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NEWSLETTER No. 86

JANUARY 1998

Editor: John Jarrett

Once again, water makes our main story, but this time, it's not water in the sky or on the roads, but beneath our feet - the sewers, in other words.

It came about this way. A plumber, tending to a minor blockage in your Editor's home, mentioned that he has seen two Thames Water crews in Loudwater while he was on his way here. This was in November. Further research revealed that there were at least seven plumbing crews in our area on that day, and it has subsequently been learned that the number of call-outs for back up or blockage problems in our area has gone up noticeably in the last ten years.

The reasons are not hard to find - apart from the inevitable problem with tree roots! Some of the sewers, notably in the Estate, were laid almost sixty years ago and many are thirty years old. In that time, we have had a gradual but steady increase in the number of houses, an increase in multiple-occupancy, and of course a massive increase in water-using domestic appliances. So what, you may say!

The problem is that if this deterioration goes on, we may face an enquiry by the local Environmental Health Officer, who has the powers to order improvement or even complete replacement. AND, many of the sewers in the area are private. That means, any cost has to be born by those who own the sewers, which in some cases is the householders in that road, and, for the Estate, the Estate Company.

It must be hoped that this is an unnecessary worry. However, it can happen. The inhabitants of Little Hill in Chorleywood reported a blockage causing back up. It was found to be centred only in one house. However, the EHO deemed their whole system in need of improvement, and that cost had to be shared among all in the road. It was five figures. What the costs would be in this area is frightening. So - if you use less water, you may be not only a good boy environmentally - you may be averting a bill of thousands in the future.

JEFF'S FLIGHT OF FANCY

Cameron Jeffs, the creator of the Loudwater Estate, had some dramatic plans for this area, even before he started building here, dramatic and, by today's standards, horrifying.

This emerged from a casual glance, on an entirely unconnected matter at the Chorleywood Highways and Commons Committee of May 23 1921! Mr Jeffs had submitted an application for permission for aeroplanes "to rise from and alight upon the common". The minute is worth quoting further. "Mr Jeffs informed the Committee that this (application) constituted merely a part of a large scheme involving development from Pinner to Chalfont and in connection with a number of guest houses, the grounds of which would provide means of recreation for tennis, bowls,

golf, bathing, boating lakes etc. It was proposed to develop flying and although accommodation would be provided for storage (sic) of aeroplanes on private grounds, they would occasionally require landing and alighting stations for which purpose they required to use the Common...For the alighting of an aeroplane it might be necessary to clear a small space of some 300 to 400 yards of the Common...He did not think this would in any way interfere with the use of the Common by the inhabitants".

The Committee, whose memory we must praise, did not agree and Mr Jeffs went away to other schemes.

One has to admire the foresight (in 1921) and audacity of Jeffs' plan. One also has to thank heaven it was stopped.

WHERE DID THEY GO?

At the risk of tedium, two other fascinating documents have come our way. They are both maps.

One is very old, dated 1822. Then, there are some cottages shown among Common road, there are Red Hall, Ivy House and Jew House in Sarratt, but in Loudwater, there is only Micklefield Hall for, although the Mill building is shown, it is not thought worth naming.

The other, much later about 1939, shows L.House with a cottage to the S.E., the three gates houses (The dell, L.Drive, Loudwater Lodge in L.Lane and Troutcote in T.Way). T.Rise, T.Way are moderately developed, but only a scattering of houses elsewhere.

But what stands out as the biggest loss is a massive ring of trees in open ground between the boat house near the L.House weir and the footpath, roughly behind Harewood and what was then Dyke Place. The detail on such maps is not guaranteed to be accurate, but the ring shows some fifty trees and its diameter, to give an example, is about twice the length of L.House.

What happened to this magnificent stand? Old-age, vandalism, cut down for housing? It would be good to know.

Two smaller curiosities - why was the stretch of trees from Sarratt Lane to the N.E. corner of T.Rise called Home Wood, and the stretch between the L.House end of Loudwater Drive and the Chess called Crab Row? If because of crab trees, they've gone.

THE INVISIBLE MENACE

The threat of extra motorway lanes has gone, but pollution does not stop. Tests have shown the probability of higher incidence of chest problems in this area, and the Government has given the Three Rivers Council money to start monitoring levels, especially of particulates. And guess where it is thought to be highest and need monitoring? K.Lure and Junction 18.

LETTERS

"The sad felling of trees down L.Lane and the semi-clearance of the adjacent woodland still seems to have bought no action. The abomination of the concrete and galvanised chain fence, erected without planning consent, is still offensive and the Council do not seem to be inclined to have it replaced or modified. Such changes should not be permitted to succeed on a 'fait accompli' basis.

"The woodland site has for many months resembled a dumping ground with abandoned machinery and assorted rubbish. Bearing in mind that the felling and fence occurred over twelve months ago, it is not unreasonable to expect action by the Council and the properties' owners.

"I am not sure what regulations were observed about the fencing of the adjacent footpath, but the result is that a previously open, natural pathway is now restricted by a fence two metres high, and in places only three and a half foot wide, making an unattractive and claustrophobic corridor."

W.D.Woolcock L.Lane

(Without doubt, we all sympathise with Derek Woolcock but, alas, the law grinds exceedingly slow and small, and the Council has in fact served the legally necessary enforcement notice on the owners of Great Poplars. Ed.)

Marcus and Jo Westerby have moved from T.Rise but sent us this nice note.

"Please convey to all concerned our grateful thanks for our twenty eight years in Loudwater. Thanks to you, the LRA and all. We hope the new residents, Mr and Mrs Alan Watson, their son Oliver and their Great Dane Henry, will be very happy here as we have always been".

BITS AND PIECES

There will, it seems, be no changes in ward or parish boundaries affecting us, after all. The consultation exercise could hardly be said to have stirred much interest.

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The LRA once again held a small party to say thank you to our gallant band of deliverers. Very rarely do any of them fail to get the Newsletter out in good time - some have been seen leaving to deliver within hours of getting their batch.

Thanks are due to two people, particularly Denise Preedy who provided the party with delicious fare, and to Jack Prince who so capably takes on the major task of counting out each deliverer's copies, and cajoling them to get cracking.

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John Parsons, the organiser of the LRA's Bridge Club, sends this note.

"The Bridge Club has just celebrated its first anniversary. All LRA members are welcome. We play every first and third Wednesday at Loudwater Farm, starting promptly at 7.45pm and finish about 10.30pm. We play Social Bridge, usually Chicago, and bidding is verbal or using bidding boxes. The cost is £2 per person per evening, which includes coffee. There is a £10 annual membership fee.

"Your first visit is FREE. To learn more, ring me (778241), or Cttee members Liz Crook (77657), Fennella Lough (773416), Maurice Escow (771810) or Peter Philips (778431).

"P.S. The Club participated in the National Bridge

Challenge. Four couples played in the Social Bridge Class and the winners, through to the second round, were Jean and Dennis Longman."

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For various reasons too boring to go into, the last Newsletter had some poor setting and some misprints. One to correct was about the L/water Painting group. Those interested should call Dorothy Francis on 770894 (not, as printed 2708794).

Jack Prince sends this report.

"When Godfrey Crook became LRA Chairman, he told the Committee he was determined to improve Community participation in Loudwater. We now have two active clubs - for bridge (see above) and for theatre - going (see below). Two Antiques Evenings have taken place and were so popular others will follow.

"Our latest test-run was a Christmas wine tasting on November 21st. Over fifty members enjoyed a convivial evening in the special surroundings of Loudwater Farm, sampling twenty seven wines from 8 countries. These were presented by local wine merchant Blenheim Wines.

"Some of the wine shippers attended to give expert advice. The success of the evening was shown by the number of orders placed and many requests for another tasting evening. Rest assured, there will be another."

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As Jack mentions, the Theatre Club went out in October to see "The Woman in Black" in London. Despite it being a miserable wet evening, after the coach had let the party of 30 down outside a good pub, the event was voted a success.

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PLANNING

- 0530/97 Hillpoint, L. Lane. Erect detached house, vary access. (Approved)
- 0569/97 Land at Tall Trees/Willows, L.Drive. Erect three detached dwelling and garages to replace existing dwelling. (Refused).
- 0682/97 Clearburn, T. Rise. Two storey building to house three cars with playroom above. (Refused).
- 0723/97 The Dell, L. Lane. Erect detached dwelling. (TRDC has applied for listed building status).
- 0764/97 Pooh Corner, L. Lane. Single-storey rear extension.(Approved).
- 0792/97 Riverview, L. Lane. Two- storey rear extension, one-storey side extension. (Approved).
- 0922/97 Dorney, T.Rise. Erect detached dwelling.
- 0923/97 Krupa, Cherry Hill. One-storey conservatory / garden room at rear.
- 0925/97 Highacre, L. Heights. Erect two detached dwellings.
- 0926/97 Highacre, L. Heights. Erect one detached dwelling.
- 0962/97 The Dell, L. Drive. Erect replacement 4-bed detached Bungalow.

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AND TO ALL OF YOU, A HAPPY AND
PEACEFUL NEW YEAR, OR
(TO SHOW WE DON'T REALLY HATE EUROPE),
BONNE NOUVELLE ANNÉE, FRÖHLICHE
NEUES JAHR, FELIZ ANO, AND I'M
SORRY BUT WE CAN'T PRINT RUSSIAN.

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