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NEWSLETTER No. 72

JULY 1994

Editor: John Jarrett

Alas, we cannot say you read it here first! Unfortunately, it was only a few days after the last Newsletter went out that the D.o.T. was found to have dropped its link roads scheme for this area, so by now you will all have read or heard about our victory. I say "was found" because it had to be winkled out. When Mr. McGregor made his latest motorway statement, most of the papers concentrated on the fact that he was giving higher priority to some schemes, but two did say that he had abandoned others, among which ours was included. As Chairman of NORMAL, I then spent over an hour on the telephone to the D.O.T., clearly in a state of disarray, to find out the truth. No one there would admit the truth, saying only that the plan for Junctions 16 to 21 had been "down-prioritised"! I passed this on to the right quarters and eventually had a letter from Mr Page, our MP, that the "mere idea of considering link roads for this area" had been "indefinitely postponed". That is D.o.T. speak for "we give up".

I now make no apologies for cribbing from a letter I sent to the Watford Observer immediately after. In it, I gave thanks to those who supported NORMAL, not only the councils, residents' associations and environmental groups who made up NORMAL's thirty members, but also the individuals who supported their organisations' decision to fight. It is worth repeating that the first group to decide to back Three Rivers D.C.'s decision to fight was the LRA. Without those who supported that decision, morally and / or financially, we might not have won. You backed the LRA, the LRA backed NORMAL. I went on to say "Either directly or indirectly, NORMAL was responsible for over 30,000 letters or cards being sent to Ministers, MPs, Councillors and the D.o.T. While there is little doubt that we won because the Government had to reduce public expenditure, different savings might have taken priority had this massive public protest not been generated....

"Some people have expressed concern that the D.o.T. has not categorically abandoned the scheme, merely 'down-prioritised' it. Government departments NEVER admit they have given up. Somewhere in the Ministry of Defence, there is probably a "temporarily postponed" plan for the invasion of Baluchistan!" The link road scheme for 16 to 21a is dead for the foreseeable future; and LRA members should be proud.

I went on to say that the battle over the extra lane remains to be fought. As was said in the last Newsletter, the LRA's consultant has sent the D.o.T. an excellent report saying how the extra lane should be built, IF it is to go ahead. It would do no harm if those in Loudwater who have been zealous in telling the D.o.T. what we think of their plans continued. In the letter, I said: "We helped to produce several thousand suggestions and objections to the Dept.'s proposals for the extra lane between Junctions 15 and 16 and the Dept. rejected every one. I happen to have the Dept.'s reply to the public inquiry for the building of the North Orbital Road (1972). Objectors then prophesied that such a road would inevitably attract traffic and lead to demands for a larger motorway and that creating junctions at Chorleywood and Maple Cross would pour traffic on to adjacent roads. They were of course, right, but the Dept. rejected every point again."

The link road scheme has now been dropped for the whole of the motorway with the exception of the stretch between Junctions 12 to 15. This is, of course, outside the concern of the LRA, and indeed of NORMAL, whose members are all north of the M25. However, it will be a matter for discussions in the next NORMAL meeting how we can, or should lend a hand in this fight on the grounds that any stretch of link road that is built makes it more likely that some government, at some stage may try to make that an excuse for returning to the scheme that would so have ruined our very special area.

However, that is not merely a pessimistic view but also one that cannot

affect us, even in the worst scenario, for decades. The two Chairmen of the LRA who have been concerned with this matter and your hardworking Committee would like to offer sincere thanks to those who have supported them in this 3 1/2 year battle.

ANOTHER GOOD AGM

Over fifty people came to this year's AGM, which, understandably, had much to say about the M25, including the fact that for various reasons, our response to the deadline for the D.o.T.'s enquiry was so close to deadline that Mr Crook had to phone instructions from Tokyo where he was working at the time and Isobel Johnson had to risk breaking speed records to get the final report to Bedford. Regret was expressed that Mr Page was taking only officers from 3RDC and HCC with him to make our case to the Minister because, however competent, they could not be expected to make it as forcefully as our consultant could do not being a Government employee. The subscription will remain at £3 - thanks to those who say "Take £5 - it's worth it" - and the LRA has about £3,200 in its general fund and £8,100 in its M25 account (that is, of course, before paying our consultant).

The speaker for the occasion was Mr. Jack Groves, a trustee of the Chiltern Museum. This an extraordinary achievement where you can see farm houses, agricultural implements, barns, cooking utensils all as they were over a hundred years ago in this area, to say nothing of a restored village hall and a museum Victorian loo that has won awards. Mr Groves made it charmingly clear that it is worth a visit.

AND NOW THE REST OF THE NEWS

Everything else this time is dwarfed by the M25 news, but not, I hope without interest.

Mr Don Cammell, who has so efficiently for years dealt with planning applications and correspondence with local authorities, asked to be temporarily relieved, following the sadly early death of his wife. Many people have already expressed their sorrow at the loss of such a warm and vibrant woman. Your Editor was asked to step in for the moment. One outstanding item was the condition of the upper half of Loudwater Lane which had not, as was promised, been re-surfaced after white lining. I wrote in April, got a reply in May agreeing the work should be done, and surprise, surprise - was told it would be done in June. We will be watching.

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To answer some queries. There HAS been planting around the new pumping station in L. Lane - it'll take some time to show. The replacement of post office time tags in our letter-boxes is still not working, not helped by some joker burning the card in T.Way pillar-box.

We have asked Herts C.C. about damage to road signs, indicating Loudwater, at C/wood Road - Loudwater Lane / Croxley Green, as well as road signs for Chess Hill and Chess Close. 3RDC has replied that the latter will soon be replaced - on the others we wait.

* * * * *

When the Loudwater/Troutstream Estate company decided a number of years ago to install gates at various entrances to the estate, it was recognised that not everyone on the Estate would be happy, and that quite a few outside would be much put out. However, the Estate Company did canvass opinion of all those living inside the gates and there was a massive approval of the scheme. The reasons were three. First, those inside the Estate already pay for the upkeep of those roads and don't see why they should pay for wear caused by those outside using them for a short cut. Second, the Estate Board AND the police are convinced that closed gates keep our burglary rate down, and indeed, several criminals have been caught because their flight was impeded by the gates. Thirdly, a

closed gate system helps convince insurance companies that our Neighbourhood Watch set-up is worth offering discount insurance to.

Anyone who objects to these ideas and is a shareholder on the Estate has a perfect right to have the decisions reversed, with support at the AGM, but until then they remain a decision democratically arrived at by the majority for the good of all.

Despite this, some people are either unaware of the reasons or are contemptuous of them, because the V.Way gate is now being constantly left open, and those living near it are getting somewhat peeved at having to shut it over twenty times a day.

The main culprits seem to be two young women who come from the T.Way area and go to a house in L.Drive an amazing number of times per day. One is in a blue Corsa, the other in a red Escort, E reg. They must have keys because they unlock the gate and then swan through regardless.

There are, of course, minor culprits. "I'm just dropping my child up the lane" "I'm only nipping down to the Station" "I'll only be five minutes." They're always more, sometimes over half an hour. Plenty of time for the house you come from - and others - to be burgled. Please think of others and take the minute (it is only that) to shut the gate behind you.

THANK YOU FOR LETTERS

From Peter Groves, T.Way.

"While hitherto it has never been my policy to write to editors, I am driven to expose my flank and pass comment on the January newsletter.

"Firstly, the police. Being the father of children now in their twenties, I have several instances where police activity could only be called pointless bullying. But I must say that in losing the report of the car at the gate and not acting on the man reporting his neighbour, they exercised discretion. My own car was stolen just before Christmas. It surfaced again four days later in Mill End. The police kept me courteously informed all the time, not even hinting at the obvious - namely, that it was my own fault. They have the culprit and he is now otherwise engaged for eight months.

"Secondly, wild life. We must protect badgers, because from time immemorial they have been blamed for everything from sorcery to TB in cows. But they are still persecuted. Last spring, I was told there are four breeding females in our area. Could the offending lawn damage be due to birds digging for leather jackets?

"We could, of course, control the leather jackets, thereby starving the birds, while trapping the badgers and burning the insides out of squirrels. This is a much easier sight to forget than a magpie catching a chick for the sake of its own survival. And a female squirrel comes into season only twice a year and produces on average only three offspring.

"Thirdly, lawns, bonfires et al.. One of the reasons we live in Loudwater is for the trees, in our own property, our neighbours' or on common ground. Every pleasure has its price and the price of trees is leaves, seeds, petals. Surely, if approached courteously by a neighbour with a warning of expected smoke, we would similarly react with courtesy and close our windows. Furthermore, the Council provides green bays and collects garden rubbish free, or we can take our rubbish to disposal centres, or we can call a contractor. What I would request is that it is not dumped in the woods. There is now a pile five feet by three by forty - yes, forty-in the edge of the copse facing my house. It washes down the road, blocks the drain, causes flies and smell in the summer and in due course will kill the trees by rotting their bases."

"If we behave like this in our own environment, how can we expect contractors to behave better?"

Peter Groves.

"Thank you once again for a most interesting and informative Newsletter. I am glad about the M25 widening. We DON'T want the four lanes or the access roads. The resume of the consultants report was very helpful - we can only hope the D.o.T. takes note of the massive opposition.

"On another sore point, who has authorised the laying of cable for cable TV throughout the area? I hope we won't get this disruption in Loudwater."

Joan Townend, Bridle Lane.

(Everyone seems, has at one time or another recently wanted to kill Jones Cable Group and Fitzpatrick Builders, who have carved up pavements and roads all over. The sad fact is that Jones (poor Fitzpatrick are only their agents) under various Posts and Telegraphs Acts, has the right pretty well to do whatever digging and building they like, just as the companies putting up communication towers have. A Government deci-

sion many years ago and upheld by its successors said that better communications were so important that operations of this kind can override every objection. I can't believe they foresaw that all our roads would be churned up and traffic stalled in the interest of blue movies and Spanish football!!! You and I, Joan, are powerless - and the contractors will have to come back again within a year to finish making good. Infuriating!)

Editor

From Mrs M. White, Lower Plantation.

"I might tell you that the Newsletter is well-travelled. When we have read it, I send it to my daughter who is now in New York and she is very interested to hear the news from 'back home'.

(Thank you, Mrs White. By coincidence, we also had a letter from Richard Longman, formerly of Violet Way, now in S. Africa, who is also sent the letter by his parents. He comments wryly how peaceful talk about gates and badgers seem to him in that turbulent country.)

PEOPLE AND POLITICS

Cllr. Margaret Jarrett, previously Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council and a previous Chairman, has replaced Cllr. P. Birchley as Chairman of Chorleywood Parish Council. The place of Tony Williams, a Cllr. till he moved from L.Drive, has been taken by Geoffrey Liley, of Burfield Road. The place of Brian Gowshall, (Chess Hill) who retired for health reasons, has been taken by Cllr. Tim Prizeman. Three Rivers D.C. is now evenly balanced between Conservative and Liberal Democrats, Labour having lost seats.

We have a new bobby on the beat. Replacing P.C. Saunders, we have P.C. Ian Spence, but he has, poor man, been given the whole of Chorleywood Parish to cover.

We have lost from the Committee our excellent Treasurer, John Reid (Glen Chess), who finds commitments have just crept up on him. Thank you, John - our accounts have never been better kept and presented. Luckily, Maurice Escow (L. Heights) has volunteered to take over. We have been informed of only one semi-newcomer to welcome, Mrs. Susan Geary having moved into L. House from Bridle Lane. Watch out for the Canada Geese that have moved in on the lake, Susan.

ALSO WELCOME TO....

Col. and Mrs Hawkswell, The Spinney, Bridle Lane; Mr and Mrs Smith, Daintree, Bridle Lane; Mr and Mrs U. Bundell and family, from Scandinavia, Batu Mas, Bridle Lane.

PLANNING

- 8/781/94 Cariat, Sarrat Lane. Erection of boundary wall and gates. (objected, refused, appealed. Inspector upheld appeal on wall. Gates issue pending.)
- 8/043/94 Greenacre, T. Way. Two-storey side and rear extension. (Approved)
- 8/0050/94 Wychwood, T. Way. Two-storey side extension. (Estate objected, refused).
- 8/0128/94 Riverview, L. Lane. Two-storey rear extension. (Approved).
- 8/0150/94 Loudwater Cottage, L. Lane. Detached garage. (Approved).
- 8/195/94 Long Ridings, Sarrat Lane. Erection of dwelling. (Approved).
- 8/198/94 Mulberry Cottage, T. Way. First floor side extension. (Private objection, refused).
- 8/251/94 Pheena, Chess Lane. Two-storey rear extension and dormer.
- 8/0267 The Dingle, Whisperwood. Two-storey and single storey side extension (Approved).
- 8/0335/94 The White House, T. Rise. Single storey-garage extension. (Estate objection).
- 8/0443/94 Mulberry Cottage, T. Way. Repeat application.
- 8/439/94 Farthings, Bridle Lane. Single-storey rear extensions (Approved).

ARE YOU A BAD BOY OR GIRL?

The subscriptions have been a little slow coming in this year. If you have not yet paid, please help us by sending the £3 (cheques to Loudwater Residents' Association) with the form below.

To Maurice Escow, Wildwood, Loudwater Heights, Loudwater, Herts, WD3.

I enclose my subscription to the L.R.A. for 1994

Signed