

LOUDWATER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER No. 57

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Editor: John Jarrett

The result of our M.25 appeal is odd. Those who have responded have been more generous than we could have hoped and we are now almost one-third of our way to the target. BUT fewer than a quarter have responded at all. We sent — at some expense of money and labour — a S.A.E. with every copy so that, if you didn't want to help, all you had to do was tear off a slip, write your name and slip it in the envelope and into the post. If you did want to help, then you also had to write a cheque. But neither required any major effort. Three hundred of you haven't made that effort, so here is a plea.

PLEASE, PLEASE, REPLY!

From the hundred or so replies we have had, two conclusions can be drawn. As said above, those who want us to fight want it strongly — hence the high average donation. Secondly, the percentage who don't think it's worth fighting has risen. Our initial straw poll showed about 85% wanting to fight. The appeal response, in contrast, is running 70/30 at the moment. One can draw some inferences from this, but not strong ones. It is, as I have said, easier to say "No" than to actually hand over some money: there are always some people who cry "Something must be done" but won't actually help to do it. But the percentage of support is still high. What is worrying is that, even if it is a true representation of you all, the sample is small. If from a fifth of you, we have raised nearly £3,000, our target of over £10,000 should not be difficult. BUT WE HAVE TO HEAR to assure the Committee that the majority of residents want us to continue with expending a lot of time and energy. Please dig out the form and return it before you're up to your necks in Christmas!

WHAT YOU HAVE SAID

Of those who have said they do not want to help, there is very little evidence of any common reason. A few members have said that the money will just go to make lawyers and experts rich. I don't know about rich, but of course if we fight we will have to pay experts. Those who have arrived recently may not remember that it was only by paying experts to speak for us that the old A404 Committee forced the Government to double the insulation and improve the gradients on the North Orbital. (Yes, I know they're not good enough but they would have been worse). If we get results, the payments will have been justified. One or two have said they hate the idea of extra lanes but it's not worth fighting when we can't win. Well, London beat off their extra lanes, so it can be done.

From supporters, a few quotes.

"The politicians must understand there has to be a limit on the noise and pollution. An alternative solution must be found." . . . "A reliable public transport service system must be a better answer." . . . "A secondary objective for the LRA must be to see that junctions such as 18 — or even 17 and 18 — are closed." . . . "I can't afford much but I do thank the LRA most warmly for fighting what seems the only way of protecting my children from being poisoned and their world threatened by the motorway mania."

A MESSAGE FROM RICHARD PAGE, MP

Our MP Richard Page has most courteously been in touch, having seen our case and appeal documents. He feels we have not quite fairly put his position. We hasten to report what he feels is accurate. "I have never been 100% in favour of the extra lanes irrespective. But something must be done to

improve the inadequate and dangerous Junction 18 access, and *if* the extra lanes can be built to a proper standard, and if with the greatest possible care for homes and the environment, then I think no one should reject — or accept — it out of hand."

Mr. Page also urges the LRA to extend its campaign as widely as possible as soon as possible. We should, he feels, be seeking views in Bucks and, if possible, from all other residents' associations along the whole length of the M.25. He feels it is a matter of some concern that there appears to be so little evidence of any residents' interest in the Denham/Slough area which is where the first engineer's report will consider. It is, he feels, too late to wait till all the details are known before seeking the general public's views in that area.

We are in fact already trying to sound views in Bucks and have begun to try to make contact with other M.25 areas. But it all takes time, and some money. We will keep you in touch.

OUR MUSICAL EVENING

Perhaps our most successful yet. All tickets were sold and, although some people became discouraged by the torrential rain falling up to an hour or so before we started, the house was nearly full. After Eight, who performed, were great fun, using Betjeman, Noel Coward and Kenneth Williams material for skits on subjects varying from property developers to molecatchers and Rasta string quartets.

As always, the audience not merely applauded the acts, but enjoyed themselves meeting one another in the interval — your Chairman had some task getting them back to their seats. Once again, the Subud, in the person of the new warden, Mr. Wilton, couldn't do enough for us, and we are lucky to have such a pleasant setting for these evenings.

BYE-BYE CHORLEYWOOD?

One of the little-recognised sentences in the Department of the Environment's judgement about the change in the Chorleywood boundary could have a very important effect on Loudwater. In making the ruling that Chorleywood (Bucks) should become part of Chorleywood, Herts in 1992, the Secretary of State also said that Three Rivers must review the Rickmansworth/Chorleywood boundaries. The statement makes particular reference to the Cedars Estate and Loudwater.

It should be stressed that Three Rivers will not even begin to consider this till after Council elections next year. But when the Secretary of State says something must be reviewed, he is tacitly requiring changes. Some members may not realise that the S.E. side of L.Lane, some houses in L.Drive, and all the Chess Lane complex are already electorally in Rickmansworth.

What the Cedars Estate residents do is, of course, their affair. We suspect Valley Road will consider itself Chorleywood biased, but The Drive, Highfield, Hill Rise etc might feel differently. A number of LRA members may feel Rickmansworth is more use to them than Chorleywood but others may feel that they do not want, whichever place they most frequent, to be electorally and church-wise anywhere else.

The matter is complicated by the suggestion that, if these changes do take place, the Cedars Estate could be transferred to Moneyhill Ward, while Loudwater could be taken into

Croxley Green. It seems unlikely that any but a very few LRA members would consider themselves as part of Croxley (although Croxley Green at least now has a Parish Council which would be lost by any Cedars or Loudwater move into Rickmansworth or Moneyhill). Members might care to raise the matter with their Council candidates next year, so that when the matter does come up, they know where we stand.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Older residents will have been sad to read the news of the death of Nick Nicholls (Loudwater Lane), after a brave struggle. All the early Garden Parties owed much to the energy and organising ability of Nick, who ran all the arrangements and presided over the bar with brisk efficiency in his white suit and Panama hat.

Those who watched the Battle of Britain anniversary day will have noted the name and impressive bearing of Air Marshal Sir Ivor Broom (Bridle Lane) carrying out the vital post of marker for one of the many parading columns. Air Marshal Sir Ivor is also the very busy President of the Rickmansworth Society.

Those interested in another kind of battle — the Test matches between India and England — might if they were lucky have caught sight of the talented Indian spinner N. Hirwani but in T.Way, not Lords. Mr. Hirwani was paying a short visit to his Patel friends in T.Way.

Mr. and Mrs. Duce, of Bridle Lane, have asked us to report the marriage of their oldest son, Martin Graham to Fiona Jan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ian Scleater of Watford. The wedding on May 26th, was at The Queen's Chapel of the Savoy.

Miss Maggie McLeod, of Loudwater House, was pictured on the front page of the local paper when the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire opened the new extension to the P.N.E.U. school in The Drive where Miss McLeod is the head.

BITS AND PIECES

We've had our usual few burglaries in the past few months. Our rate is still much lower than surrounding areas, but that is small consolation for those affected. Your editor does not think it can be repeated too often and that there is no reason for anyone in this area to barricade themselves in at night and cut off all freedom to go out or be visited. There are no cases here of burglars knocking at the door or committing physical assault to obtain entry.

On the other hand, it's still amazing how many people leave houses and cars wide open with valuables in sight. The other day, a car (not belonging to a resident but calling on one) was left in a selfish and foolhardy way. It belonged to a soft furnishings agent. 1. He parked in such a way as to block three exists. 2. Indignant householders investigating found he'd left his window down. 3. He'd left his doors unlocked. 4. He'd left the keys in the car. 5. He'd left probably a thousand pounds worth of materials in the car. 6. Any mischievous kid could have got in, fiddled with the keys and (the car was facing down a hill) created a nasty accident. No wonder the police say a little care is worth a dozen Rottweilers.

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By the time you get this Newsletter, the gate on Violet Way into the Estate will probably be closed. A new gate has been installed and the lock (which can be opened by the keys that operate the other gates) should be in place. There will undoubtedly be some who are delighted (see re burglaries above) and some annoyed. May we stress this is an Estate Board right and an Estate Board decision, not the LRA's.

The Estate is also replacing the notice boards at the gates. Two have already been replaced, others will be as and when needed.

* * *

As we go round, your Committee sometimes gets praise, sometimes complaint. Fair enough — sometimes, we deserve neither!

But we do try. For instance, a number of people have asked why we don't do anything about the state of the woodland North of L.House along T.Way and Violet Way. Please be

assured we have tried. We know that, after two successive hurricanes, it is a shambles. The owner has been good enough to have work done, as we and the Estate urged, on trees dangerously overhanging the two roads. Inside the wood, however, is entirely the owner's to do as much or as little as he likes. We appreciate that parts of it look like a 1914-18 battlefield, but, just as nobody has any right to walk through it, with dogs or without — although many people do — so nobody has any right to demand it be cleared up in what would be a very expensive operation. Both the LRA and the Estate Board have offered to put together some consortium that would, for a modest price, buy the woodland, which would then be cleared and replanted on a rolling ten-year basis, and we could have advice from the Chiltern Society or the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. So far, there has been no response.

* * *

As we've said, you win some, you lose some. Mostly we've won lately and we can now report a small but significant victory. Members may remember there was an attempt recently to develop on the critical Cob Cottage site, in T.Rise. It was of course beaten off. But your Chairman and his favourite Parish Councillor, puzzling over the plan, noticed with surprise that a sliver of land, on part of which the development was proposed, and which stretched across the road alongside the river, was not listed as Green Belt. In conjunction with the Estate Board, we at once made representations and it is understood that the new District Plan recommendations will include making that strip Green Belt. We think it unlikely that these proposals will not be approved.

However, we have still failed on another issue — the whitelining of all of L.Lane. Two years ago the contractor neglected to do this, and ever since we have been nagging. It will be done, it will be done, we were told, and eventually a few months ago, it was. Up to a point! The white-lining stopped just past Glen Chess. We pointed out that the old Liberal Democrat controlled Council had promised L.Lane would be white-lined as a priority, whereupon the new Conservative Highways Committee Chairman told us that it just so happened that, a few weeks before the contractor started, a directive came from the County Council that roads under six metres wide were not to be whitelined. We are still waiting for any explanation (saving money — at the expense of lives? seems the likely answer) but in the meantime we are pressing. Meanwhile, members might care to express their views to Cllr. Tim Williams, Chmn. Highways Committee, or to Cllr. Hazel Whiting, the local District Councillor on transport.

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We appealed for a representative from Lower Plantation — hey presto, we get a volunteer. Mr. Anthony Moss of the Water Garden, Lower Plantation has been gratefully accepted on to the Committee which once again has representatives from every major road in Loudwater.

PLANNING

- 8/1116/89 Long Ridings and Rookery Nook, L.Drive. Erection of five dwellings. Opposed, rejected, appealed, refused.
- 8/223/90 Tayholm, Lower Plantation. First floor extension. (Approved)
- 8/57/90 Oak End, Wagon Way. Two-storey side extension and detached garage. (Approved)
- 8/369/90 Highland Water Gardens, Solesbridge Lane. First-floor office extension. (Approved)
- 8/467/90 Old tiles, T.Way. Conservatory. (Approved)
- 8/510/90 The Old Farmstead, Farm Lane. Single-storey side extension. (Approved)
- 8/545/90 Troutstream Hall, T.Way. Two-storey rear extension.
- 8/550 and 551/90 Rasehill Cottage, C/wood Rd. Depositing soil and regrading land
- 8/559/90 Borromor, Bridle Lane. First floor front extension. (Approved)
- 8/637/90 Long Hedges, L.Lane. Front, side and rear single-storey and rear first and second-storey extensions.
- 8/565/90 Briar Cottage, Chess Lane. Detached dwelling and garage.