

## LOUDWATER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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Editor: John Jarrett

The River Chess is one of Loudwater's great features. After all, it is the sound of its running that has given us our name. It fringes the gardens of riparian owners: many more can see it from windows: and the bridges provide a vista for everyone and a place where generations of children have gazed wide-eyed at swans and ducks, watched for "enormous" fish and, of course, played Poohsticks. So it is important that our river is in good heart.

But it is not. For years now, residents have suspected trouble — bad smell, discolouration, weed growth, few fish. Now we know they were right.

Committee member Desmond Martin, a riparian owner, was asked to see if any scientific work was producing proof. He found that Miss Julie Harrison had recently studied the Chess for her Master's degree. She has now kindly given us permission to see her thesis and quote from it (it has to be a quotation, because the full report is 238 pages). Clearly, in quoting so briefly, we have to generalise — any errors in so doing are our responsibility, not hers.

Last year, Miss Harrison sampled the Chess water at seven points, starting up-river north of Chesham Sewage Treatment Works and coming down to Loudwater. From one sampling point, Bois Mill, South of Chesham, to its junction with the Colne, below the Ricky watercress beds, the Chess is, by an EEC directive, a "salmonid river", that is, capable of supporting salmon and trout. For this, the water must be of a high quality. It is not.

The reasons for the deterioration are many — intensive use of chemicals in farming in the North, treatment by riparian owners, discharge from fish farms etc etc. But the main causes of damage appear to be two.

In 1984, there was a spillage of cypermethrin, a chemical which nearly exterminated shrimps downstream of Latimer Bridge. Shrimps form the main food of many fish, no shrimps, no fish.

But Miss Harrison's report puts the main blame on Chesham Sewage, particularly after it had in 1981 to take over from the overloaded Bovingdon Sewage works. The National Rivers Authority had already said Chesham was unsatisfactory for poor control of effluent, design faults, incorrect ammonia levels and the works was largely rebuilt.

Unfortunately, the rebuilding, in attempting to improve matters, made them temporarily worse, through negligent control by contractors. By April 1990, the contractors were still at work, and the NRA was saying that the works were still deficient in pollution control.

The disturbing conclusions in Miss Harrison's report can be summarised thus.

There is high organic matter (which includes sewage) in the silt throughout the Chess, 25% over the EEC limit. It is less in our stretch of the river. There is too much lead, cadmium and zinc, and possibly too much copper. There is too low a population of invertebrates — thousands of which have been put in — generally and, the trout and salmon fry do not survive. Trout and fish farms are discharging too much chemical and fish faecal matter. Miss Harrison exempts and actually praises the Solesbridge Lane Highland Water Gardens. Water plants are still too low and blanket weed is too high. The fish caught are smaller than normal and there are too few juveniles. Of the areas monitored, Loudwater has, because being furthest from Chesham, lowest pollution levels but there is still too much fish faecal matter, unpurified

sewage, copper, cadmium and zinc.

If the NRA is correct, and Chesham Sewage works do what is required, things should start to improve this year.

We believe Miss Harrison, and the LRA, have done a service in making this report public. We have already had comments from two residents who have seen it. "Frightening — but I wonder if anyone cares enough . . . to do anything about it?" and ". . . bad. I have decided to avoid farmyard trout in future." For those who wish to read further, the report is with Dr. Desmond Martin, Chess Cottage, L. Lane. For those, who wish to encourage better control, contact the National Rivers Authority. (Dial 100 for Freephone 3666 or 0734 575268).

P.S. Ironically, after showing that water pollution control is not adequate, Miss Harrison has not been able to get any work in water pollution control.

### THE M.25 SILENCE

We reported in the last issue that the Government's next stage plan had been issued with suspicious speed as soon as Mr. Rifkind took over, shortly before Christmas when, perhaps, not too many people would notice. The Committee instructed Eric Tindall and your Editor to contact all local authorities along the whole length of the M.25 for their views. NOT ONE HAD SEEN OR HEARD OF THE PLAN! Consequently, neither had any of their local Residents' Associations. They have now been alerted but it is also clear that no other district is going to be as severely affected as Three Rivers, so we do not know what reaction will come. However, many of the local authorities asked us to send them our material, so the LRA is still leading the campaign.

Our fund has now reached £5,000, less than we hoped for, but, of course, we have made only one appeal nor have we asked any other groups to contribute. It may interest members to see who is now with us in the consortium which has acquired the name NORMAL (No More Motorway Lanes). They are Three Rivers District Council, Chorleywood Parish Council, Sarratt Parish Council, Loudwater Resident's Association, Chorleywood Residents' Association, Heronsgate Residents' Association, Tatling End (Bucks) Residents' Association, Brickett Wood (Dacorum) Ratepayers' Association, the Chiltern Society, and the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Protection Society. Three other groups are poised to join as soon as it becomes evident that the widening will affect them.

And we have just heard that the first houses affected have been bought by the Department of Transport after blight orders had been established and the owners had found that they could not sell. The payment for the houses, which are on the *South East* side of the motorway, are reputed to have had meagre payment from the D.o.T.

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Our AGM is on May 16. We've steadily had more people at this meeting. As this may be the last we can hold in Chorleywood House, some people may want to come and say a goodbye if the worst turns out. There'll also be your reactions to the Water report (above) and there will be some major decisions to make about our M.25 plans.

The other important date to book now is June 15 for our Garden Party. That, as we said last time, is as good as ever but not as many people are coming. We don't know why — it's still *the* social gathering. Some people say that they know



so few people in Loudwater nowadays they'd have no fun. Surely, the Garden Party is the one great occasion to meet new people? We don't know the venue yet — it's been suggested that we'd get a better attendance if we moved out of the traditional T.Rise sites, lovely as they are.

#### **BITS AND PIECES**

Our plan to put a bench along T.Way to provide a breather for some of our older residents is going ahead. We have had to be very careful in making sure that any house on whose verge the bench would be is happy about it, and several residents have happily said we can use their verge. You will remember the bench is in memory of our late Treasurer and long-time resident Cyril Brine — and this has brought us some embarrassment. The first houses we found agreeing to siting it on their verge at once said: "What a good idea, can we make a donation to the cost?". It was something we hadn't considered but now we have to, because clearly some people who admired Cyril would be hurt if they did not have a chance to contribute.

So, let us make this clear. We are *not* asking for money but if you do wish to contribute in memory of Cyril and for a good cause, please send your cheque, with a covering note specifying it is for this purpose, to John Reid (address at top). Many thanks.

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Desmond Martin has now taken over as Chief Co-ordinator of Neighbourhood Watch. He is concerned that there are some areas not covered at all, and will be trying to find volunteers to fill them.

He and other members of the Committee went to a useful meeting of the Police Liaison Committee. We say useful, because, apart from making our number, contacts were made there outside the official meeting that might, just might, get us something over centre white lining (road bumps?) in L.Lane.

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The group that is trying to save Chorleywood House for the community is still pressing on. (Inevitably two members of the LRA Committee — Don Cammell and Michael Nest — are heavily involved.) The group has put before Three Rivers D.C. a plan which they believe is realistic in financial terms while still preserving the possibility of community use. Three Rivers so far is not appearing to accept the figures.

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This is not a Loudwater bird note, but we think it's worth putting in just the same. Sparrowhawks are back on Chorleywood Common after decades without them. We wait impatiently for AVIS or any other 'twitcher' to see one here.

#### **PEOPLE IN THE NEWS**

One very special tribute to a Loudwater resident did not make the local papers, so you may say you read it first here:

Many people who knew Mr. and Mrs. Bicknell of T.Way

either knew before or learned on his recent death of Mr. Bicknell's international fame in the field of recording classical music for what was HMV and then EMI. Few, perhaps, knew of his wife Gioconda's international reputation as a violinist. As a young girl, she won first prize at an international competition in Vienna from a jury including Krauss, Kubelik and Flesch. She went on starring in international concerts up to the war, though more and more of her time was spent teaching. At the 1953 Edinburgh Festival she was chosen to play a famous Stradivarius.

Now the Italian Government has recognised her work with an award in the Mozart bicentenary year of the Premio Amadeus, a special distinction for those who have contributed conspicuously to music in Italy and elsewhere. The Italian Ambassador said that Gioconda De Vito (her maiden name) was "a captivating artist".

Clive Radley, former Middlesex and England cricketer, of T.Rise, has also had a tribute paid to him — but one that many would not have the courage to accept. Clive has been appointed to succeed Yorkshireman Willie Watson as Chief Cricket Coach to the MCC. Bearing in mind how much our cricketers in the recent defeats in Australia were criticised for poor technique, we must all keep our fingers crossed.

The local paper recently carried a front-page story about Miss Agnes Harwood whose 90th birthday was celebrated by many when she became Moor Park Golf Club's oldest playing member. But some people may have missed the note in the story that reported that a special cake was made for Miss Harwood. The cake was decorated — wait for it — with a spaniel, a pony and trap, Moor Park Mansion and some sweet peas! Cake-maker who noted Miss Harwood's interests so cleverly? Mabel Tindall, of Overstream.

#### **AND MORE BITS AND PIECES**

Welcome to Simon Harris and Jenny Bell, who have moved in to Treetops, Cherry Hill. They moved the day the snow was at its worst!

Talking of snow, all those who believed in sympathetic magic have had a few words to say to your Editor for gloating (last issue) that we hadn't had snow and ice. Sorrrryyyy!

Lastly, this is the time of the year when the member who looks after your patch for us will be asking for your subscription. It's still only £2 — We think — and hope — you will feel it's well worth while.

#### **PLANNING**

(An apology. 8/799/90 Ladyswood House, T.Way, was cited by us last time as approved. No decision has as yet been made.)

7/870/90 Little Petherick, T.Way. Conservatory at rear. (Approved)

8/873/90 Wedgewood, Sarrat Lane. Single-storey rear extension. (Approved)

8/113/91 Newlands, Bridle Lane. Double garage and workshop. (Approved)

8/114/91 Rasehill, Chorleywood Rd. Erection of garage.

8/53/91 Wren Top, Bridle Lane. Part double, part single and first-floor side extensions.

8/79/91 Willow Cottage, L.Lane. Single-storey side extension.

8/74/91 Homewood, Farm Lane. Erection of detached dwelling.