. Some combine two irises in one image, creating a striking portrait for couples or families. Enlarged to poster size, the iris resembles a distant planet or intricate landscape, revealing colours and patterns normally impossible to appreciate.

The coloured part of the eye is the iris: a ring of living tissue surrounding the pupil. Its main purpose is to control how much light reaches the retina, rather like the aperture of a camera. Under magnification, every iris contains a unique arrangement of fibres, rings, ridges and tiny markings. Even identical twins do not have identical irises.

Eye colour is largely determined by our genes, which regulate how much melanin is produced and distributed within the iris. Melanin is the same natural pigment that gives colour to our skin and hair. People whose genes produce higher concentrations of melanin in the iris generally have brown eyes, while moderate amounts create hazel tones and smaller amounts contribute to green, blue or grey eyes. The final shade also depends on how light interacts with the microscopic layers of the iris.

Surprisingly, blue eyes contain no blue pigment. The absence of melanin allows light to scatter within the iris giving it a blue appearance. Research suggests that blue eyes first appeared following a genetic mutation between 6,000 and 10,000 years ago; before that, everybody had brown eyes.



ALAN BELLAMY

Alan Bellamy is the senior optometrist at Bellamy Eyecare, serving Leicester and Irthlingborough communities for over 22 years.

Brown is still the most common eye colour worldwide. An estimated 70–80 per cent of people have some shade of brown from black to warm honey, gold and copper. Green eyes occur in only around two per cent of the population, while grey and amber eyes are rarer still.

Hazel eyes are particularly fascinating because they can appear green outdoors, golden indoors and brown in lower light. The iris itself is not changing; differences in lighting, clothing and pupil size simply alter how we perceive its colour.

Eye colour may change during early childhood as melanin develops. In adults, apparent changes are usually harmless. However, a genuine change affecting one eye alone, particularly if accompanied by pain or blurred vision, should always be examined.

Whatever their shade, every iris is an entirely unique natural work of art.

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KNOTT'S LANDING

Balaclavas have a long and illustrious history dating back to the 1850s and the battle of Balaclava where they kept British soldiers warm in the bitter winter of the Crimea. Until recently, the face covering kept you from losing your nose to frostbite so it's a shame now that they are associated with crime. People who are wearing those black balaclavas these days, especially in the height of summer, have no excuse other than keeping their identity under wraps. Wearing black trousers and jackets makes it hard to tell them apart.

Hiding your face is a universal signal that you are up to no good. A balaclava is now an admission that you are ashamed of your actions - that you know you are a lawbreaker. We see these men in black every day, often skinny types in their late teens or early twenties, and it's almost exclusively men who wear them. They're seen riding stolen e-bikes and e-scooters at speed without helmets, driving motorcycles across parks, attending marches about 'forrainers in boats', and hanging around in jitties and outside shops.

The Asda garage on Hinckley Road, our local supermarkets and corner shops have been the repeated victims of shop thefts, often by men in

balaclavas. It must be terrifying to work there at night knowing that people travel through the jitties under the cover of darkness just to nick a six-pack of beer and a steak with menaces.

That little Asda garage has had its glass door smashed in numerous times, and thousands of pounds worth of stock stolen in organised raids, while the staff stand helplessly by.

The police are stretched so very badly they have no quick way to help other than to react. Preventative policing feels like a distant memory and not because they don't want to do it.

I ran into two young men wearing the fascists favourite face covering while walking home from a friend's at about 1am on a Saturday night recently. I fantasised about being able to rip the black, polyester head condoms off and shove them hard where the sun doesn't shine. I didn't. I couldn't. But I do wonder if having to carry ID is the way forward. Because if you're up for a bit of crime and want to hide who you are, the police should have a way of finding out

Helen Knott



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Woodgate Community Centre 36 Woodgate, LE3 5GE. Monthly 1st Saturday 11.00am – 12 noon at Fosse Library, Mantle Rd. 3rd Saturday of each month 11.00am – 12 noon. Fosse Community Meeting, 13 Nov 6pm & Mantle Rd. No surgeries BH weekends, Easter or Xmas.

Western Ward: George Cole, Vi Dempster, Molly O'Neill. T: 07891 232 672, 07976 348 325 & 07742 766 462.

New Parks Library, 321 Aikman Ave, LE3 9PW First Saturday of each month 11.00am – 12 noon

Westcotes Ward: Cllrs Adam Clarke & Sarah Russell. T: 0116 454 0034 & 07814 532 928

Surgery: Westcotes Library, Narborough Road, LE3 0BQ, 2nd Saturday of each month, 11.00am – 12.00 noon.

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Riverside Football Ground, Braunstone Lane East, LE3 2FD. Saturdays 9.00am to 10.00 am

Cllr Halford Surgery: B-inspired, 39 Gallard's Hill LE31QR. T: 07736 194813.

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Take the family to Leicester's award-winning heritage attractions this autumn, thanks to a Kids Go Free offer at the King Richard III Visitor Centre and Jewry Wall Museum.

Up until October 31st, up to three children aged up to 15 can visit both attractions free when accompanied by a paying adult.

At the King Richard III Visitor Centre, explore the remarkable story of England's last Plantagenet king, and at the Jewry Wall Museum, take a step back in time and discover what life was like, 2,000 years ago, in Roman Leicester.

Visit the websites for the King Richard III Visitor Centre and the Jewry Wall Museum for more info.

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A £6.40 Family Flexi Day Ticket offer is available every Saturday and Sunday throughout September. The ticket allows up to 2 adults and 3 children under 16, unlimited day travel anywhere in the Flexi Area for only £6.40 and £10 at all other times.

The ticket can be used across participating Leicester Buses operators, so families can change between operators as part of their journey.

The special offer is part of Leicester Buses' support for Catch the Bus Month, the annual campaign encouraging people to choose the bus more often.

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10 YEARS OF CARS + COLOURS

How difficult is it to start a winning business in a new country and in ten years become one of the top 5 in your field? Marek and Bozena Zabicka, along with their son Dawid have the answer.

Tucked away on Abbey Gate, just off Woodgate, you will find Cars + Colours body shop, arguably one of Leicester's top first aid spots for your car - and a family success story that started with Marek in 2008.

Marek, who had spent many years working as a panel beater, arrived in Leicester from Poland on a contract to work as a vehicle sprayer. His wife and future business partners Bozena and Dawid arrived later. A few years on and they set up Cars + Colours, but it wasn't until Brexit that the three made up their minds to go all in with the body shop.

The company started in 2016 and has steadily expanded ever since. Bozena said: "It began in a tiny office, with pigeons everywhere, and a small repair shop. Friends and local businesses supported us to start with, and it grew from there.

"As Brexit arrived and Poland had become economically successful, we decided to stay here and put our savings into the business. Our children were educated in the UK, and this seemed the right choice."

The business expanded into the space around them and now employs 12 technicians and support staff, handling an eyewatering 1000 repairs a year.

Marek, Bozena and Dawid credit their recent growth to Marcin Lipinski for driving the business forward.

He joined them 4 years ago as MD and is responsible for getting the necessary BS:10125 accreditation for insurance work. Marcin said: "That was a big thing. It quadrupled our turnover and opened the door for insurance work. Now we're looking to buy a diamond cut alloy wheel refurb machine and safety calibration equipment for new cars."



Cars + Colours is a small, friendly family-owned west Leicester business, that treats people as names not numbers and to celebrate their 10th anniversary you are invited to their birthday party!

"It's a big thank you" said Bozena, "To all our customers and friends who've helped us on the journey! "Discounts, food, a DJ and a workshop tour will all be on offer! Come and see for yourself and join the party!"

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CAREY'S COMPOST CORNER



Japanese knotweed is one of the UK's most troublesome invasive plants. It was originally introduced as an ornamental garden plant at Kew gardens in 1850. It was then used as erosion control enabling soil stability and even went on to win a gold medal as forage for cattle. Now it can cause huge problems for homeowners, neighbours and the local environment. Its rapid growth and extensive underground rhizome system make it particularly difficult to control.

One of the main dangers is its ability to spread rapidly. Japanese knotweed can regenerate from tiny fragments of rhizome or stem, with pieces as small as 1cm capable of producing a new plant. Digging, strimming or moving contaminated soil without care can therefore make the infestation worse and potentially spread it into neighbouring gardens.

The plant can also damage domestic gardens and hard landscaping. Its vigorous growth can exploit existing cracks, joints and weak-



nesses in paving, tarmac and other hard surfaces, causing shoots to emerge and surfaces to become uneven. Although claims that Japanese knotweed routinely destroys sound buildings are often exaggerated, an established infestation close to structures can create genuine management and repair concerns.

There are also environmental and financial consequences. Dense stands can crowd out other plants, reducing biodiversity, while an infestation may complicate the sale or purchase of a property. Sellers in England are expected to disclose relevant information about Japanese knotweed during conveyancing, and lenders may need an appropriate management plan.

Homeowners should also be aware of their legal responsibilities. Having Japanese knotweed in a garden is not, by itself, illegal, but owners must take reasonable steps to prevent it spreading. Plant material and contaminated soil may also be classed as controlled waste, so it should never be placed in household or garden-waste bins.

There are anecdotal reports of Knotweed in West Leicester; any sightings on council property or public parks should be reported to the council immediately.

If Japanese knotweed is suspected, avoid disturbing it and seek professional advice. Correct identification is important, and specialist treatment can help prevent the infestation becoming a costly, long-term problem.

Leicester City Council do have a good advice page online or email treesandwoodlands@leicester.gov.uk

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Sept Police Update

A father and son have admitted robbing several businesses in Leicester, Nottingham and Glenfield. This included the One Stop Shop on Stephenson Drive in New Parks on 2nd July.

Gary and Jack Moore pleaded guilty to a string of offences, including possession of an imitation firearm, when they appeared at Leicester Crown Court.

They committed their offences between May and July, targeting several shops by threatening staff, stealing quantities of cash and are due to be sentenced on 28 October.

Two men have been charged with murder following the death of George Glover. Mr Glover was attacked riding his bicycle on 17th August at the junction of Narborough Road and Noel St and later died from his injuries at the Queens Medical Centre in Nottingham.

Chae Smith, 31, has also been charged with one count of robbery and one count of possession of a bladed article, Joshua Cook, 24, has also charged with one count of robbery.

In addition, Louise O'Connor, 39, of Noel Street has been charged with one count of robbery.

All three appeared at Leicester Magistrates' Court on 24 August.

Police were called to Winstanley Drive just after 5pm on Thursday 13 August following a report that a group of men were fighting with weapons. In the interest of public and police safety, armed officers were deployed. A total of eight people have been arrested.

The men, three aged 18, two aged 23, two aged 20 and one aged 21, were each arrested on suspicion of affray.

The 18-year-olds were also arrested on suspicion of possession of cannabis with intent to supply, with one of them also being arrested on suspicion of crack cocaine with intent to supply.

All eight have been released on bail while enquiries continue. No serious injuries were reported during the incident.

Officers continue to tackle anti-social behaviour and drug related issues highlighted by a recent patch walk around Glenfield Rd East and surrounding streets. Earlier in the month police conducted multiple stop searches, seized drugs, confiscated an illegal E-bike and arrested 2 people. More recently 4 people have been arrested - wanted for pre-existing offences.

The Fosse and Westcotes beat teams have performed numerous stop & searches after groups were seen congregating in the area near the Kirby Rd playground, arresting one man under suspicion of dealing Class A.

The area continues to be of great concern to local residents and businesses and police are working to solve these issues.

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S	R	E	W	O	L	F	H

Can You Solve The Word Wang? Hidden in the above box are the following words:

Autumn, Foses, Pay rise, River, To, Brown, Raw, Work, Ivy, Squirrels, Winds, Flowers, Leaves, Return, Storm, Rain, Fiat.

Answers: westernparkgazette.co.uk © Paul Towers

	3		6	5		1		
	2	5						8
				2	4			5
	9	4			1			
		7				4		
			7			3	8	
1			5	9				
9						2	6	
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