

LOUDWATER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER No. 50

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Guest Editor: John Jarrett

FIFTY UP

First, as we celebrate our newsletter's 50th birthday, make a note. The LRA AGM will be on May 18. If you're a new resident, come and learn what we are about: if you think Loudwater is in peril, come and hear what we're doing about it. As water is such a feature in Loudwater, we hope to have a speaker from the Thames Water Board whom you can ask if our rivers are endangered (the Estate Board says there's no aluminium pollution in the Chess, by the way.)

Second, Loudwater's great annual social event, the Garden Party, will be on June 18. It's the great chance for newcomers to meet the rest of us, a great free occasion for the kids and the sun always (well, nearly always) shines.

PAUL'S PRIZE

Another Loudwater character in the news, the much-liked Paul Noon who delivers milk to most of us. Paul appeared, beaming as usual, in the Watford Observer when he was nominated by the Express Dairy for the Milkman Of The Year prize. With agonising slowness, the competition has reached the last twelve, all of whom get prizes. We wait as we go to press to find out if Paul wins deservedly and gets the big prize and his personalised milk float!

ON BOARD

The Loudwater Troutstream Estate Board has changed its method of running the Estate. After the retirement of Hywel Francis, its Secretary, the Board found itself unable to persuade anyone to take on the job. So the Directors have decided to split these functions among themselves, one taking responsibility (say) for planning, one for finance, one for admin. etc. We wish them well, especially since the new Chairman, Derek Speight, fell ill as soon as he had been elected! He's well again now.

It's perhaps not surprising there was no rush of volunteers for what is a thankless job. The Editor has known four Secretaries, all of whom worked very hard and all of whom faced continual criticism — too lax, too strict, too solemn, too light-hearted, too legalistic, too ad hoc — often from people who were more ready to find fault than to offer help. To Hywel, as to his predecessors, the LRA offers thanks for warm co-operation.

While writing about the Estate, we have been asked, and gladly agree, to re-state the desirability of not leaving the gates open. Many new residents may not understand why residents on the Estate decided a number of years ago by an overwhelming majority to install these gates. At that time it was anticipated (rightly) that there would be more building round the Estate perimeters, that the M25 would tempt more motorists to look for a short cut to it, and that road maintenance costs would rise. More cars going through the Estate would raise noise levels, increase danger to the children and old people living on the Estate and cause extra wear on roads which we alone have to pay to maintain. All of those arguments still hold good. I know it takes a minute (at most two) to open and close a gate, and that it's an irritation in the rain. BUT remember, each time you or yours can't be bothered to close a gate, it's YOUR peace and quiet, your children and old people and your pocket that suffers.

Two notes: the Board will supply keys to anyone entitled to them. Secondly, it's possible that some of the offenders are the builders who never seem to be absent from the Estate

in these development days. Please ask them to use the ungated entrances rather than give them keys.

ARE YOU MISSING?

The pace of change in Loudwater grows faster. At the same time, the job of organising newsletter delivery has changed hands several times recently. We think that, because of this, a number of new residents who should have been asked to join and have had newsletters etc have been missed. We're checking all deliveries in the New Year. But meanwhile, if you know anyone whom we have missed, please let Ann Tate know (R.773863)

YOU WRITE

Correspondence has been brisk this quarter. Many thanks and keep them coming.

1. "For the past seven years I have had a fish trap in my stretch of the river which I monitor regularly. This is the first year in which I have not caught any trout, eels or other fish larger than 2" long. I have written to the Thames Conservancy Board to ask if this is a general feature of the river or if it is associated with the increase of watercress production upstream. Watercress growers do not like such creepy-crawlies as shrimps on which fish feed and use zinc sulphate to control the shrimps. No shrimps mean no fish. I will advise you when I have an answer from the Thames Conservancy."

Alan Crisp, Burnside, Troutstream Way

2. "My wife and I make a yearly collection for the Spastics Society in T.Way and Farm Lane. This year's collection was over £66 and we would like to thank all who contributed.

Secondly, I am becoming concerned at the group of young cyclists who tear up and down our end of T.Way. One or two elderly ladies from T.Hall walk the road in good weather but the youngsters show little respect by whizzing past between them and the grass verge. I fear a nasty accident sooner or later. Youthful exuberance is a fine thing but so is common courtesy and respect for other people."

J. Prince, Stamhus, T.Way

(The Editor has had several complaints on the same line, from T.Rise as well as T.Way and K.Lure, concerning not merely cycling but also skateboarding, starting very dangerously at the K.Lure junction. The group swelled at its peak to a dozen, led (let's be fair) by one boy and one girl. A few tactful words have been spoken to the leaders' parents and matters seem to have improved. Most people would not want to stop kids cycling in Loudwater — personally I think skateboarding is less safe — but as Mr. Prince says, too many too thoughtlessly is another thing.)

3. "I have written to Richard Page MP expressing deep concern about the Conoco Oil Company's proposed pipe line through the grounds of Chorleywood House and across the Common, but do not feel any great optimism in view of this Government's negative attitude to preserving the environment as evidenced by the proliferation of building in Loudwater, opposed by all and then afterwards allowed on appeal to the D.O.E. I wish Mr. Ridley lived in the neighbourhood of one of these building sites and had to put up with the noise, dirt, smell of bonfires as trees and shrubs are immolated and above all encounter the huge vehicles delivering plant and materials constantly blocking our country lanes and ruining banks, verges and trees as they pass. I am sure many other residents feel the same way."

Joan Townend (Mrs.) Ridings, Bridle Lane

(Indeed they do. The Editor has twice been called on recently to sites where builders have persistently cut across lovingly-tended verges or parked right across entrances so that mother couldn't get out to fetch a child from school. My advice is forget those doing the damage — almost always sub-contractors — fire a solicitor's letter with claim off to the main contractor.)

4. "I always find your newsletters interesting and informative. Carry on the good work! You regularly refer to wild animals. Perhaps I could put in a word for the birds. When you and I first came to Loudwater the Spring bird song was a great pleasure (even if too early in the morning!). Today we no longer have that. Each Spring the grey squirrels (American tree rats) climb into nests and take eggs for breakfast. The only eggs that stand a chance of hatching on our land are those nested in the front porch or in toolsheds.

Unfortunately many residents regard squirrels as "lovable" and attempts to shoot them as cruel and unnecessary. I say: "Do you want to be overrun with squirrels or to have thrushes and blackbirds? The balance of nature was upset by the introduction of grey squirrels (and escaped mink which fortunately have mostly been destroyed). The damage squirrels cause to trees and shrubs is also unbelievable.

So let us, I beg, reduce the squirrel population to give birds a chance to survive and to give us the pleasure of bird song in Spring."

Dennis Longman, Woodstock, Violet Way

NOTES

Muntjac sightings continue to confirm the pattern we've established. Thanks to Mrs. Townend again and to Mrs. Rogers (Wendover, Bridle Lane) who was lucky enough to see a dam and young, and has one that drinks from her fishpond.

We noticed that Three Rivers District Planning minutes were not mentioning the LRA specifically but referred to us as "from a Loudwater resident". We pointed out that when the LRA writes to the Council it speaks for some hundreds of residents and that Councillors might well get a wrong impression that only one resident was expressing a view. The Planning Office has been good enough to take our point and we are now mentioned by name.

AVIS' WINS

Our invaluable contributor on the natural history of Loudwater AVIS has a stout reply to the doubters referred to in the last Newsletter:

"The pair of snipe seen in December 1983, by the footbridge over the Chess near the Masonic School grounds (the extreme limit of my observation area) were, to my way of thinking, the rarest of my bird sightings. How wrong I was. Clearly the snipe is well established in Loudwater: indeed, a veritable pest!

My expectation was that if any interest at all was generated by my earlier list of birds spotted thereabouts, it would have been positive — i.e. additions of other species. But dismally, no. Only a negative response, suggested subtractions. YUK! I suggest that as copy for the Newsletter, this subject be dropped here and now: though, if you meet the lady who wondered "who ever sees a cuckoo" you might suggest that next May she takes up station in the open ground near Loudwater House. As the bird flies over, it can be identified readily. It calls "Cuc-coo".

That's telling the "snipers!" And of course, we want more from AVIS. Actually, we have twice before had lists of birds (in 1977 and 1978) and it's interesting to see how much they match. AVIS has, apart from the snipe, eight species unseen by others: Messrs Fuller and Beharrell in 1978 showed their waterside residence by listing six no one else has (dabchick, green sandpiper, mallard, Muscovy duck, redpoll and tufted duck) while your Editor in 1977 found to his surprise two in his list no one else claimed, flycatcher and nightjar . . .

Incidentally, the Editor treasures a little booklet put out by an estate agent in the 30s when the Metroland surge began, and Loudwater was being built. How's this for nature notes, just to take one extract?

"Small wonder, then, that father's blackbird and his mate have made Loudwater's sparkling stream valley their happy pitch: thrush and linnet, mallard and heron, nightingale and chaffinch, and even that gorgeous little chap, the kingfisher,

have known the secret of Loudwater for generations: the wily speckled trout, too, beneath the stream's ripple past the fairy dingles — all add to the irresistible fascination for nature lovers."

They don't write ads like that nowadays!

For those who want less empurpled prose about Loudwater, I recommend George Ray's "Chorleywood and Chenies." The information, if somewhat thickly packed, is massive and has fascinating items, for instance that our river was at one stage, called the 'Loudwater' and that Glenn Chess was owned by the man who founded the London Illustrated News, H. Ingram.

WELCOME to (among others)

Mr. and Mrs. Matzer Van Bloois (Dutch) and their children. The Shieling, Violet Way.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Patel, and family, Dacres, T.Way.

Mr. and Mrs. A.B. Slifkin, Troutstream Lodge, T.Way.

Mr. and Mrs. Nathwani, The Coppice, K.Lure.

Finally, to all residents new and old (who is now the longest resident in the Loudwater area?), a very Happy New Year. We who have been here for so long may look back with rose-tinted glasses and regret. But only dying organisms remain free from change and over the years the LRA has been in being, much less harm has come to Loudwater than it sometimes seems. That's thanks to the support you give us. Come to the AGM and the Garden Party and help us continue to thrive as a community in this area.

IT'S PAY TIME

When your deliverer gives you this newsletter, he or she will also ask you for your subscription. At £2 it's the cheapest good cause you can support. If your deliverer misses you, could you please send the £2 in a cheque made out in the name of the L.R.A. to Maurice Escow, address at the top of this newsletter. Thank you.

SOME NEW NAMES

It's always rewarding to find that we merely have to say we need some new blood on the Committee for good people to offer themselves. We've now filled the vacancies we reported in October. Welcome to Margaret Homan, T.Way, R.774693; Isobel Johnson, T.Rise, R.772873; and John Reid, L.Lane, R.773473.

PLANNING

Of the four applications the LRA opposed from the last list, three have been refused, one withdrawn

8/959/88 Danemaur, Whisperwood. New detached dwelling (Opposed, refused.)

8/966/88 Baystock, Whisperwood. Two-storey side and rear extension, detached double garage, accommodation over (Opposed).

8/988/88 Chess Place, L.Lane, New detached dwelling (Refused).

8/1026/88 Rose Garth, L.Heights. First floor side extension (Granted).

8/1054/88 Sanam, T.Way. One-storey front and side extension.

8/1077/88 Round House, L.Drive. Two-storey side extension and detached garage block.

8/1096/88 Miraflores, T.Way. First floor glazed enclosure (Granted).

8/1142/88 Silverdene, Sarratt Lane. Rear extension (Granted).

8/1145/88 Lightwoods, T.Way. Demolition of existing building and erection of three detached dwellings (Opposed, refused).

8/1150/88 White Woods, Cherry Hill. Two-storey side extension.

8/1151/88 The Coach House, L.Lane. Two-storey side extension (Granted).

8/1163/88 The Old Farmstead, Farm Lane. Single-storey rear extension (Granted).

8/1167/88 Uptop, T.Way. Two-storey side extension (Granted).

8/1172/88 Larchmead, T.Rise. Two one-storey side extensions, new dormer window and chimney stack (Granted).

8/1266/88 High End, T.Way. First floor side extension, front bay window extension.