

# LOUDWATER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

*Chairman*  
Desmond Martin  
Chess Cottage  
L. Lane  
R. 775433

*Vice-Chairman*  
Isobel Johnson  
The Tile House  
T. Rise  
R. 772873

*Treasurer*  
John Reid  
11 Glen Chess  
L. Lane  
R. 773473

*Correspondence Secretary*  
Don Cammell  
Martins  
Ladywood Close  
R. 776126

NEWSLETTER No. 69

OCTOBER 1993

Editor: John Jarrett

After two years absence, the LRA Garden Party came back with a vengeance and it was brilliant. The fact that nearly 270 adults and children turned up would seem to show it does still have a place. Once more, we heard members greeting one another with that phrase: "I haven't seen you in months" which is what the Garden Party is all about: the weather was glorious, and the setting of Micklefield Hall could not have been better. When so many members of the Committee and others worked so hard, it always seems invidious to pick our individuals but we should all be grateful to the LRA Chairman, Desmond Martin, for pushing the event so skilfully, to Maurice Escow for handling the bar so well, and to many ladies, particularly Isobel Johnson, Denise Preedy and Joan Martin for the superb catering.

Mr Edmonds not merely threw open his lovely estate, but also took it upon himself to try to welcome everyone who came. We are much in his debt.

I have no doubt that there will now be another garden party next year - many of you would like us to approach Mr Edmonds to see if we can return, and others who came were so impressed that they have also offered their houses.

## OH DEAR, OH DEAR . . .

It was particularly galling that, when Mr Edmonds was being so good to us, your editor in the last newsletter called him by the wrong Christian name. Why I wrote John when I knew that his initials were R.H., I do not know.

An equally grovelling apology is due to none other than a member of this Committee till just recently, Anne Tate, both of whose names I got wrong, even if I was saying what a great job she had done.

Hopefully on the other side, an unprecedented number of people - well, five actually - have recently taken the trouble to write or say how much they enjoy the Newsletter. Thanks to Mr L, Mr P.F, Mrs I.P, Mr R.S, and Miss J.W. for their kind words.

Before we leave the Tate household, I wonder how many people know that Peter Tate is one of the Nation's foremost ornithologists with a library of bird books that constantly threatens to take over the entire living-room. For a number of years now, Peter has been a sort of Sir Mortimer Wheeler of the bird world, taking parties of 'twitchers' all over North America, the Near and Middle East and other unusual parts of the world to spot birds. Since the rarer birds have an uncomfortable habit of living in the hottest, coldest, wettest, driest, jungliest, or barest habitats, it's not a total joyride.

## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

The local paper reported the end of a family medical tradition when Dr. Michael Scorer (L.House) retired from his practice in Sarratt. His father also worked in the Watford area. Michael Scorer started his Sarratt practice in 1959, long enough, as he said, for him to have seen one Sarratt family grow up through five generations.

## AT LAST, SOME LETTERS

From Richard Sankey, of the Tropical Marine Centre, Solesbridge Lane. "Some rather pleasing news is that the sustained wet period over the last twelve months has dramatically helped the poor River Chess. Together with increased pressure from the NRA on would-be polluters, the Chess has been able to improve considerably. The NRA has recently given a glowing report on the river, particularly at Solesbridge Lane. We have brown trout in respectable numbers again, even if restricted to the areas where we and the NRA have done work. I am sure it would come as a shock to the D.o.T. to know that brown trout are thriving right under the M 25. They should realise that wherever brown trout survive, so do other lower and higher life forms".

From John Parsons, of T.Way. "I constantly applaud the work of all who serve on the LRA and look to a time when I return to

the UK and can properly enjoy the area it protects. On the motorway battle, can I suggest the following message in the newsletter: 'Do you, as a resident and member of the LRA value the quality of your life, the worth of your property? If yes, then surely a donation of at least 1/2 of 1% of your home to protect those values is worthwhile?'

And one more, from someone who requests anonymity, after we had another spate of house name signs and road signs being stolen in T. Rise. "Is it a sign of the times that residents' families and their friends find pleasure in removing house name signs, breaking them into pieces, throwing them into hedges or totally removing them? Most of us take a pride in living in an estate such as ours. Why then have these vandals and hooligans have so little respect for their neighbours' property?"

(In case this is thought to be pre-judging the case, it should be said that there is fairly clear evidence of the perpetrators but not legally sufficient. It was the same some years ago when two local teenagers were well known to be responsible for removing and damaging some 30 residents and Estate signs, most of which were later found dumped in a resident's shed. Those young men moved on after their parents were warned by police, Estate Board and the LRA).

## CLEARBURN - THE INSPECTOR SPEAKS

The Dept. of the Environment's Inspector, who heard the Clearburn appeal against seven of the conditions imposed by Three Rivers DC, reported on August 9. All of those who wrote or spoke about the appeal should have had a copy. For those who have not seen this long document, here is what we hope is an adequate precis. Mr Roberts had argued against the Council's objection to lighting on the area he intends to use for a manege. The Inspector has said that some lighting should be allowed, provided it is unobtrusive and again approved by the Council. Mr Roberts had objected to the condition that said the site should not be used as a riding school and that no more than 18 horses should be accommodated. The Inspector upheld the restriction to 18 horses but allowed Mr Roberts permission to submit a scheme to the Council for riding and jumping but only in certain fields. Mr Roberts objected to the ban on gymkhanas etc. The Inspector upheld this ban. Mr Roberts objected to being required to provide details of proposed landscaping, hedging, fencing etc. before first full use of the premises. The Inspector again upheld the condition. Mr Roberts objected to the Council's restriction as regards hours of use of the site. The Inspector upheld the restriction.

Some residents, who may not be familiar with the complexities of planning law, were disappointed that the District Council did not turn the application down flat when it was first made. Your Editor has no doubt that, had it done so, it would have lost on appeal and the fact that even some of the conditions were not upheld is perhaps evidence. The Council, on an all-party basis, always has to base its decisions on what applications to fight on their chances of winning because an unsuccessful action not merely has wasted officers' scarce time (planning staff numbers have again been cut) but also costs tens of thousands which all go on the bill ratepayers get. Similarly, one or two people were annoyed the Inspector did not uphold every condition. Sorry, it rarely works like that.

Suffice it to say that both the Estate Board and the LRA, while wishing the whole controversy had never arisen are reasonably satisfied that the Inspector, while not concurring totally with their views, has nevertheless given a judgement they can live with. This not unsatisfactory result would not have been come without hours and hours of work by Bill Hanman for the Estate Board and Don Cammell for the LRA, as well as the support of many of you who took the trouble to make their opposition felt. This is in one way what the LRA is all about - we are a community, a privileged

one, and the quality of the beautiful area in which we live can only be maintained if we all work together. Those who never bother to come to an AGM or a social event or read the Newsletter, please take note. Your values, your property, are being protected for you. Think on't, as they say up north.

### THE M25 - MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Your Editor cannot win. Some say that he harps on too much about the proposed M 25 widening - others say he doesn't make enough of it. No excuses this time, because we have major new developments. (Your Editor in fact happens to believe that the proposed 14-lane M 25 does represent the most dramatic change in the environment of the Home Counties for several decades, and whether you approve or not, it is an issue every one should be concerned with).

At the risk of repetition, let it be again stated that there are two different plans. The first is to add an extra lane within the existing curtilage of the M 25. LRA policy is to press that these extra lanes should be designed and built to the highest standards to ensure the best future environment for Loudwater. This first plan technically requires no public enquiry in which the D.o.T has to justify itself because it is taking no public land. Such a widening is already taking place between Junctions 15 and 16 - the Denham and Iver district - following on the building some time ago of four lanes between Junctions 11 -12, the Heathrow area. The second plan is to build link roads alongside the 8-lane M 25, thereby creating up to 12 lanes. We are totally opposed to this plan. It is interesting that the Heathrow widening was done largely because of pressure from British Airways who said the extra lane was necessary to avoid congestion. The D.o.T. now targets this stretch as most urgent for link roads because it is once again heavily congested!

The Denham/Iver area was without doubt chosen because, whatever the effects, they were on fewer people than in any other stretch. It was the first stretch to have plans for the fourth lane - it is now also the first stretch to have plans for the link roads.

So much for background. There have been no official plans yet produced for the extra lane in our section, that is Junctions 15 -19. However, D.o.T. officials have had several meetings with Three Rivers; the last one generated a good deal of heat. Councillors learned that, despite the promise to take no public land, a number of residents near the motorway have been "encouraged" to volunteer to sell their houses: that there were no plans to do any work on access roads, even though it was admitted there would be more traffic on them : and lastly, and most amazingly, there would be no air and soil monitoring for pollution, because (said the D.o.T.) "the M 25 in this area passes through a rural section." Tell that to the people in the Chorleywood Road, Valley Road, Chestnut Avenue, Parkfield etc. whose houses have been officially designated as blighted!

What has come out officially however is this. The "link road" plan for the Denham/Iver area has come out, accompanied by the statutory Environmental Impact Statement (E.I.S.). The exhibitions for seeing this at which D.o.T. and Consultant Engineers were present are now over but those who want to see the brochure can get it by buying from the D.o.T., Heron House, 49-53 Goldington Road, Bedford MK40 3LL. Although it will cost you more, it's really worth buying not just the glossy PR brochure, but also the supporting documents (where the real meat is) which are Assessment, Ecology, Archaeology, Noise, River Corridor and Air Quality. It took NORMAL a year to discover these are available!

But more important still is the document called "M25 Junctions 12-15 Proposals for Link Roads" (this from the S.E. Construction Programme Division, Federated House, London Road, Dorking, Surrey RH4 1SO). The salient points here are: 1. Although it is known that the D.o.T. wanted to build link roads all round the M 25, that idea has been dropped. There will be no link roads between Junctions 21-30 or 3-10. From Junctions 30 to 3 nothing will happen until further studies. Link roads are proposed from 12 to 15, and 10 to 12 and 16 to 21 are designated as "likely provision greater than dual four lanes". In other words, while the D.o.T. has backed off a plan for us, it is still on the cards.

(Everyone concerned is sure it would have been definite had it not been for the strong opposition voiced by groups such as the LRA).

2. Without any explanation, the proposal to add link roads of three lanes either side has been reduced to two lanes.

The conclusions from all this are twofold. First, there should be pleasure that the D.o.T. has been forced to moderate its original plans. We are, for the time being, saved, and the worst threat is less than was wished by the road lobby. But secondly the lobby is still trying to press ahead and we are the next target. There must be no let-up in campaigns by groups such as the LRA. It is worth recalling that there is not one single MP in an M 25 constituency, not one County Council, not one District or Parish Council, not one residents' group or environmental society that is not against the link road project. The D.o.T. has painted itself into a corner where it has no friends and what was achieved at Oxlea Woods can be achieved here.

### WELCOME TO LOUDWATER

We offer good wishes to Mr and Mrs Prickett and their four children, now in Chess Lodge, T. Rise, and to the Guvercinci family at High End, and Peter and Jane Higgins, Two Bridges, T. Way.

### IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME

It hardly seems possible that the first newsletter was 21 years ago and that your two editors, Dorothy Francis and John Jarrett, have been churning them out since then. Looking back, we mentioned that in June 1976 the sub was going up to £1, Loudwater House grounds were up for sale, we had recruited our **third** distributor and we announced our first garden party. By November 1976, we proudly stated that over half the residents were members, in March 1977 we dealt with the tricky subject of gate closures on the Estate and July 1977, we carried this fascinating piece from our then Treasurer, Cyril Brine.

"In 1971, the Loudwater bus service ended, despite local protests. It began for very commercial reasons when Cameron Jeffs in the 30's found his building plots slow-selling because Loudwater was isolated by lack of transport. He started a service with two Lancia charabancs (grey, with exits for each aisle).

"He and his successors established traditions that continued, even after the London Passenger Act killed off all "pirate" schedules. First, the passenger mattered. The bus, infallibly on time for trains to London, also infallibly met trains from London in the evenings, no matter how late snow, fog or accident made them. The Loudwater bus got through. Its last driver, Harry Cross, made no bones about ordering his passengers to push - bowlers, umbrellas and all - if ice made the bus stick. It was a social function as well as a bus. Men said: "See you on the five past Harry" (never the 336, always Harry); women sent messages, posted parcels, and got shopping done by the Harry bus : children learned their travelling manners from Harry's fierce looks. On no other route, surely, would passengers waiting at halt depute one member to collect fares so that all could be handed in by one to save Harry time. (The Lancia fares in the 30s were one penny to the top of L.Lane, twopence all the way).

"This one-man route ended in 1971. A cheque for £105 was handed to Harry, who died not many years after on holiday in Spain. Later plans to reinstate the service fell before London Country Buses' intransigence".

Please tell me if flashes from the past such as this are interesting or just boring; that will decide whether we print any more.

### PLANNING

- 8/346/93 Troutstream Hall, C/Wood Rd. Extension and development.
- 8/396/93 Long Ridings, S.Lane. Erection of new dwelling (Approved).
- 8/404/93 9 Lower Plantation. One-storey rear extension.
- 8/440/93 Beechen Hill, S.Lane. Erection of conservatory.
- 8/452/93 Whitewoods, T.Way. Part single, part double rear extension.

P.S.: Your editor is proud of the fact that he has a set of LRA Newsletters because they give a very special picture of our area over nearly 30 years. But numbers 14 and 19 are missing. If anyone has these, I will happily have them photocopied and return them to complete the set. Who knows, they might become valuable.