

LOUDWATER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER No. 85

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Editor: John Jarrett

The theme of this Newsletter is water - not enough of it and yet too much...

Margaret Bianchin, of Trout Rise, has looked into the facts of concern to all riparian owners, who have watched their water levels steadily falling, and she sends us this report.

"When we viewed our property in the late summer of 1976, it was the River Chess, winding its way along our boundary that gave the tranquillity we had been looking for. Until this summer, the wild life the water attracted - ducks, swans, moor hens, coots, herons, kingfishers graced our garden. On one occasion, the cob and pen brought nine cygnets for our inspection. We have some photographs of them sitting round our garden tables during a LRA Garden Party..

"This year, the Chess dried out completely in places leaving just silt banks, too shallow for the ducks to swim, so they walked to be fed. The abundant river weed was no more, nor were the trout.

No swans and the normally shy coots and moorhens have been all over the lawn in search of food.

"Why has the Chess been so affected in recent years?

answer: Local water authorities have been taking water from one or other of eight stations. The licences to do this were granted in the sixties, and they are held in perpetuity. Not only the water authorities have this right, licences were granted to many house holders on the river, again in perpetuity. For example, the late Lady Lewis' property, Clearburn, was granted a licence in 1966.

"Only change in the law can revoke these licences, and that must go through Parliament. My family and I have been in touch with those who have the power to raise the matter with the Government, because the hands of Environmental Agencies are tied without this change, and substantial funds to re-examine thousands of such licences all over the country. (revoking one such licence in St. Albans cost the Environment Agency six million pounds in compensation.

"The Wildlife Trust is running a nationwide campaign, which we are supporting, and we would ask Loudwater residents as a whole to put their feelings of support to their local M.P. Richard Page. If you write to us, we will ensure they are passed on."

Mario, Margaret and Davide Bianchin, Handa and T. Rise all of this may seem ludicrous to those who suffered in the September flood. Alas, no, the area is so short of water that we need months of rain to catch up. What came down in that storm bounced off the earth, was swallowed up by the trees or plants or just evaporated. But what a storm it was! Parts of the Chorleywood Road that never flood did so. Half a dozen cars died on the road, others got through only by driving half on the pavement. Two cars at the notorious flood point at the bottom of Loudwater Lane ran into a 'wall of water' whereupon their owners abandoned them and blocked the road from the main road and from Croxley Green. In fact, the flood by Chess Cottage sank away quite fast.

It was no doubt infuriating for those who had to do it, but it was fascinating to see so many Loudwater residents walking home, more exercise than they'd had in years!

Nothing can be done about that and our sympathies go to them. But locals should know better than to charge down L.Lane in heavy rain, and outsiders should have the common sense to know that water is liable to lie at the bottom of a steep hill.

As regards Loudwater itself, apart from a few people with very wet feet, problems seem to have been light, though one resident did have damage to a roof.

What we should all do is offer up prayers to Jupiter Pluvius for a winter of continual, steady, not too violent rain all night long every night. Then Margaret and Mario Bianchin will be able to see their ducks swim to them again.

HITTING BOUNDARIES

As people and industries move from one place to another, electoral boundaries need to be changed. It's most obvious in Parliamentary seats where boundaries are changed because one MP can get elected by getting the lion's share of 50,000 votes, whereas another may have to get the best of 70,000. District Council boundaries need to change the same way, so that the ratio of Councillors to electors is roughly fair. This may be happening to us, as Three Rivers is looking at the situation.

Seeing the opportunity, Chorleywood Parish Council has suggested some anomalies on parish level could be straightened out at the same time.

Anomalies there certainly are. Some houses in L.Lane and L.Drive are in Rickmansworth District Council wards, while their next door neighbours are in Chorleywood. All the Chess Hill/Chess Close enclave is in Rickmansworth. It is suggested that almost all of these residents would consider themselves to "belong" to Loudwater, as most of us do. (Outside our area, one anomaly that will almost certainly be recommended for tidying up is the Council House estate in Queen's Drive and Edinburgh Avenue, who are at present in C/wood, but almost certainly feel they "belong" to Mill End, for example.)

It's all terribly complicated, because any change could not alter the probability that some areas will be in one ward for the District and another for the Parish. Then again, the Rickmansworth Loudwaterians don't have any parish Council representation because Rickmansworth doesn't have one, while the Chorleywood side does, and, of course, money and politics come into it. No authority wants to lose more rate-payers than it gains and no Councillor wants to see his/her seat disappear.

There are arguments for and against being parished: For, is a closer voice in local decisions, against, is another layer of bureaucracy. The LRA has been asked for its views and is considering the matter. If you have any views, tell the LRA or the C/wood Parish office.

CONSERVATION - THE BIG DEBATE

Some time ago, the Estate Board began to wonder about having the Estate listed as a Conservation area. Hersongate has long been one, and recently Moor Park acquired the same status.

The Board finally decided to circularise all members and then have the issue raised at the AGM.

There is no doubt that it would give extra protection to the area. Those who feel the Estate's environmental standards are correct will approve the move. Those who want a looser rein would oppose it, because conservation status does impose restrictions.

Because this was an important issue, the Estate AGM was much better attended than usual, some 50 plus. Because it is also a bit complicated, the meeting went on too long and too many people had left for a show of hands to be worthwhile. However, from this meeting and the written replies the Board had had, it seems clear that the idea generally finds favour. The definition will have to be fairly strict, which may mean that the two lodge houses from the old Panmure Gordon days (Loudwater Lodge and The Dell) will, however historic, be excluded.

Other interesting notes from the AGM-since the electronic gates were installed, surveys have shown traffic through the Estate down by something like 20%.

For some reason, nearly three-quarters of the shares in the Company have not been taken up. That means that any decisions by the Board that involve voting are taken by a too small

minority since only shareholders can vote. It is true contentious issues rarely arise but if one did, most Estate residents would have no say. Buying a share, which is open to any resident, costs only £1.

The garages the Estate owns are fully rented, and Maurice Escow has a list of those on the waiting list. If you might be interested later on, let Maurice know. The same applies to the handsomely-refurbished Company flats which do become free for short or even longer term rents from time to time.

YOU WRITE

"I think I can add some comments on items in the last Newsletter.

"As a resident for over 40 years, I was aware of the prayer meeting hut in K.Lure. In 1954, when I was negotiating with Miss Wallis, then acting for the Trustees of the Estate, I feel sure the Estate Office at the times was that hut.

"Mr. Woolcott's story about the ducklings was a sad but common one, as there are so many predators about. The wild mink, like the grey squirrel, is very bad, but mink traps are available from most gamekeepers. Badgers, as a protected species, are a special problem as they not only destroy ducks nests, but hedgehogs as well. The Tiggywinkle lady would not be wise to loose her hedgehogs elsewhere."

Dennis Longman, Violet Way.

"I would like to thank the LRA Chairman and the Committee who were involved in the recent Garden Party. Despite the rain, we thoroughly enjoyed a successful afternoon.

"I have a suggestion that may assist developing community spirit in Loudwater, that is social opportunities for families with young children. Because of Loudwater's geography, it is sometimes hard to meet other families with children. My suggestion aims to provide for our children a network of friends in the true spirit of a village community in a safe, quiet and beautiful area.

"At the Garden Party and on other occasions I have found a resounding approval for creating a list of families with young children and perhaps regular gatherings. Would parents who are interested please contact me?"

Ann Garner, Greenbanks, T. Rise. 720561

"There used to be a group of artists in Loudwater called 'Loudwater Limners'. If you are interested in reviving this, please contact me at Dovecote, T. Way, 270894. The group would decide when and where to meet. If the response justifies it, some founder members might get together with me and decide how to proceed."

Dorothy Francis. T. Way.

BITS AND PIECES

The latest Neighbourhood Watch report has good news, in that crime in the area is down by some 20%. Overall, crimes in the Loudwater area are down from 65 to 37 last year for the comparable period, with only four burglaries and 18 vehicle crimes.

Loudwater was actually almost crime free. It has to be noted that the police area definition of Loudwater is made for their convenience of manning, not geographic, so it includes parts of Valley Road, The Clump etc, so figures for our Loudwater are always less than the official total.

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Despite constant appeals here, too few of the new arrivals are reported to the Newsletter, so thanks to S.T. and M.B. for the following.

Welcome, then, to Pat and Irene Hanly with their children Aofie and Simon, in Chess Hill, and to Alan and Margaret Tan as well as Chris and Annaleese, with daughter Kristina and Macavity the cat, both in T. Rise, and in L. Heights is Arturion and Maya Stepanov from Russia and Andy and Sandy Yates and their daughters.

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The LRA Theatre Club goes on apace. The members have decided to try the West End and will be going to see "The Woman in Black" soon. Obviously, the idea of having the tickets bought, a meal provided and coach travel to avoid the hassle of parking has

great appeal.

Even more ambitious is a plan to go to Glndebourne. Anyone who wishes to join should contact June Curtis.

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Another LRA initiative, and something new to the area - there is going to be a wine-tasting here on November 21. Lastly, all those wonderful people who distribute this Newsletter are invited to a drinks party to say thank you. It'll be on December 4th, at 12 Harewood, courtesy of Mr. and Mrs Preedy.

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This, we are sure is a record.

In listing the oldest, and longest-resident members in Loudwater, we have so far omitted S.J. (Phil) Rogers of Wanstead, L. Lane. Bill as a relative youngster, doesn't qualify for age but he was born in the house and has lived there, almost without interruption for all of his 65 years! That doesn't happen often these days.

Apologies for three errors in the Last Newsletter. Dotage is creeping up! The Walled Garden is, of course part of the L.House complex off T.Way not in L.Lane. The planning application for magnolia Cottage, Chess Way, should have not appeared, Chess Way not being in Loudwater, and the reference to The White House application should have been 326, not 362.

PLANNING

0910/96 Dacres, T.Way. Demolish existing house, erect house with integral garage-amended plan. (Approved).

0026/97 4 Harewood. Retention. one storey extension, to garage. (Approved).

0104/97 Thurwin, L. Heights. One storey rear extension, one storey detached garage. (Approved).

0216/97 Ladygate, 11 Ladyswood Close. Erect conservatory. (Approved).

0241/97 Cherry Tree Cottage. Erect conservatory. (Approved).

0276/97 Swandrift, T Rise. Erect conservatory. (Approved).

0357/97 9 Lower Plantation. Part ground and first floor side extension. (Approved).

0326/97 The White House, T Rise. Erect conservatory. (Approved).

0379/97 Willow End, Chess Hill. Two story side extensions.

0479/97 The Spinney, K Lure. First floor and one story extension. (Approved).

0481/97 Tudor House, Lower Plantation. Two storey side extension. (Approved).

0403/97 Woodside, B Lane. Two storey side and first floor front extension. (Approved).

0530/97 Hillpoint, L.Lane. Erect detached house with varied access.

0541/97 Hautbois, L.Heights. First Floor extension. (Approved).

0569/97 Land at Tall Trees and Willows, L Drive. Erect three detached dwellings and garages to replace existing dwellings.

0622/97 Morningside, B Lane. First floor front and back extensions. (Approved).

0634/97 Windyridge, L.Lane. Two storey back extension. (Approved).

0682/97 Clearburn, T.Rise. Two storey building to house 3 cars with playroom above.

0723 The Dell, L Drive. Erect detached dwelling.