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NEWSLETTER No. 66

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Editor: John Jarrett

If there has been one Loudwater theme over the last few months, it has been water. The Chess is running high again, the leaf piles have all turned solid with rain, drives have been flooded and those keen gardeners who, a little while ago, were complaining the ground was too hard to dig, now bring half the garden in on their boots. But there is cheer. The National Rivers Authority says we only need two more wet winters like this (!) to get the aquifers back to a moderately healthy state, and the hosepipe ban has been lifted.

It's been water, too, that has made Loudwater Lane both a curse and a blessing. The installation of a new sewer system in the fields opposite Glen Chess has closed L. Lane and will do so until after Christmas (warn your Christmas visitors) and infuriated Loudwater residents have been struggling through Solesbridge Lane and Croxley Green to get out. Those who walk, or exercise their dogs down the lane, have been up to their ankles in mud, but, on the other hand, as one L. Lane resident said: "Hasn't it been lovely without the traffic!"

The new installation should mean the end of septic tank sewerage in Loudwater - and, it is hoped, the end of the flooding by Chess Cottage. Don't ask those affected how much it's costing them to be connected because the price is horrifying. One other consequence which one can do nothing but laugh ironically about is that the centre white lining which we fought so hard to have installed has, of course, gone completely under the impact of the sewerage work. We shall be watching very vigilantly to see it is replaced and we shall continue to make the point that, rather than painstakingly doing lines here and there, it would be cheaper and quicker to restore the line along the whole of the lane.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Absit omen, but we continue to have a remarkably trouble-free time as regards thefts, apart from the poor folk at Glen Chess whose garages were done over (special commiserations to the resident who had a case of Scotch in one). Perhaps thieves can't afford the fares out here in these hard times, or perhaps we have at last got the message about locks and bolts on garages and garden sheds, and also about locking and garageing cars, particularly if you've an expensive car stereo.

All the action recently appears to have been over in the Valley Road and the Drive.

However, Dr. Martin, the N. Watch co-ordinator, is by no means convinced that we deserve this luck. Several times recently, news of what thefts there have been or suspicious strangers in the area have totally failed to get down the network. We can't all be in all the time but, if you are one of the N. Watch stalwarts and are going to be away for more than a day, please let a neighbour or Dr. Martin know so the gap can be filled.

Do remember that insurance companies are often willing to make substantial discounts on premiums for households in a recognised N. Watch area, such as we are. If they get the idea ours is not working, that discount won't go on.

MILKING THE PROFITS

One sorry story has ended up satisfactorily by and large, instead of being a crime statistic.

Apparently, to my surprise, certain residents have been in the habit of paying Paul, our local milkman, by leaving cash (or open cheques) in the milk bottles they put out. Some enterprising crook noticed this and got up early to scoot round and collect these before Paul got there. Had the situation stayed like this, Paul would have had to make the loss good, as the milk company's policy is apparently that losses and bad debts are their milkman's responsibility. Glad to

report that those concerned have been generous enough to make it good.

THE MONSTER MOTORWAY

There have been some requests - with which, let me say at once, I do sympathise - that the newsletter concentrate less on the M 25 plans. We do therefore, say less this time. But I would like to point out that the heavy coverage in recent issues has been for two reasons - first, there were complaints that members were not being kept informed enough, and secondly, it is the biggest threat to our area in years. So, here is the M 25 news, but as condensed as I can make it.

Two of the six MP's whose constituencies NORMAL (to which the LRA is affiliated) covers have now told us officially they have opposed and will oppose the 14 lane plan. They are Mr Richard Page and Mr Tim Smith, Bucks MP. Mr Garel-Jones, being in the Government, apparently cannot give an opinion as Watford's MP., while Mr Clappison (S. Herts) and Mrs Gillam, also Bucks, have taken no stand.

What is encouraging is that every affected County Council - Herts, Bucks, Surrey, Essex etc have all seen the Minister for Transport and made it quite clear that they think the scheme is a disaster, and Bucks Highways Committee recently, to its credit, held a meeting in Denham (the most affected Bucks area) to express their concern and seek local opinion which was vehemently against. As Chairman of NORMAL, I was asked to speak.

NORMAL continues to attract support, Croxley Green and Chenies Parishes being the latest to join. We have produced an up-to-date statement of the case against widening, which the LRA will receive. Any LRA member who would like a copy please contact Michael Nest.

The bad news is that both Herts and Bucks County Councils have, with some opposition, accepted in principle the insertion of the one extra lane. We have been unable to get any statement yet on why they feel this should not be opposed. We have therefore fallen back as regards this plan on strategy two, namely to circulate all members of the Environment Committee (which was the recommending body) with a request that they ensure the sharpest examination of the details of the construction of this extra lane when they are available on half a dozen vital issues of noise prevention, pollution control, better surface material, safety, and maximum consideration of the health, safety and convenience of those living on or near access roads. We have also urged that, if they are not satisfied with the D.o.T.'s answers on these crucial points, they reverse their decision to accept.

One encouraging point is that every time we hear of any date for any of the processes of the extra lane or the 14 lanes, the dates recede further and further. It now seem unlikely that, even if the extra lane is given the go ahead under adequate conditions, work will not start till 1994, while the 14 lane project seems now to be up for public consideration, should it get that far, not till 1997.

In the meantime, can I repeat that the opposition of MPs and Councillors would not have been voiced had not the public made their feelings felt. Any member who has not yet expressed his or her opposition to the plans for more motorway lanes should do so. Write to Richard Page MP or to Kenneth Carlile MP or to John McGregor MP, House of Commons and demand that no more lanes be built until there is an integrated transport plan for the South-East with more money for better public transport. We all know the construction industry needs work desperately, but to take one example, renewing our Victorian sewers would be more beneficial in every way than spending £28.5 billion on motorways.

THE ESTATE BOARD

We have to recognise that the Loudwater Estate is the heart of our area, so we are always pleased to offer them some space. They have kindly contributed the following, from the Chairman, Derrick Speight.

"I should like to explain, for the benefit of newcomers, that the founders of the Estate Company formed it to ensure that collectively we should be able to maintain the special character of this particularly attractive part of the Chess Valley. The covenants were written to provide some ground rules and some backing for the Company's activities. It is surprising how many people don't seem to have read the undertaking they signed when they bought their property or have forgotten what they once read."

"Shareholders elect a Board of unpaid directors to run the Company for them. Clearly, they would have an impossible task without the understanding and co-operation of most, if not all, of those who live on the Estate, and any success that the Company has had in preserving Loudwater Estate has been as a result of this mutual support."

"You will see that the sand trays have been topped up, not because we've had any advance warning from above, but because this is done during November each year. Richard Allen, who does most of our maintenance work, will usually be able to grit the iciest parts of our roads, but the sand and grit are essentially a "self-help" facility for everyone living and driving on the Estate."

"If road conditions become particularly severe, all the gates are unlocked so that drivers can use Loudwater Drive as an alternative approach to the Chorleywood Road, if Kingfisher Lure becomes hazardous. In the last thirty years, there was only one occasion I can remember, when vehicles were unable to get in and out of this valley, and the grit was no help at all on the snow-bound roads. Let's hope we don't have a re-run of that this winter".

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME

From time to time, we are asked who's been longest in Loudwater. Not who is the oldest Loudwater resident - that is almost certainly Mrs Richards in T.Way who's said goodbye to 90, but who has lived here longest?

I am told that four ladies are in the running - Mrs Richards of course, Joyce Brine, Tiny Thorndick (both of Rooks Hill) or Mrs Marshall of Sarratt Lane. All I believe, lived here before the Second World War. Any challengers?

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Jim Davis, who has only recently left the Estate but still runs his stamp empire from Rickmansworth, made news with a report of one of his most successful ever stamp sales. It was for the island of St. Vincent and it featured, believe it or not, Madonna on each of the values issued. It was massively bought. What this says about St. Vincent, stamp buyers or the state of our culture, I leave you to judge.

Solicitor Valerie Kleanthous, of Bridle Lane, was in the nationals and on radio as spokesperson for the Solicitors' Family Law Association. She was being asked to comment on the case of the girl who sought a divorce from her parents. Valerie was also one of the number of people who wrote to the local paper asking Richard Page to say whether he was or was not in favour of the 14-lane motorway scheme.

BITS AND PIECES

Despite all the Council officers' optimism, Chorleywood House remains, as we feared it would, the subject of almost no interest from buyers, and with the glut of local office space, so mistakenly allowed by the Department of the Environment, we may be in for another sad story like the Peace Hospital in Watford.

The one bright spot is that the Parish Council is now fully operational in the enlarged version of the old public lavatory. (Councillors may be seen there at their convenience). The local papers carried a picture of the Parish Council's last meeting in Chorleywood House, the picture showing, among others local Councillors Margaret Jarrett and Tony Williams.

Not everyone may know that the Estate Company own a set of garages behind Loudwater House. The Company has asked me to say that one garage is now available. Those who need space for another car or whatever, contact Maurice Escow on R. 771810.

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Continuing the general smartening up of the Estate, we have handsome new gates at the top of K. Lure.

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The mystery of the new road sign for Loudwater Drive is solved. Thanks are due to Mr Goffin of L. Drive, who, getting tired of living in a road with no name, collected a favour due from a colleague in design and put up the bright new board.

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A small but not, I hope, too selfish a boast on behalf of the Editor's youngest son, Timothy, who some months ago was putting the bite on generous Loudwater residents for the British Olympic appeal which Watford Boys School backed. Tim raised the most money and was invited by Sanatogen, the sponsors, to come to British Olympic HQ, meet Olympic athletes Todd Bennett and Suki Brownsdon and picked up a Halina Zoom camera. His picture was in a number of papers.

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Your Editor enjoys writing this newsletter and is grateful when kind people say they enjoy reading it. But there is one major gap - you. It does not seem possible that such a highly intelligent and articulate group as the LRA members have nothing to say for themselves about Loudwater and issues affecting it, yet we get no more than four or five letters a year for inclusion here. It is your newsletter - write!

WHERE DO I TURN

You know the situation - neighbours playing loud music in the early hours; a vicious stray dog in your drive locking you in your home; drains overflowing up your path - so many of these things happen at weekends and in the evening!

So! Where do you turn? Most situations are covered by Three Rivers District Council. Dangerous dogs only are covered, otherwise contact the Police. If people are being noisy, banging car doors, etc. also contact the Police. They will probably initially deal with loud parties, although legally loud music is under the control of the Environmental Health Officers. If a quiet word from the Police Officer doesn't do the trick, he or you can contact the Three Rivers emergency line for help.

Your Association thought it might be useful to list some of the numbers to deal with these emergencies:

Three Rivers District Council

(daytime)	0923 776611
Out of hours emergency number	0923 774858
Alternative emergency number	0831 360425
Out of hours drainage emergencies	0860 408314

Direct lines for Three Rivers departments (daytime):

Building Control (Hotline)	0923 777853
Drainage	0923 777451
Environmental Health	0923 777694
Planning	0923 777693
Street Lighting	0923 777320

Police 0923 244444

(We print the above with acknowledgements to the Chorleywood Resident's Association Newsletter).

Planning

- 8/451/92 *The Walled Garden, T.Way. Erection of dwelling on adjoining land. (Objected, refused)*
- 8/575/92 *4 Ladywood Close. Raise roof to enlarge first floor storey, side and rear extensions. (Objected, approved)*
- 8/616/92 *Clearburn, T.Rise. Erection of self-contained dwelling with two-storey extension, detached double garages, sheds and greenhouses. (Objected, approved).*