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Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the November edition of the Western Park Gazette.

This month we feature the spooky shenanigans of Halloween as our local ghouls and ghoulesses took to the streets of West Leicester to demand their yearly tribute of sweets. We captured it all on camera!

We find out about a new novel featuring our own local witch, the legendary Black Annis, local photographer Tony Shelly compiles a book about long gone West End corner shops and Project Hive unveils their plans for the EcoHouse on Western Park.

In our regular features; Helen Knott nearly gets blinded by a laser pointer and is way past homicidal about it, Tony Huxley, has advice on protecting plants from frost, Roger Blackmore's gooin' Skeggy, and Ed Jones delivers our monthly Policing Update.

As Christmas is just around the corner the De Montfort Hall have given us 4 competition tickets for Aladdin! Oh yes they have!!!

And unsurprisingly the crossword and Sudoku stare beadily at us all from the 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.

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.

Upstairs @ Western in Nov 27/28th: Essex Girl,

29th: Rhymes Against Humanity, Dec: 4th - Fitting, 15th - I Gotta Right To Sing The Blues.

DM Hall: Nov: 26th - Love Actually In Concert

28th - Jools Holland, 29th - Adam Ant, 30th - Emeli Sande, Dec: 3rd - Australian Pink Floyd,

Curve Theatre: 19-24th Nov: The Gruffalo 23rd Nov-11 Jan: West Side Story.

Festive Local Makers Market: 30th Nov. Railway Arch 2, Bede St. LE3 SLD. 11-3pm.

Stand-up Comedy: 23rd Nov. 7.30-11pm. Hall at St Anne's. Tickets £11pp from eventbrite.co.uk

Project Hive Xmas Party: 30th Nov. 7-11pm. Hall at St Anne's. Tickets £15pp from eventbrite.co.uk

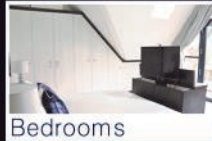
Xmas Fayre: Dec 7th. 1-3.30pm. Dovelands Sch.

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KNOTT'S LANDING

Sometimes after work I sit in the car for a few minutes in the absolute quiet. There is no-one demanding my attention, nothing for me to do except be, nothing that needs saying, there is only peace. Once I've achieved a state of equilibrium I set off home.

A few days ago, having achieved a sort of zen and set off, my equilibrium was blown out of the water by a group of teenage boys on the top deck of a bus in front of me.

These horrible children had bought a laser pointer and thought it was hilarious, just such a brilliant game, to point it in a complete strangers face. I could see them looking down at me and laughing. I pulled my visor down but they switched sides at the back so they could try and hit me with the laser light again and as we went round a corner, they managed it a couple of times. I kept the car on the road by the skin of my teeth but it was not pleasant and could have resulted in a serious accident.

Laser pointers are powered by AAA batteries but they are strong enough to burn your eyeball and cause life-changing eye injuries. Green and blue lasers are more dangerous because of the frequency of light they emit – around 550 nanometres – which is very strong. Probably most perti-

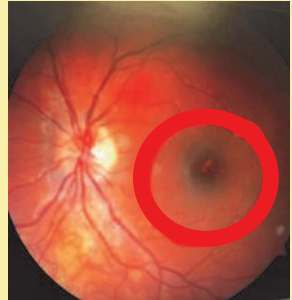
nent to this story is that IT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE TO SHINE ONE AT A DRIVER - even for a few seconds. The sort of offence that could get you five years in jail and an unlimited fine.

It was clearly very dangerous to stay close to them so I turned up a side street and called 999 to give the details of the bus and the boys on it. I don't know if anyone else was attacked in this way that evening but it was a vicious and evil thing to do and their evident glee at my discomfort meant they probably did it to others. What is really bizarre is that these things are still sold as toys!

The big takeaway from this is if you see anyone in your family with a laser pointers or pens then take it off them and bin it, unless you are prepared for them to blind themselves or someone else.

I hope the police found that pack of boys. I hope they were arrested. If not, I hope they get Noro virus and flu at the same time. Karma is a bitch.

Helen Knott



Hole in retina caused by laser pointer

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GOOIN' SKEGGY

Many Gazette readers may remember joining or seeing the queues at the former Belgrave Road Station on a summer Saturday, as trains departed for Skeggy and Mablethorpe. The station was on the site of what became Sainsbury's and the Peepul Centre. The direct trains to the east coast were very popular.

Today, that line out of the city, via Scraftoft and the quaintly named John O'Gaunt station, have long gone, thanks to Dr Beeching and his infamous report. Skegness however is still (just about) reachable by rail. In these days, when holidays in the UK are increasingly popular, Leicester is within easy access of a number of interesting inland destinations which can be easily reached from London Road Station without having to change.

Prominent among these is the city of Lincoln which is surely one of the most interesting cities in the country. With its cathedral and castle, remains of the Bishop's Palace and attractive waterfront, the city is becoming increasingly popular for inland holidays and weekend breaks. Lincoln also has some good hotels as well as bed and breakfast accommodation.

Also directly accessible by train is the fenland city of Ely with its magnificent cathedral, famed as an architectural masterpiece. This also houses the stained glass museum. Not far, further along the line is the university city of Cambridge. Here many of the colleges are open to visitors and the Fitzwilliam museum is world famous. Trips in punts along the little river Cam, which gives its name to the city, are very popular, as are visits to the lovely nearby village of Grantchester, with its famous Orchard tearooms. Be warned however that the station is a good mile from the city centre though easily accessible by bus.

Nearer to Leicester, the historic towns of Stamford and Newark, the latter home of the Civil War centre, also welcome day visitors or those looking for a weekend break close to home.

I have deliberately highlighted a few destinations for which you do not have to change trains or platforms to visit. Sadly, many once popular haunts, such as Sutton on Sea and Mablethorpe, no longer have a railway. Quite a number of destinations, luckily, remain to be explored within easy reach.

Roger Blackmore





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ON A ROLL AT HALLOWEEN!

October 31st is a scary time in our neck of the woods!

Dozens of young ghouls and goblins roamed the roads of West Leicester as night draped its vampiric cloak over the neighbourhood.

From the pouring rain sodden pumpkin race on Western Park to the impressively gothic household transformations, the level of effort homeowners and locals go into is staggering. It certainly shows a huge sense of community has built up over the last few years.



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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.

On November 6th we held our most recent public meeting at Dovelands School. Despite the terrible weather it was well attended by a cross-section of the community and three of our local councillors. Parmar Properties were there too and gave a brief overview of their plans for the rest of the site along Hinckley Road. We had arranged the meeting to update residents on our progress with the project and also to introduce our architect who unveiled the current version of the plans for the finished building and what it will offer the area. It was great to hear the overwhelmingly positive comments on the designs.



This is a crucial time for Project Hive. We have now embarked on a crowdfund campaign which will enable us to complete the first phase of the redevelopment works when our target is successfully met. We are delighted that the City Mayor Sir Peter Soulsby has backed us with a £5000 pledge but now we need your help. We are asking for as many people as possible to make a cash pledge of support, from as little as £2. The local community needs to show that they don't *just* like the idea of Project Hive happening and are happy to buy a cake, build a scarecrow or roll a pumpkin, but that they actually WANT to make sure it succeeds and becomes a valuable asset to the area and beyond.

This space could continue to be an eyesore and sit empty and increasingly dilapidated or it could be something that will bring people together, get people talking, learning new things. It could bring isolated people out of their front rooms, enabling them to feel valuable and connected. A place to get to better know our neighbours. It could remind us of what the Eco House showed us about sustainable living. It could be this and more. It could be a hive of activity. But ONLY with your help.

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Award-winning Leicester author Bali Rai, centre, with Isis Liddle, left, the winner of the Everybody's Reading Sue Townsend award and runner-up Chelsea Watts, right

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LIGHTING UP THE SKY!

It's become a local tradition that the Crows Nest Pub hosts an annual free firework spectacular and this year was no different.

Hundreds of people gathered in the pub's car park for plates of traditional Bonfire Night nibbles before spilling out onto the road to watch Narborough Road based pyrotechnics experts, Leicester Fireworks, set off a dizzying exhibition of multi-coloured sky tearing explosions.

Traci along with her two children go every year. She said: "It's great! The kids love it and it's just around the corner. It's so friendly and much safer than doing yourself or spending a fortune going to one of the bigger displays. And the food's great too!"



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BLACK ANNIS RETURNS

Many in West Leicester will be familiar with the legend of Black Annis - an evil crone who lived in a hole somewhere near Western Park. This monstrous tale has inspired a Leicestershire based author to pen her first novel.

Frances Evelyn was born in Coventry, worked in Leicester for twenty-five years and now lives in Rutland. The Changeling Tree, her debut, is set in Leicester and inspired by the local legend of Black Annis herself.



Local folklore tells of a witch also known as Anna or Agnes. She lived in Dane Hills, in a cave scratched in the sandstone with her own fingernails. Annis prowls the woods at night in the form of a black cat, searching for children to skin and eat.

Annis's origins have been traced to Celtic and Germanic mythology and to a 15th century Dominican nun.



Frances's Black Annis is the queen of the Faerie. When the court grows tired of endless pleasure, her rivals begin to vie for the throne and Lord Carrick challenges her to a game. If he succeeds, his prize will be a single wish. If he fails, she'll cast him out forever.

Mike Murray's girlfriend, Tracy Goodfellow, is missing. Her mother claims to have no idea where Tracy is, but she seems uninterested in her daughter's whereabouts and unconcerned for her safety. Months later, Mike still needs to know why Tracy left and to find out whether she went of her own accord.

On the night of the winter solstice, Mike returns to Tracy's house, which stands dark and deserted. In the garden there's a pram, and inside the pram is a baby...

The Changeling Tree is published by Galdorbec on 22 December 2019 in paperback, as an e-book and is also available on Amazon.



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TICKETS TO ALADDIN!

It's panto time once again (Oh yes it is...!) and this year we can climb aboard De Montfort Hall's magic carpet and fly to ancient China to meet our hero, young Aladdin.

Aladdin, with his mother, Widow Twankey, works long hours in the family laundry.

His life takes a dramatic turn one day when his long-lost uncle, Abanazar, appears and helps him find an ancient lamp from a cave full of treasure.

Disaster falls as Aladdin becomes trapped in the cave and in despair he rubs his hands – accidentally unleashing the genie within.



As the genie offers to grant Aladdin's three wishes, he soon finds out that magic wishes are not all they seem.

The De Montfort Hall hosts this traditional family pantomime full of songs, laughter, fun, baddies, silliness – and lots of custard pies!

Starring X Factor winner Sam Bailey and pop star Antony Costa from Blue, as well as Channel 5 Milkshake! presenter Nathan Connor, BBC Radio Leicester's Martin Ballard, Paul Burling from Britain's Got Talent and magicians Matthew Pomeroy and Natasha Lamb it promises to be the ideal Christmas show for young and old.

Aladdin runs from 14th December until the 5th January at De Montfort Hall.

If you would like to win THE SET OF 4 TICKETS and join Aladdin on his epic trek just email the answer this question by Dec 10th 2019 to: editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk

THE QUESTION

What is Widow Twankey's job?

- A: Car mechanic
- B: Bar maid
- C: IT expert
- D: Washer woman
- E: Grocer

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CLOSED ALL HOURS

For most of the 1970's, I lived in terraced accommodation in Rydal Street. Back then I didn't use any major stores, preferring to shop local at the many corner shops in the area, and over the canal in places like Ridley Street, and Cranmer Street.

In the years that followed, many of these traditional premises were taken over by the Asian community, opening different hours, including 'Sunday opening', in doing so changing public shopping habits forever. But as time moved on, even these began to close down, some converted into living spaces, or just remaining empty for enormous lengths of time.

Coming back to live in the West End nearly a decade ago, I was saddened to see just how many corner shops, once the centre of so many different communities, had no occupancy whatsoever, although some were managing to hold their own, despite the competition of bigger, more established stores.



As a photographer, it struck me that I should record this passing of time, before corner shops begin to fade into history, forgotten by all but the communities and generations who used them. Walking street after street with my phone camera and three clip-on lenses, I began to gather a segment of social history here in the West End, a facility was for many citizens, a way of life in their daily and weekly shopping routines.

The ongoing project is called 'Closed All Hours' the intention being a self published book to appear in the summer of 2020, and maybe a website.

Tony Shelly





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Nov Police Update

This month saw a national initiative to tackle County Lines offending. Your teams have been targeting those engaged in the criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults. This included the execution of warrants upon premises suspected to be utilised for this activity and targeting the main routes utilised by travelling criminals. County lines criminality the growing phenomenon we need your help reporting suspicious activity.

As daylight hours become shorter we traditionally see a rise in burglaries. Whilst we have seen a reduction compared to previous years, it is still important to consider some simple steps to prevent you from becoming a victim. Keep doors and windows locked at all times even if you pop outside or go upstairs. Prevent easy access to the side of your home with locked gates and fencing, ensure valuables are in a safe place and make sure your home looks occupied by using automatic timer switches to turn the lights on and off. Be a good neighbour and don't be afraid to report anything out of the ordinary. You could always register your belongings with www.immobilise.com.

We are increasing patrols and specifically targeting our efforts. In particular we are visiting those whom we suspect to be burgling, to make them aware that we are taking an active interest in them. This is already starting to have an impact, with the capture of one active burglar caught in the act and now safely remanded to prison. Thanks to good quality CCTV, a number of suspects are being actively sought and their pending arrest is an inevitability. It is worth mentioning the good work of officers in the securing of a six year jail term for a distraction burglar who preyed upon a 92 year old victim.

On a different tact, our area has been one of the first to have deployed the new 'digital media dogs'. Whilst this may conjure up images of pooches pouting on selfies, our canine friends are being trained to sniff out tiny SIM cards, media sticks and all manner of small computer storage devices.

Finally, the hard work of your officers have been recognised! Awards for PCSO of the year and Beat Team of the Year were scooped by West Leicester in last month's Chief Constable's Award Ceremony. Just gently blowing our trumpet but it means that you have the best of the best working hard to keep you safe!

Don't forget you can now use our online portal to vote on local issues important to you. This can be done by visiting www.leics.police.uk I would encourage you to use this and hope to report upon what you have said and what we have done in response.

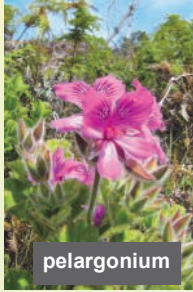
Sgt Ed Jones

Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



After a month of Diluvian weather it seems like the flood waters are finally receding. So, once I've got the animals back off of the Ark I'm hoping to get out on the garden again. But clearer skies and colder nights mean a risk of frost so it's time to protect any tender perennials you'd like to keep for next year.

Lift and pot up your favourite pelargoniums (geraniums) and place in a frost-free greenhouse or a cool bright windowsill. Cut back large plants and remove old leaves and flower heads. Reduce their watering and keep well ventilated as they're prone to mildew. If specimens are too large and space is too limited it's easy to take cuttings.



Dahlias continue flowering until the first hard frosts kill the foliage. That's the time to cut them back to a few inches above the ground before digging out. Remove as much soil as possible, as well as any remaining foliage or damaged and

rotten parts. Be careful as the tubers break easily. Keep them upside down for a couple of weeks to heal up, then place them in containers on dry sand, compost or similar. Check them regularly and discard any rotten ones.

You can do the same with tuberous Begonias, Canna Lilies and Gladioli. It may also be worth lifting or taking cuttings of your favourite Salvias (part of the mint family which includes sage) or Fuchsias. If you lack the space or have larger, established plants that don't appreciate the disturbance, like hardy banana plants and Agapanthus you may need to leave them in situ. In which case, mulch the plants with something like compost, woodchips or straw. You could cover them with cloches but check them for pests like slugs and snails, as they also appreciate a nice warm place to bed down for the winter. Talking of which, I'd better get those animals back to where they belong. The lions are taking an unhealthy interest in the zebras and that dove has torn a branch off my laurel bush!



Tony Huxley



Martin Page

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5: Alter attendant **6:** Swimming breathing device
7: Tumbler

© Paul Towers

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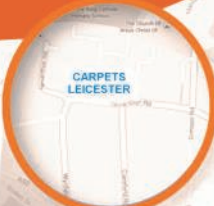


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