

LOUDWATER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER No. 75

APRIL 1995

Editor: John Jarrett

IMPORTANT NOTICE. BECAUSE OF A DOUBLE-BOOKING AT LOUDWATER FARM, THE SUBUD HAVE HAD TO ASK US TO CHANGE THE DAY FOR OUR AGM. IT WILL NOW BE ON WEDNESDAY MAY 10th (NOT THURSDAY MAY 11th).

Sorry for the change. But we can now confirm that the guest speaker will be that well-known local historian, Mr Eddie Parrott, the leading light of the Rickmansworth Museum.

Incidentally, you should also make a note of our Garden Party date which is June 11th, Sunday as usual. Once again, a cold buffet and wine will be provided from 12pm onwards and nibbles and soft drinks for kids. Tickets once again will be £6 for adults and £3 for children (5-14) and little ones come free. Tickets from Maurice Escow (771810). The party will be at Handa, T. Rise.

SAD START TO 1995

Most of us are already fed up with 1995 as we watch the snowdrops, crocuses etc bashed down by relentless rain, hail, snow and so on. But it has been a sad start for people, too. We had what is only the second mugging in Loudwater in forty years when two women, returning from shopping to a house in T. Rise, had their bags snatched by a couple of youths in a stolen car. Our condolences on a shaking experience.

But more startling was the loss of life in a Chess Close fire when two Australians were killed. Short-term tenants of Heathcote (whose owner has for some time been in America), the middle-aged couple had been for a night out in London. Returning, they decided it would be better to take a taxi back rather than drive. It is understood they were both smokers. Shortly after they were brought home, a fierce blaze virtually gutted the house where their bodies were found later. The first fire appliance arrived within three minutes but, despite reinforcements from Watford and St. Albans, the fire took an hour to control.

As it happens, this fire has a bearing on two other issues, one of which has already concerned the LRA. For several months, we have been expressing our concern to the local authority that a number of road signs had fallen, or been knocked down. We specified the road sign for the junction of Chess Lane and Chess Hill, which was lying on the ground. One of the fire tenders travelled the length of Chess Lane looking for Chess Close and got stuck in the mud and had to be towed out by another tender. Its driver said they "could not find Chess Hill". Three Rivers has agreed that the sign should be re-erected as a matter of urgency.

Because of our concern, Godfrey Crook and Isabel Johnson went to the Ricky emergency centre - police, ambulance, fire - and found that basically these services were operating on out-of-date notations in an exercise book which was not correlated between the three services. The LRA has therefore arranged to give all three services maps with all roads and houses marked on them for all our area. It must be said that Godfrey and Isabel were received with great courtesy and gratitude for what we said we'd do. But the LRA cannot avoid pointing out that there is certainly at least one complete record of all houses in the area, namely the Finance Officer's department for the collection of Community Charge. All the emer-

gency services could, with a very moderate expenditure on a programme that we could name, have all the relevant details on a PC printout on a system common to all departments.

A second point is well made by Isabel, who has written the following. "We could do more to help ourselves. The first line of defence is a smoke alarm. They are relatively cheap to buy and, provided you check them every few months, could be life-savers. Any resident changing a house name should inform Police, Fire and Rescue Services. Do have your sign / number clearly visible from the road. Signs on the house can be obliterated by hanging baskets, signs on the verge obscured by privet, the sign on the roadside may have faded, rotted etc.

"Also, Emergency Services are often frustrated by people calling sometimes on mobile phones, without saying exactly where they are - "I'm travelling South on the M25 and there's a lot of smoke on my left". Take a minute or so before you lift the phone to check that you know where the problem is, what help is needed and where".

YOU WRITE

Once again, two good letters. Do, please, write if you've a point to make. It's **your** newsletter, after all.

Firstly, an anniversary memory.

"As we come up to the 50th Anniversary of V.E. Day, may I recall some of the LRA residents who lived and served at that time?"

"In 1940, Gordon and Pamela Done moved to Hazel Cottage, T. Way, during which time bombs fell in T. Way, destroying a hedge opposite the garage and devastating a house in Cherry Hill.

"In 1941, the Dones moved to share Edgehill (now Jordans) in T. Rise and in 1943, they brought End House, Chess Lane. Gordon (later Sq. Leader) was part of Bomber command HQ in High Wycombe. Next door to End House lived another HQ man, Sq. Leader Fred Ingard. Wing. Comm. Vivian Varcos lived at Woodlands, L. Lane again at Bomber HQ, as was Gp. Capt. Silvester of Thurlow, L. Heights. They all often shared transport to save petrol.

"End House was next to a searchlight battery manned by WRACs. They called Mary Done their "mother hen" for the care she took of them. Mary died in 1977 and I, having been widowed, married Gordon the following year.

"P.S. We moved to Croxley nine years ago but are still LRA members!"
Pamela Done, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth

"I have recently heard some complaints about the Estate Boards asking residents to remove stones from the verges of the Estate roads. This is only requested for the good of the natural environment by those who cherish Loudwater. Those who disagree can air their views at the Estate AGM.

"There are other places with big houses and gardens but the Loudwater Estate is unique, thanks to many people who over the

years have worked hard to make sure it keeps its charm. Our thanks are due to those public spirits who have given unstinting, selfless service for the Estate Board and the LRA Committee. Many people do not know the members of these two bastions of good husbandry of the Estate, and the surrounding area. It is time some public mention is made of them - perhaps in the next newsletter. Perhaps short profiles can be included, each in turn, with a photograph even."

Dorothy Francis, T. Way

(How very kind of you, Dorothy. We'll think about it. Photos might be a bit difficult. As regards Loudwater, people do say it's great, but I've never been clear what it is that appeals to all of us. The river? Fine for riparian owners and the trout are coming back but many of us get no closer to the river than Pooh-Sticks with our kids on the T. Way bridges. The trees? Some fine cedars and copper beeches, but a lot of spindly stuff. And those leaves! Beautiful houses? Come on - they may be big and their gardens pretty but architectural distinction is rare. It's peaceful - with the Chorleywood Road and the M25? Out traffic and crime rate are lower than most similar areas, but we still suffer. The wildlife? Yes, and what about the people who get furious with damage by muntjacs, badgers, squirrels, moles etc. Don't get me wrong, I love it, but it's hard to put a finger on Loudwater's secret. Any views? Ed.)

"Someone in the Bridle Lane area is taking the trouble to send anonymous letters instructing the recipients where they may or may not exercise their dogs. The sender is quoting Neighbourhood Watch as some sort of official back-up to the communication. My advice to this individual is plain; stop it. You have no connection with Neighbourhood Watch. Those receiving this sort of communication should ignore it completely."

Desmond Martin, Chmn and Chief Co-ordinator N. Watch

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO

George, our milkman at the time, twice noticed strangers in one of his rounds, alerted the police and helped to catch burglars. (Won't happen if we lose our milk round!) The M25 widening raised its ugly head first over blacktop. We got the Water Board down to enforce restitution of the river where its channel had been altered. A young resident who did a paper round complained about potholes in L. Drive and the difficulties and cost of re-surfacing this unadopted road came up. The Forestry Commission said it "would insist" that 58 replacement trees were planted in Great Populars to make up for those that had been illegally felled. (They didn't get their way because the owner decamped). The Estate Board put up the splendid map of all our houses. Residents complained about the state of the woodland between V. Way and T. Way, but the alleged owner neither replied nor did anything.

WELCOME TO...

Mr John Rawlings, Ms June Ball, Trevor and Paul Rawlings at Tall Trees, L. Drive, and to the Viccars family at Burnside, T. Way. Good luck while you're here.

ODDS AND ENDS

In Three Rivers "Clean up Three Rivers" campaign, the Council will be placing four skips at various sites in the area over the weekend of the 8th / 9th April. They asked the LRA about this and we hope you will find them useful.

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We've had one serious burglary and several annoying thefts from cars again. Stupidest is that there has been another outbreak of removal of road and house signs, which is just yob vandalism.

The absentee American owners of Cariad, S. Lane, have felt it worth while going to appeal over the awful gates they put up without permission. The appeal will be heard at Three Rivers House

on May 2nd from 10am onwards. Anyone with an interest can appear and ask to speak.

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We have a major issue coming up that is again about a woodland. The owners of Beechengrove Wood and Millfield Plantation are proposing to do some major clearing work on these sites. Both were badly hit by the two recent storms that took so many trees all over Britain and there is no doubt that remedial work has been needed. However, local residents have expressed concern to the LRA over the scope of the proposed thinning and clearing which the owners have put forward after advice from the Chiltern Woodlands project and the Forestry Commission.

The difficulty always with improving damaged woodland is that it almost always involved taking good mature trees as well to some extent. The reasons for this are simple - first, often access to damaged trees is impossible without taking some good trees, and secondly grants do not cover the full cost and some of the expense must be recouped by selling timber. Older members may remember that some years ago the LRA was ready to put together a consortium to buy this wood and then manage it but the offer was not taken up. After approaches by us to Three Rivers Landscape Officer and to the Forestry Commission, the two bodies have asked that some of the trees planned for removal should be kept. Here, as at Great Populars, we do recognise the practical and financial implications for the woodland's owners, but we also hope that the need to preserve trees along the verges of our roads may be understood, too. The LRA is grateful to two Ladywood Close residents, Msrs Cammell and Greaves, for much work on this problem.

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Dorothy Francis has asked us to remind you, if you are interested in the visual arts, that Rickmansworth Art Society meets at 7.45pm on the first Thursday of each month at the Cloisters Memorial Hall. Demonstrations of techniques are given by experienced, sometimes internationally known, artists. The annual subscription is £10 or £2 per visit. If you are a painter, potter, sculptor or embroiderer, you will be very welcome. For information, phone 721317 or 776785.

YOUR MONEY PLEASE

With this Newsletter, we would ask you to be kind enough to renew your subscription. If your local patch warden calls on you, please hand him or her the modest sum of £3 and accept our thanks. Some of you will be left addressed envelopes, and again if you'd be kind enough to send cheque, P.O. or cash to Maurice Escow, Wildwood, L. Heights, that would be fine. It does save your poor Committee members hours of tramping around if we don't have to chase too many of you.

PLANNING

- 8/0727/94 Tara, T. Rise. Erection of conservatory (Approved).
- 8/0735/94 Krupa, Cherry Hill. Part two, part first-storey extension (Withdrawn).
- 8/0760/94 Aiglemont, T. Rise. Erection of garage (Withdrawn).
- 8/0784/94 Rooks Hill Cottage, Rooks Hill. Erection detached garage (Granted).
- 8/0795/94 Aiglemont, T. Rise. Extension to garage (Granted).
- 8/0886/94 Old Meadow, Bridle Lane. Renewal for two-store extension (Withdrawn).
- 8/0941/94 Tall Trees, L. Drive. Convert part garage to room and lobby (Granted).
- 8/0006/94 Chess Place, L. Lane. New balcony access, rear conservatory.
- 8/0760/95 Detached garage Aiglemont, T. Rise - re-submission.
- 8/0033/94 1/2 Rose Gardens, T. Way. Erection three prefab garages.
- 8/0093/95 Rookery Nook, V. Way. Single storey side extension.