

## LOUDWATER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER No. 56

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Editor: John Jarrett

The World Cup — and the weather — notwithstanding, we had over 60 members at our Annual General Meeting. It was perhaps no surprise that the major topic of discussion was the proposal to widen the M.25. It soon became clear that, although the Committee had feared it was pressing ahead too fast, members present felt the opposite, that the drive should be pushed ahead with greater urgency.

John Jarrett, the Chairman, said that to take on a major Government department would cost money but that the L.R.A. did not want to take members' money until it proved necessary. The meeting disagreed and, on a show of hands, urged the Committee to ask for money now, rather than be caught asking for it at short notice.

The Chairman said that we had already been promised some £3,000 on request but that we would be needing a great deal more than that if the campaign had to be fought all the way, though he hoped that, in view of what was now total opposition by every local Government and residents' group in the area, the local MP would ask the Dept. of Transport to reconsider.

The LRA Committee discussed the AGM advice later and have agreed to make the appeal. We hope to raise initially £10,000. With what we have been promised by some members in excess of that, we should have no difficulty. It is appreciated that among our 400 members there are a number who are in favour of the motorway widening, but if only half of the others give an average of £50 we shall make the target. To prevent further damage to our homes, our environment, to protect us against more noise, more poisoning of our air, food and water, it is surely worth it.

As soon as it is clear that we are on target, we shall approach other objecting local associations and ask them also to raise funds. The LRA itself will put in at least £500 from its reserves and we hope there will be a contribution from the Troutstream Estate Board. Since this is a new and major venture, we think it right that two trustees, neither of them on the Committee, be appointed to ensure that proper records are kept and the money properly used. Any money contributed will be recorded (anonymously by a number if requested) and any unused will be returned with accrued interest, but not until such time as the Committee is convinced that the battle has been won or lost.

We have, of course, in newspaper statements tried to make clear what all those opposing feel is wrong with any of the possible plans to increase the motorway size — be it tunnel, viaduct, one lane either side, two or four lanes on one side, special lorry lanes etc. We will be repeating them in the appeal letter. But briefly, since not everyone may have read the articles, the points made are as follows:

1. The Government's main claim is that better motorway capacity will be to the country's economic good. This is persistently claimed but the Dept. of Transport's own press statement admits there are no validating figures. We also suspect the cost of motorways quoted omit proper repair, maintenance, fire, police, ambulance services and certainly no social/environmental cost.

2. The traffic estimated for the M25 has turned out massively wrong. Road engineers now accept that motorways attract traffic, especially short trip traffic. If the official estimate is that traffic in the next 35 years will increase by between 80% and 140% is correct, we will need at least four more lanes for every motorway — and if the official figures are wrong,

even more. Clearly impossible.

3. Therefore we believe that in not too many years, the widened motorway will turn out to be inadequate, barring other measures. Indeed, the Dept. of Transport's own statements envisage (to make the plan work) 50 m.p.h. limits, lane changes being restricted, junctions (such as 18) being closed etc.

4. But, by the time the mistake has been admitted, in S.W. Herts alone hundreds of homes will have been ruined, open space concreted over, pollution levels increased and billions of pounds of taxpayers money spent to no avail.

That is the case in brief.

### THE AGM, PART ONE

The M.25 discussion came in the second, open part of the meeting. Before then, the Chairman reported the normal activities of the Committee. We were gaining in skill in our dealings with planning applications and Don Cammell did an expert job, so that we had succeeded in every case in the last year. We were trying to help and encourage the owners of two afflicted small woodlands to fell and replant. Desmond Martin was harrying the various water authorities to investigate reports that the Chess was becoming more polluted. Our membership was now at its highest ever but some newcomers, particularly those originally from the Asian sub-continent, had not yet become involved. Our auditor, Mike Hill, reported that funds were now over £2,000 in line with the LRA policy to have just enough to meet any sudden need. Eric Tindall, Chairman of the M.25 sub-committee, said that they had gathered much technical information about road surfaces and noise reduction. Our pressure for the restoration of white-lining in L/water Lane has produced a promise this will be done this summer. We are still being consulted about the future of Chorleywood House, but it seems probable it will all be converted to offices and flats. P.C. Richard Allen, our local bobby, was congratulated on the work he and Jim Davis had put into re-organising Neighbourhood Watch. Messrs Cammell and Brine were the committee members due to stand down. Mr. Cammell was re-elected, and both the Chairman and Mike Hill spoke warmly of the service Cyril Brine had given and of the richness of his life. A warm vote of thanks was passed to the Chairman.

### OUR MUSICAL EVENING

Every time we have a musical evening, those who come say: "Do have more!" We think one a year is enough, and that we should vary the fare. We've had classical, semi-classical, pop — now we are into cabaret-music. The group is called "After Eight", they've appeared at spots from Grosvenor House to a Penzance disco, there are five of them, and they perform exclusively to raise funds for charity, in this case the Pinner Residential Home.

The date is September 30, the time is 8.00p.m. and the venue once more Loudwater Farm. Wine and light refreshments will be served and Tickets, £4.50 from Maurice Escow, are limited to 70, so apply soon, please.

Incidentally, the AGM speaker was Mr. E. Saunders, who is Chairman of the Loudwater Subud group who have restored the Loudwater Farm from an overgrown, dilapidated and dangerous quagmire to its present charm. Recalling the volunteers' work in hacking through the jungle, Mr. Saunders said that he was stung so often by nettles he was hospitalised!

He explained the individual-with-God, work and contemplation orientated nature of the Subud group. Mr. Saunders spoke of the nut-tree walk that has been planted, the hope that the listed barn would soon be properly floored and also expressed his gratitude for the way the Subud members have been received in Loudwater. The Subud is happy (by arrangement) to show visitors round, especially children, and we are grateful to have such a charming venue for our Musical evening. Come and see for yourself.

#### THE GARDEN PARTY

We did it again — the only really Sunny afternoon for weeks before or since and we got it!

For early comers, the Garden Party even had its own wild life show — our two resident swans and their four dove-grey cygnets and a couple of pairs of duck and drake with their numerous peeping offspring. In fact, when committee members arrived early to set things up, they had to shoo the birds away from the patio where they had settled down for the Sunday brunch Mario and Margaret Bianchi normally give them. Our thanks to the Bianchis for again letting us use their lovely garden. Two boys — and two crates of beer — went in the river, but all were saved.

Again, all those who came were warm in praise for a lovely occasion. But some people never come. Why? In fact, although our attendance of some 130 people was good by most people's standards, it was down for the second year on the 200 plus we used to get. Again, not one Asian family. If you've been and enjoyed yourself, please encourage new residents to come next year; the children, who come free, have a great time racing around between filling themselves with snacky bits and drinks, we have an enormous range of soft drinks and for the resident alcoholics (like your Chairman), it's a real bargain.

#### BE SAFE, NOT SORRY

Richard Allen is keeping us well informed of what's happening on the crime front in Loudwater. We can only repeat that it is still by and large remarkably crime free for an area so open and with so many people with valuables. The largest number of crimes are still thefts, almost entirely car radios and lawnmowers, which are now expensive enough to be worth taking. Richard says he can only repeat the necessity of locking, properly locking garages and garden sheds. If you've a valuable car or lawnmower, it is worthwhile — I know it's a bore — keeping the doors shut at all times. If you leave them open, a thief can see what's worth nicking without even coming close to your property, and he'll mark it down for a future night.

There has also been — only on the fringes of Loudwater, admittedly, but still — a nasty outbreak of anti-Semitic scrawlings. Again, Richard would be glad for any call if you suspect anyone.

One other plea from Richard. Several times recently, he or his colleagues have been called out when burglar alarms have gone off only to find they have been given no information as to who the second key-holder for the house is, when owners are away. So they just have to go away and hope there wasn't a burglar. Please when you are away, drop a note into Ricky police station with the name and phone of whoever has your second house key.

It is failures such as this that have led one or two senior police officials to question whether Neighbourhood Watch is taking too much police time. They say (with some justification) that while police are happy that Neighbourhood Watches are set up and happy to help that process, it is up to the community after that to keep it running. If too many people in the community aren't willing to put a little effort into protecting their own property, not only will the Neighbourhood Watch

scheme collapse (and our reduced insurance premiums), but police chiefs may even question the efficacy of having any neighbourhood bobby at all!

#### PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Since we last published, Bill Pitt-Ford of Trout Rise seems to have been in the Watford Observer regularly! Bill is Chairman of the Macmillan Cancer Relief Nurse Appeal which is trying to raise £120,000.

It was a great pleasure to see at our Garden Party no fewer than three of our Associate Members, that is, those who have moved away but wish to keep in touch. Thank you, the Usbornes, the Dones and Geoff Liley.

#### CHORLEYWOOD HOUSE

We mentioned above that at our AGM the news was given that Chorleywood House would probably be converted into offices(!) and flats. We are grateful to Three Rivers District Council (as was) for enabling representatives from the LRA and the Chorleywood Residents Association to attend and speak at the meetings. At the last meeting, however, it was clear that the officers' recommendations would mean that there would be no community use of the house once conversion was agreed. (Cllr. Ann Shaw took the Chair at the meeting, As Cllr. Grindell, the leader of the Conservative majority group, did not attend; he has in fact not attended any Council's Working Party or public meetings on Chorleywood House in the two years since the W.P. was formed!) John Ellis, the Chairman of Chorleywood Residents, and your own Chairman, made our protests and reiterated that the grounds were sacrosanct, but it seems that we and they will no longer enjoy the dignified comfort of Chorleywood House for our meetings. Probably we shall consider Christ Church School, which would be equally convenient, if less impressive than the panelled Council Chamber of Chorleywood House.

#### YOUR COMMITTEE

We are glad to welcome John Reid as our Treasurer to replace Cyril Brine. Secondly, it is vital that the LRA Committee continues to have representatives from all the major roads in our area. Therefore, can we again appeal for a representative from Lower Plantation — we haven't had one for two years now, since Fred Bingham and Dick Bilton both found work pressing too hard on them. Any volunteers, please?

#### PLANNING

- 8/1040/89 Carema, Timberidge. Two-storey rear extension. (Approved)
- 8/1116/89 Rookery Nook and Long Ridings, Erection of five dwellings (Opposed, refused, revision submitted, opposed, refused, going to appeal)
- 8/13/90 Tara, T.Rise. Three-storey front extension. (Approved)
- 8/25/90 Sanam, T.Way. Erection of detached garage. (Approved)
- 8/223/90 Tayholm, Lower Plantation. First floor side extension.
- 8/233/90 Jordans, T.Rise. First and rear dormer and side windows. (Approved)
- 8/306/90 17 Lower Plantation. Single storey rear extension. (Approved)
- 8/57/90 Oak End, Wagon Way. Two-storey side extension, detached garage.
- 8/369/90 Highland Water Gardens, Solesbridge Lane. First floor office.
- 8/467/90 Old Tiles, T.Way. Conservatory.
- 8/510/90 The Old Farmstead, Farm Lane. Single-storey side extension.