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NEWSLETTER No. 67

APRIL 1993

Editor: John Jarrett

Many of you found the film "The Importance of Being Albert" (shown at our last AGM) fascinating. Well, the canal comeback goes on. During the first three weeks of May, the largest fleet of narrowboats seen in fifty years will be moving cargo throughout Britain's canal system with the journey's climax coming at Batchworth Lock over the festival weekend of May 21-23.

The event is called CANAL 2000 because 1793 was recognised as the peak of Britain's canal mania. Boats will be coming from Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, the Wash and London and will tie up and unload - three abreast - at the festival site of nearly a mile along the towpath from Batchworth to Stockers. There'll be trade stands, school competitions, a Victorian fairground, fifteen hot air balloons, jazz by Terry Lightfoot's quartet, a symphony concert, a late night ceilidh, clowns and acrobats. And not to forget ALBERT - he'll be used by Chiltern Radio as a broadcasting station.

Talking of the AGM, this year's will be on Wednesday May 26, at Loudwater Farm, 8 pm as usual. A special entertainment is being arranged.

THE MOTORWAY BATTLE

The latest evidence of the Dept. of Transport's folly comes with the news they are considering imposing a 50mph limit on the Junctions 12-15 sections of the M 25. Reason - to prevent the surge-and-stop pattern that is making traffic on this section particularly badly jammed. But wait a minute - isn't this the one section of the M 25 that is already four-laned, as they want to do to us? That's right. If it hasn't worked there, why should they think it will work here?

Meanwhile, the battle continues. Representatives of NORMAL have been invited to address a Friends of the Earth conference in London on transport, and a Civic Trust meeting ditto in St. Albans. We were also asked to attend the meeting at which D.o.T. spokesmen explained the scheme to Three Rivers District Council. Unfortunately, the Chairman of the meeting, Cllr. Clements, refused us permission to speak, despite protests from other councillors. But we were, at last, able to make our point to three of the local MPs at the House of Commons. It is our belief that the letters from LRA members to Mr Richard Page have played a major part in bringing this about. Please keep writing.

We also need your help on two other fronts. The local Three Rivers District Council Conservative group of councillors has tried to put a motion that the "rapid widening" process should be accepted. Luckily, this was defeated in full Council. Those who feel the motion was not helpful should write to the Conservative Group leader, Cllr. Alan Littlejohn, at Three Rivers House. Similarly, a rather less unequivocal motion was passed by the Chorleywood Parish Council, and letters would be welcomed to Cllr. P. Birchley at the Parish Office. It should be pointed out in fairness that all parties are still opposed to the link roads programme.

In the meantime, because some uncertainty seems to exist, here is the D.o.T.'s timetable for the rapid widening. I should point out it is provisional and has already been pushed back somewhat.

Junctions 12-15 - Completed 1991, Junctions 15-16 - Environmental Statement 1991, started Jan. 1993 - finish date Jan. 1995. Junctions 16-19 - Environmental Statement Aug. 1993, Start Sept. 1994 - finish date Sept. 1996. Junctions 20-23 - Environmental Statement Feb. 1995, Start Sept. 1996 - finish date Sept. 1998. Junctions 23-26 - As Junctions 16-19.

The Environmental Statement is a statutory requirement. It is **not** a public enquiry, but the D.o.T. has stated that if their plan met major public objections, it could be changed. (I know, but they said it.) Objections can **only** be on environmental grounds.

THE M 25 - AN APPEAL

The fact that whatever widening is planned for Junction 18 will be revealed in August takes us to a crunch point. Because a number of you have moved here since early 1991, we need to recapitulate.

The LRA was asked in 1991 (a) to oppose the widening and (b) to see, if widening happened, that noise, pollution and disturbance were minimised. To give us political clout, the LRA joined NORMAL, the consortium that now speaks for over 200,000 people. But the LRA did raise a fund to fight our special concerns, because legal and planning advice on how to get changes made to a road plan is not cheap.

That fund now stands at about £4,500, a useful amount but it won't go far. The Committee feels it is now time to ask again for your help so that we may have experts in place to act at once on the August statement. Many of you gave generously in 1991 - as many didn't give because it all seemed a bit distant and vague. We now know there will be more traffic along the A 404, probably narrower lanes, discontinuances in the hard shoulder, a 50 mph speed limit and attempts to use the cheapest materials. Moreover, unless we fight vigorously for best practice, the D.o.T. will conclude Loudwater is a soft touch and feel they have a good chance of getting away with the subsequent 14-lane plan which could cut physically into Loudwater.

In 1991, we suggested a £50 donation. Times, we know, are hard but we would appeal to new-comers and wait-and-seers to be generous - those who gave before might feel it worthwhile to give again.

Cheques, please, to John Reid (address above), to the L.R.A. but noted as for the M25 fund. Thank you.

BITS AND PIECES

Almost everything else in this edition is minor compared to those two big issues. For instance, we note that all property in Loudwater has been listed under the poll tax as G or H standard. Only some flats in Branksome Lodge, Glen Chess and Loudwater House are in the F band.

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This edition is printed by Hertsprint. In recent years it has been the work of Bill Reece and his staff. Bill (T. Rise) is off to Greece for a while. We are grateful to Hertsprint and this also gives us a chance to thank Bill and his excellent typesetter for work over the years.

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We were sceptical about the promise to finish L. Lane completely by the end of February and we were right. We are once again assured the road will be whitelined soon. Perhaps it says something about our complex society that it will then be re-surfaced - which, of course, means the white lining will be covered and will have to be done again!

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Those who have seen the handsome swan stamps recently issued by the Post Office will be pleased to know that, in connection with using this theme, the Post Office made a useful donation to Liz Dorer of Swan Care. Liz has many times been to the rescue of Loudwater swans.

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John Overend, of Loudwater Heights, is the new chairman of the Rickmansworth Society. A small consolation, we realise, for having his shops in Ricky and Chorleywood ram-raided. Not many people know that John is quadrilingual as a result of a childhood spend in Egypt, where his adventurous life included being arrested as a suspected spy, and getting out just before the Egypt/Israel war.

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Those of you who said what a pity it was that we had given up our Garden Party now have your last chance to show your support. We have decided to try once more. For the sake of those who don't know, some ten years ago we decided that too many people in Loudwater didn't get a chance to know one another, and that a Garden Party would be the perfect answer to get you all together. With considerable reluctance from some Committee members (well, men never want to go anywhere, do they?) we set it up. Some seventy people turned up. Next year, there were well over a hundred, and up to three or four years ago, we regularly had over 200 of you. The sites in T. Rise, were beautiful, price of two or three pounds for as much as you could drink, hard or soft, in two and a half hours was a bargain, kids came free and ate pounds of nuts and crisps, and we never had bad weather once. But the numbers started to go down - no one knows why, and a couple of years ago we had under one hundred and twenty.

Some reasons were given. It shouldn't always be in the gated area - it shouldn't be on Father's Day - it was a nuisance holding up preparations for some Sunday lunch etc.

Well, we've tried to meet all of those. The party will be on June 27 at Micklefield Hall, off Sarratt Lane. It is the lovely grounds (and farm) of Mr John Edmonds (owner of Clements). The house is 200 years old, though because it's off the centre, many people will not know it. The date is June 27, and there will be a cold buffet for those who want to feed as well. The free flow of drinks, will of course, be as usual. There's plenty of parking. For £5.00, it's a bargain. So come, tickets will soon be on sale. For those who have said they feel shy because they won't know anyone, that is precisely the point, to get to know your neighbours, and we see that you do.

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It is extraordinary, if true, that some people move into this area without finding out, either themselves or through their solicitors, that all of Loudwater is covered by Tree Preservation Orders. That means, you must not cut down or heavily lop any tree without permission from the Council T.P.O. Officer. Several times, a vigilant resident has heard chainsaws going and found that some new resident was cutting without allegedly knowing this could lead to a fine of several hundred pounds. In our experience, permission is quickly and easily given for reasonable grounds.

FROM THE ESTATE BOARD

A seasonal reminder: on Good Friday April 9th, the gate at the top of Kingfisher Lure will closed to all traffic. The closure

is a ritual observed at least once a year, in order to maintain our claim to Private Estate status. The gate will be manned during the "closure" period, and residents displaying the 1993 symbol will have ready access.

A programme for major patching of the roads is being planned to take place probably in May. This work should not involve any re-routing of traffic, and we hope it will be completed with the minimum of inconvenience.

Residents will recall that when the local authority gave approval to Mr Roberts for the development of a private livery on the land behind "Clearburn," a number of restrictions were imposed. Most of these limitations were in response to the concerns expressed by householders, the Estate Company and the Residents' Association. We are now informed that Mr Roberts has appealed against a substantial number of the restrictions. For example, he seeks permission to expand his business to cater for 24 horses, to install some floodlighting, and seeks the freedom to hold gymkanas and equestrian events, for friends.

A public enquiry will be held at the Council Offices when we shall be able to make our views known to the Inspector appointed. Details of this meeting will be published in due course.

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Planning

- 8/451/92 *The Walled Garden, T.Way. Erection of dwelling on adjoining land. (Objected, refused, to appeal)*
- 8/304/92 *Clearburn, T.Rise. Conversion to livery stables. (Objected, approved with conditions. Conditions now to appeal)*
- 8/739/92 *Cherry Hill Cottage, T.Rise. Extensions and alterations. (Approved)*
- 8/751/92 *Casula, Sarratt Lane. Rear conservatory. (Approved)*
- 8/20/93 *Cherry Hill Cottage, T.Rise. Erection of detached garage.*
- 8/30/93 *Valley View, Rasehill Close. Single story rear extension.*
- 8/139/93 *Endways, Chess Close. First floor rear extension, new pitched roof.*
- 8/164/93 *7 Lower Plantation. Single storey side extension.*

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN

This is the issue with which we hope to collect the yearly subscription. You may remember it was agreed at last year's AGM that the new sub should be £3. (We've held it at £2 for a long time and a number of people said it should be a fiver!) If you see your patch warden and could pay the subscription there and then, it does help, otherwise send as requested to John Reid. As you may know, we keep a minimal amount on hand in case of emergency - the extra pound maintains that balance and we hope you feel it's worth it.