

LOUDWATER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER No. 84

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Editor: John Jarrett

Most residents know the special sites in Loudwater - Loudwater House and the houses originally attached to it, such as The Walled Garden where the house's fruit was grown, the Coachman's House, Flint Cottage where the laundry was and of course, the garage with its two charming primitive plaques.

But it seems probable that nobody, including your Editor, has ever given a thought to our prayer meeting hut. Where is it? Thought so. It is a little clapboard hut in the grounds of High Cleve, just on the West corner of K.Lure and T.Way.

The history is this. Cameron Jeffs, who created the Loudwater Estate in the 1920's, was a pious man, and also some what dour. He gravitated towards the Plymouth Brethren sect and they held prayer meetings every Sunday in this little hut.

It's only about 18' by 12', and although over forty years successive owners of the property have used it as a shed/lumber room etc, you can still see the original gas light fittings (with a gas mantle!) and marks of where a reading lectern stood. After each meeting, tea would be taken in a little annexe, now boarded up. The prayer meetings, which could not have been more than a dozen people in that space, apparently petered out in the 1930's, but the hut, which must have been one of the earliest buildings on the Estate, is still there.

Your Editor is most grateful to the charming Mrs. Ruby Saghir who took time off to let me see the hut - and, of course, gave me a cup of tea afterwards. And no - the Saghirs didn't know the history, either.

THE LRA AGM

As usual, well attended, with some 50 people on a rather drizzly night. Chairman Godfrey Crook managed in an able speech to cover all the flurry of activities the LRA has had in the past year - the Bridge Club, the Theatre Club, the Antiques Shows etc. And it didn't end there - there is talk of a Golf Club, a play-reading group etc.

A constructive and brave note was struck when Dr. Laurie Hall was invited to speak about the much-criticised fence from Great Poplars onto L.Lane. Although some members spoke of their incredulity that it could ever have been erected, it was good to hear that the Halls, the council and the LRA are all co-operating to agree on a suitable replacement.

It may be of some use to print the names of the committee, since not all of them, while doing valuable work, get the spotlight. Apart from the three named at the top of this Newsletter, they are Brenda Hope, Michael Nest, June Curtis, John Renshaw, Jack Prince, Joan Martin, Tony Moss, Denise Preedy and Sue Tippen. Thank you, all.

One unusual note was that the LRA showed a deficit for the year. Not to worry - the balance sheet still shows a surplus of over £4.500, which is kept just in case there is a sudden need. The main expenses were the Newsletter and printing, postage etc, each over £300 (the latter is usually much smaller), and the AGM and Garden Party, both over £200 (again, the Garden Party usually has a small profit or loss). The black hole, however, was in subscriptions, over £300 down, which reinforces the plea made in previous issues. If you haven't paid for 1997, please do so now.

And just to add to the point, look what the LRA is doing, apart from what has been detailed above. There is a sub-committee, which both the local Cty Cllrs attend, to try to make L. Lane safer. A scheme will be put to all residents and, after responses have been considered, to the Highways Agency. (By the way, if you find any potholes that are dangerous, ring the Highways Department on 777320, they should fix it within 24 hours.)

We have been monitoring Beechengrove Wood where re-

planting has started on a limited basis. Full re-planting is due to be completed next Autumn with the aid of a re-planting grant. The woodland floor has been deliberately left with fallen branches and brushwood, so that natural flora can establish themselves. A fence will soon go up and the access point moved away from the sharp u bend.

Lastly, June Curtis arranged for a property marking day, of which more below.

YOU WRITE

"The return of our swan (the cob) towards the end of 1996 with his new mate was a pleasant surprise. As his companion earlier in the year had been an 'immature', there were high hopes that the new pairing would breed in 1997. It has been a number of years since young cygnets graced the Chess in Loudwater. Since January, serious 'courting' was much in evidence. In early April the cob embarked on an energetic nest building programme. The original site over the past years had been on the island across the lake from Loudwater House but this was destroyed when the island was 'beautified' and security floodlights installed. This year, the cob decided to build the nest on the riverside above four ft diameter and two ft high, and at the end of the month the pen (female) even tried it for size by sitting on it for a few hours. Either it was not to her liking or the egg production unit failed to start, with the result that both swans now ignore it completely and we shall have to wait for another year.

"Our mallard population are having their usual problems in raising their broods. On April 1st, a duck brought her brood of eleven to the house for approval and within ten days there were only two remaining for which she had little interest. Shortly afterwards she abandoned them completely. They have survived, however, and are inseparable, always coming each day for feeding and spending long periods asleep side by side on the bank. The white duck produced her brood of nine, at the end of April but lost all of them before a week.

"My contribution this year in the matter of duck nests, (which are frequently destroyed by foxes and badgers on their nightly prowls) was to place an old lawnmower grassbox in a secure position on the river bank. It was very pleasing to see it occupied a few weeks later, and finally on May 14th we were rewarded with the sight of mother duck persuading her family of nine to enter the water. But the family was reduced to four by the following morning, and after five days became one following the loss of its 'companion' when a crow had it for breakfast.

"The mortality rate for ducklings appear to be very high because of foxes and crows and the prowling cat. A new menace, however, appeared last year in the Chess in the form of a wild mink, ruthless hunters to both fish and fowl. The score to date in the Chess Falls stretch of river, is two survivors from four broods of 34 ducklings."

Derek Woolcock - Chess Falls, L. Lane

THE NEW ESTATE GATES

"Just a short note to thank you for your kind words about the new Estate gates in the last Newsletter. A great deal of thought, research and planning went into the whole operation, in order to provide the best system for all.

"We have already had one set of vandals in the form of a van driver trying to deliver kitchen furniture onto the Estate. Frustrated at the closed gate at the top of Troutstream Way, he used excessive force and was able to break the gate open. Fortunately, he was seen and reported to the police, who are now dealing with the case. The gate was subsequently examined by the contractors and found to be un-damaged.

"Finally, may I address the comments made by Mrs Catherine Melvin in the last issue. I am sorry she is disappointed with the new gates and feels no better off.

• The prime objective of the new gates was to provide greater Estate security coupled with added convenience of use. Before going ahead with the scheme, we made it clear in all correspondence to residents how the new system would work and asked each one to return a questionnaire with views. A few residents were originally sceptical and voiced opposition, but changed their minds as they realised the important benefits the new gates would bring. Our records show that Mrs. Melvin was one of the first to formally register her approval.

• Unlike most car parks, which have one way traffic in and out, all gates on the Estate roads carry two way traffic. To install a card reader on the verges would obviously position a car on the wrong side of the road, facing on - coming traffic as the gates open. Imagine the confusion and chaos that would have caused, not to mention additional installation costs and the vulnerability of the card reader posts to accidental or deliberate damage. For obvious reasons, a card reader positioned in the middle of the road was out of the question. The workman who spoke to Mrs Melvin was clearly not aware of the difficulties.

"You might like to know that 83 remote units have already been purchased and we have another 10 on order. I think this demonstrates that the vast majority of residents believe that the remote control unit represents good value and added convenience."

Peter Lough, Director
Loudwater Troutstream Estates

PROPERTY MARKING DAY

"Statistics show conclusively that where an active N.W scheme is in operation, the crime figures are much lower (up to 75%) than in areas where N.W is non existent. But such low crime figures tend to lead to complacency, which was illustrated during the Property Marking Day in Loudwater on the 20th April. Although leaflets were delivered to over 400 houses explaining the free services on offer, only 13 people turned up. I find a 3% turnout not just very disappointing, but alarming. I had no idea Loudwater had such a severe case of apathy

"Burglars for the most part give N.W areas a wide berth, but if our scheme should cease to exist through lack of interest or support, the prospect of higher crime figures will become a reality.

"Lastly, a big thank you to the Co-Ordinators for delivering the leaflets, knocking on doors and generally doing their best to promote Property Marking Day."

June Curtis
Chief Co-Ordinator

"I was disappointed to hear from June that the Property Marking Day was not better supported.

"Prevention and detection of dwelling house burglaries is at the very top of our Crime Policing Plan for this year and we, the local Police, need your support and co-operation. Each year the Police seize millions of pounds worth of stolen property. You can imagine our frustration when we cannot return these precious items to their rightful owners.

"Without a resident positively identifying such property, we cannot charge the burglar or handler with that particular offence. Offenders therefore walk free, as the onus of proof that an item is stolen rests with the prosecution. Property Marking is the best method for you, a possible victim of the future, to ensure your property is returned. It also helps as a deterrent in that offenders know that post coded property is extremely difficult to sell.

"If you would like to know more about property marking or other Crime Prevention measures, please contact myself at Rickmansworth Police Station."

Inspector Mark Crampton
Three Rivers Division

BITS AND PIECES

In the Sarratt annual horticultural show, two former residents won prizes, Pat Watson and Margaret Stratford.

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Some time ago, a woman connected with the Tiggywinkle Trust,

which saves and relocates hedgehogs, rang me to ask if Loudwater would be a suitable place to relocate some of the hedgehogs they look after. I told her this was not an expertise I had and suggested a name, but I never heard any more. Our garden has lost its hedgehogs and we would love to see them back, but have we too many cats, dogs etc?

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Very few residents seem to have taken up the Council's offer of recycling boxes for paper, and cans and plastic bottles. This seems a pity, because the service is very efficient, collected every fortnight, and it does serve the environment.

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Those people who enjoyed our exhibition of pictures of old Loudwater and Rob's pictures of the old Loudwater buses and their drivers will be pleased to know that the LRA is planning to produce a brochure about Loudwater, using these pictures. The maps of Chorleywood Parish went like hot cakes - the LRA hopes that a brochure about just Loudwater will also be something residents will want to buy for themselves, or for Christmas presents for friends and relatives who used to live here.

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There have been several reports of houses where glaring outside light have been removed or had the angle altered. Thanks to those who have helped neighbors to sleep, and all of us to see a little more night sky.

But progress goes on bringing its problems, and this one nothing can be done about. Peaceful summer afternoons get fewer when mowers and strimmers are going full blast, but the grass has got to be cut, hasn't it? One disturbing new fact has emerged, however - a new report claims that the big motor mowers emit as bad toxic fumes as most cars. If you use one often, a mask might be advisable, and keep the kids away when mowing

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Three of us have been mentioned in the local papers Mr. Norris, of Cockayne, L. Lane, has had several fierce attacks on Government spending on health and education. Mrs. Colleran, of Chess Lane, wrote of disrespect shown to people using disabled badges for parking And your Editor was the subject of a short piece by an Observer columnist when he revealed a piece of his election history. When yours truly was standing for Parliament in 1974, my agent was a young architectural engineering student who'd volunteered. He was new to the game but seemed keen, and his family had lived in Rickmansworth for generations. Moreover, his father was Charles Madge, the Co - Founder of Mass Opinion, the first national sociological survey. The young man did well, but we lost touch. A few weeks ago, when the Sunday Times published its annual list of Britain's richest people, there he was. The young man, Robert Madge, had gone from architecture into computers, and now runs his firm in America, and at 45, he is now worth over £240 million pounds!

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One piece of local larceny was a particular sorrow to your Editor. This was the theft of two dragons / gryphons from the wall of The Walled Garden in L. Lane. My five children have all in succession over thirty years seen and asked about those ferocious looking red figures, and were told (with dubious accuracy) that they were probably Welsh dragons, being red. And we christened them Evan and Blodwen. Now they are gone. Our condolences to the owners of The Walled Garden, the McDermotts.

PLANNING

- 0910/96 Dacres, T.Way. Demolish existing house, erect new house with integral garage. Amended plan submitted.
- 0026/97 4 Harewood. Retention of one storey extension to garage.
- 0299/97 Hillpoint, L. Lane. Variation in visibility splay. (Refused).
- 0104/97 Thurwin, L. Heights. One storey rear extension, one storey detached garage.
- 0199/97 Magnolia Cottage, Chess Way. First floor side extension.
- 0216/97 Ladygate 11, Ladyswood Close, Semi basement with terrace to rear.
- 0241/97 CherryTree Cottage, Rooks Hill. Erect Conservatory.
- 0258/97 Fenworthy, Bridle Lane. Part two, part single extension, loft conversion with new dormers.
- 0276/97 Swandrift, T. Rise. Erect conservatory.
- 0332/97 Chart Cottage, Chess Way. First floor extension with dormers.
- 0357/97 9 Lower Plantation. Part ground and first floor side extension.
- 0362/97 The White House, T. Rise. Erect conservatory.
- 0379/97 Willow End, Chess Hill. Two storey side extensions.