

LOUDWATER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER No. 82

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Editor: John Jarrett

The river and the trees are the basis of Loudwater's charm, and the LRA is vigilant in protecting them. (For instance, a few years ago, we called the authorities to account when toxic spillage in building work at Chesham sewage plant caused havoc with fish life in the Chess, and we have been responsible for having Tree Preservation Orders extended in Loudwater).

But two major tree issues have come to a head, most noticeable the felling along the SW side of Loudwater Lane, which brought some sharp comment ("Were the LRA all asleep when that happened?"). Let us try to get the record straight, because two different fellings are involved.

The major work was connected with Great Poplars, the house behind Harewood whose boundary comes right across to L. Lane. Older residents may remember the epic battle the LRA fought when the then owner got permission to clear and replant but decamped, leaving the wood like a Flanders battlefield when his three years of building applications in the wood were turned down. (It was then we found out that the Forestry Commission can give a licence to fell, but has no punitive powers if the promised replanting does not take place!).

This time, the present owners have behaved by the book, involving the LRA and accepting some suggested reductions, getting plans passed by TRDC, and advice from the Woodland Trust. The dilemma for the LRA was that many people hate to see any tree felled, but many on the site were poor quality, wrong species etc, and some on the L. Lane verge could be dangerous from another set of gales. In the long run, there should be a better wood, but, of course, until then the site will bear scars.

Because there was some doubt about how many trees might be dangerous, the owners quite properly got an expert opinion. The trouble with expert professional advice, however, is that it cannot expose itself to any risk. In some views, too many trees were adjudged possibly dangerous, partly because of the way in which roots were on one side in sharply sloping ground. Nevertheless, once a danger is mooted, owners must protect themselves, and so we have these sorry gaps in that once wonderful canopy of L. Lane. It is sad but there can be no blame attached to owners, Council or LRA.

Further North in L. Lane is a different story. A would-be developer who wants to build houses in land adjoining Hillpoint had a number of trees on its verge felled. Two LRA members alerted the Council within half an hour and a restrictive enforcement notice was served that morning. Both the felling and the plan are now subject of legal actions, so we can say no more other than that the LRA was on to it fast, and that, sadly, a tree can be cut down much faster than preventative action can be taken.

The other major tree issue is Beechengrove Wood. We reported in earlier issues that agreed felling was to take place, and it has now ended. We also reported that the owners had kindly agreed to make a footpath through the wood. That plan looked in trouble when it became clear that a massive public liability insurance premium would be needed. Luckily, through efforts by the LRA, Cllr. Margaret Jarrett, and Herts C.C., that may have been solved.

COMMUNITY SPIRIT, WITH ANTIQUES!

"What a good and interesting evening." "I didn't realise my candlesticks were worth so much." These were some of the comments that I heard at the Antiques Roadshow held at Loudwater Farm on Wednesday, 13th November. Organised by Joan Martin (and what a good job she did), 74 people turned up to test their knowledge of

antiques and, perhaps, more importantly to find out whether they had any precious heirlooms. The show was held in the big beautiful barn on the farm and, luckily, fires had been brought in to keep away the chill. Never having been in the barn before, it occurred to me what a splendid setting it would be for a party on a balmy summer evening.

We were seated at seven tables and the ceremony started with a Quiz where, with every table in competition, we were tested on our knowledge of antiques. We undoubtedly knew less than we should have done but my table came runner-up so I was happy! The testing was done by Bonham's, with Jane Anderson and Harvey Cammell (Don's son) in charge. Then, when wine, sandwiches and cakes were served, Jane and Harvey came to each table to value the antiques we had brought. As might be expected, some came away richer than they thought, some poorer!

£150 was raised for charity and this sum will be split between the Michael Sobell Unit at Mount Vernon and the Hospice at Watford. The entrance fee was only £5. Some people who had not bought tickets unfortunately had to be turned away. Next time book early! We are hoping for a repeat roadshow one lunch time early in the New Year. (Peter Philips).

THE LOUDWATER BRIDGE CLUB

Over 20 members attended each of the first two sessions on Nov. 7 and Nov. 20. A last session was held on Dec. 18. The emphasis is on playing bridge in a relaxed, convivial manner. All standards of play are, and will be, accommodated. We are playing "Chicago" (rubber bridge changing opponents every four hands) and we will review progress in early 1997. Dates for that year are Wednesdays, Jan. 8 and 22, February 5 and 19. A Constitution is being drawn up and will be sent to all members in January.

(John Parsons, Chmn Bridge Club (778241)).

"I am delighted the efforts to improve community spirit is beginning to bear fruit.

"The next regular event being explored is a Theatre Club, with visits to local and other theatres, perhaps preceded by dinner. Transport would be by coach. Your view would be welcome.

"The Antiques Evening was, as reported, a sell-out. A second such evening is taking place on Feb 17 with a meal. Contact Joan Martin (775433) for details. May I offer my thanks to all on, and outside, the Committee who have worked on these ideas."

(Godfrey Crook, Chmn. LRA).

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

The charming June Curtis continues to have great success as Loudwater incidents continue to be the lowest for miles. But more can be done, as she says below. She also confirms that the police are asserting the right, if they see fit, not to answer calls to houses where repeated false alarms occur, unless there is visible outside damage, or the keyholder is a lone female. Here is June's report.

"Just over a year ago, I was persuaded to take over the Neighbourhood Watch from Desmond Martin, and I am most appreciative of the efforts of our 23 co-ordinators in passing criminal news around Loudwater (thankfully, little of it in 1996). Crime will never completely disappear but by our combined efforts it can be kept low, including such things as keeping the gates locked, however inconvenient at times. Month after month, we have the lowest crime figures of any comparable area nearby. With the help of the Police Crime Prevention Officers, I am planning a property marking day in late April or early May. The Crime Prevention trailer will be stationed in Loudwater for half or a whole day. All

residents will be invited to bring any property they want post-coded, or photographed. For non-portable items, a home visit by an officer can be arranged. There will be no charge except film and developing costs where involved. Donations will be expected and any profit given to charity. Time, date, place etc will be in the April Newsletter."

(June Curtis)

LOUDWATER IN HISTORY

Following the success of the LRA exhibition of photos, sketches etc of old Loudwater, Rob at the garage decided to do an exhibition focused on the garage, the Loudwater bus, etc. He put together a fascinating show, not merely of pictures but old garage kit, bills, ledgers and so on. Unfortunately, he started this after our last newsletter and will be taking it down by the time this appears, but those who saw it were highly impressed. Rob has been kind enough to say he will copy whatever the LRA wants to add to its collection. One odd thing; Rob has pictures of every bus driver except Harry Cross, so if anyone has one or knows where one can be found, we'd both be most grateful.

THE NEW ESTATE GATES

At the Estate Board AGM on 25th September, it was unanimously agreed to install new electronic security gates at Troutstream Way, Trout Rise and Violet Way. The Electricity Board have established where the mains underground power cables exist. They now expect to start work within the next few weeks to connect up the power supply boxes on the verges adjacent to the new gate posts. As soon as these works have been completed, new posts will be installed followed by new gates. This should be completed early in the New Year.

An attractive new design has been chosen for all three gates, very similar to those at the top of Kingfisher Lure. As soon as new gates are operational, the coded electronic cards to open them will be issued and the remote control units will be available for purchase.

(Peter Lough)

THE ELUSIVE GAS LEAK

For almost six years there has been the occasional smell of gas around the gate at the top of Troutstream Way, usually in the early morning or evening when the air was still or slightly damp. But whenever the Gas Board investigated, it mysteriously disappeared. However, on Friday, December 7th, there it was again and this time the Gas Board found a small fracture in the main.

Luckily, the hole which the Gas Board needed to dig is exactly where one of the new security gate posts is to be sited, so the gate contractors can now avoid the gas main and won't need to dig the hole.

(P.L.)

BITS AND PIECES

Dorothy Francis (T.Way) had her talents as an artist recognised with an exhibition of over a dozen of her charming misty watercolours of the area in a show at Three Rivers House. All the paintings are for sale. (Christmas plug, Dorothy, OK?)

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The newsletter policy is to avoid death notices (for obvious reasons) except where former Committee members are concerned. We extend our condolences to Gordon Done on the death of his warm and energetic wife, Pam, who gave good service to the LRA.

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The local police were kind enough to ask if we had had any information about a Hollywood film star moving into the area while making a picture, a prospect that gave them no joy whatsoever. The man concerned, Tom Cruise, looked at Loudwater, but decided Moor Park was more convenient.

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A Watford Observer supplement on High Street, Ricky, Past and Present recalled that Jones "the gramophone record shop" next to the present W.H. Smith's site, was bought by local resident (L. Heights) John Overend. He bought the stock, and in 1957 held a sale of four records for £1. Such was the interest in the old dust-covered 78s that queues had to be controlled during the sale.

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We seem to have a new type of development in the area. At least three houses, have been purchased for fairly substantial sums, have then been virtually gutted or had major changes made to them at a cost which must be nearly one-third of the original price, with builders, lorries and utilities vans all over the place at all hours!

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Those lights again. We have recently had an official Government study reporting that light pollution is a growing concern, as public buildings, golf course, superstores and private houses continue to blaze into the sky. The commercial operations do it for advertising, which should not be permitted, the public buildings and houses do it for a security reason which (as reported here before) is in fact counter-productive. Motorway noise has made some of Loudwater less pleasant - is intrusive lighting to do even more?.

To those who find neighbour's lights intrusive, but say they're shy of asking for a change, let me give my reassurance. I tactfully raised the point with a neighbour and got a most polite reply that the matter would be remedied, so there are nice people about.

(One of the lights that seem to me most worrying are those that are fixed to come on as you come near a drive entrance, not near the house. Lights suddenly flashing on you as you drive past a house you're not anywhere near can cause an accident).

A WELCOME AND A WHINGE

Despite my plea (last Newsletter), neither the Editor or the LRA are being informed about some people who move here and whom we would like to welcome. Anyone out there, especially patch warden, find out and let somebody know. And thanks to those who do do the job.

Welcome to Judy and David Fox and their two children in K. Lure: to Chris and Annalise Soteriou, with Christina (and Macavity) in T. Rise: to Bruce Howard and Sarah Collins in L. House: and to Jim, Cora Lynn and Alexa-Maria somewhere, because I wasn't given the details! Hope you all enjoy it here.

A number of people have asked for Isabel Johnson's new address. It is 7 Bollin Court, Macclesfield Road, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 2AP.

PLANNING

- 0229/96 *Cherry Hill Cottage, T.Rise. One-storey rear extension. (Approved)*
- 0378/96 *Land adjoining Hillpoint, L. Lane. Two detached dwellings, ancillary works and access. (LRA objected, refused, to appeal)*
- 0406/96 *The Old Stables, B. Lane. Convert garage to living room, single-storey garage extension. (Approved)*
- 0617/96 *Variant on 0378. (LRA objected, refused)*
- 0656/96 *Siva, L. Lane. Two-storey side, part two-storey, part one-storey rear extensions. (Approved)*
- 0721/96 *Med Mills, T. Rise. Glass cover to pool. (Approved)*
- 0762/96 *The Old Stables, B. Lane. One-storey garage. (Approved)*
- 0766/96 *Breydon, C/wood Rd. Extensions, alterations, new garage.*
- 0776/96 *Globe Trotter, Lower Plantation. One-storey side conservatory and dormer.*
- 0808/96 *Tayholme, Lower Plantation. Raise roof for first-floor extension.*
- 0872/96 *Ockley House, Lower Plantation. First floor side extension.*
- 0910/96 *Dacres, T.Way. Demolish existing house, erect new house with integral garage.*

AND SO FAREWELL.....

.....TO 1996. ON BEHALF OF ALL THE OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE OF THE LRA, A HAPPY AND PEACEFUL NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR MEMBERS.