

## LOUDWATER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER No. 96

JULY 2000

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Editor: John Jarrett

The Editor offers apologies to members outside the Loudwater Estate (under a third of our membership) for once again leading on what is basically an Estate topic, but news cometh whence it listeth, and that's how it listeth for this issue.

On May 11th, the Estate Board held an almost unprecedented Extraordinary General Meeting at Watersmeet to discuss two major issues.

The first was the Estate roads. The Board has become more and more concerned about the increase in the number and size of vehicles on roads which, when built, were expected to cater mostly for horse and carts. But now, almost every house runs a car, many two and some three or more.

That might be bad enough. But a far greater peril is the number of HGV's from 20 tonners up to 32, where sheer weight damages the surface and sonic vibration may be weakening pipes.

The Board commissioned a specialist firm to make 23 tests on bound materials and the underlying sub-structures, and details of their findings were given for the meeting to discuss, so that some plan of action can be agreed.

There are, of course, already notices banning HGV's, and the bell bollards at the top of T. Way. But, while these have had some effect, the problem remains. One has only to remember the vast number of properties that have had, and are having, extensions to know how many builder's lorries have pounded the roads - and, of course, hauliers make the point that one man driving a large lorry is more economic than three driving smaller types.

A very impressive visual and verbal presentation of the issues was made by Peter Lough and John Parsons and, in due course, the Board will put proposals to the September AGM. All one can be sure of is that they will hurt, but it is in the good cause of protecting this special area.

### THE ROAD FUND-AMENTAL QUESTION

The other issue was how to reform the present system of paying for the upkeep of the Estate roads. The (apparently) logical plan so far has been that each property-owner paid according to his frontage. But, over the years, this has been queried. One property might have a large frontage, but only one car, not often used, another might have a minute frontage but three cars, including a four by four etc,etc. The crucial factor is, it has been asserted, how much use anyone makes of the road.

Some years ago, one Board Director, adamant that the system was unfair, wanted the assessment of road fund charges to be based on rateable values, but this too had flaws. Recently, one or two Estate residents have raised the issue vigorously. *(Your Editor should point out that, while he has moaned, he has not been one of the complainants, although, as it happens, he has the longest frontage in the area and pays £352 annually while one lucky blighter-with probably more road usage - pays £13.20).*

However, the Board has come up with an ingenious scheme which seems more equitable. For the first twelve foot, there will be a fairly stiff charge, but for anything over that, the charge will be a nominal one. It is obvious that some people will find their bills notably increased, but (from his very biased view) your Editor feels the balance will be fairer and nudge him a few quid nearer the millionaire status he so richly deserves.

### THE RESIDENT'S AGM

Perhaps the most significant news from the AGM was that the funds have increased after a couple of dodgy years. Nevertheless, there are problems, about which - see below.

About 40-50 people attended, and it was clear all the various clubs have done well. The Millennium event - dinner on the river down to Greenwich and a go on the London Eye - is almost sold out. The Children's Contact Group goes from strength to strength, and one foreign au pair was delighted when, very soon after arriving apprehensive and lonely, she was put touch with another young woman who spoke her language.

Your Editor thanked members for saying they (mostly!) liked the Newsletter and asked if a little more money could be found so that he could improve its very static make-up, perhaps use some colour, perhaps produce an occasional bumper issue with illustration.

The Wine Appreciation Club has had its first meeting and now has some 25 members. Contact Tony Hale 774374.

Brenda Hope has left the Committee (many thanks, Brenda) and is replaced by John Hauxwell, also of Bridle Lane. After the improvement of the road surface in L.Lane, there is a hint that we may get some traffic calming measures at the Chess Lane junction. In reply to a query as to when Great Poplars would carry out the L.Lane replanting it was ordered to, we learned that current law allows owners a year before this can be enforced!

### CHAOS IN THE COUNCIL

It seems this Government feels it must have a wizard wheeze every week. One of the latest has been to decide that the low polls in local elections mean that Councils must be made more open and democratic. Of course, the real reason for low polls is that every Government for decades, while mouthing policies of devolving power to "the people", has in fact taken more and more powers away from local bodies.

However, Councils now have to create a new structure *(In passing, it is clear that this whole exercise has cost tens of thousands of pounds while virtually paralysing the work of the officers.)*

TRDC now has a leader, elected by Councillors, a Cabinet, and below that a new layer of bureaucracy, the "Evaluation Review and Improvement Commissions". That mouthful is supposed to be a series of watchdogs on the Cabinet.

One consequence is that almost all of those who used to head Committees - Planning, Housing, Environment etc. - are now in the Cabinet, and those committees therefore have vacancies. For the Conservative vacancy on Planning, the group has elected Cllr. Mark Shephard. The Editor is sure LRA members will lose no time in applauding the choice of someone who has so much experience of planning from TRDC right up to the High Court!

*(One good piece of news. The Council has also been ordered to set up a Standards Committee to monitor how Councillors conduct themselves. As Chairman, the Council has chosen Valerie Kleanthous, of Bridle Lane. Good Luck to Val.)*

### THE WHY OF THE WEATHER

Many of you have undoubtedly muttered your irritation that the weather forecast is so often wrong for our area.



The answer seems to be that Chorleywood is on a cusp between two fronts, in fact that it has its own micro-climate. We are on the south edge of the Chilterns with two steep-sided valleys, much common land high up, and extreme frost pockets- Valley Road often records the lowest temperature in Britain.

We are indebted for much of the above to Derek Jennings of Chenies Road, former Chairman of the Chorleywood Residents Association. For the past twelve years Derek has kept basic weather records for his area, which is pretty close to L/water.

He has produced these figures.

1988-1999 ANNUAL RAINFALL VARIATION.	
Highest	Lowest
C/wood 1040mm (1992)	615mm (1996)
Heathrow 673mm (1998)	421mm (1996)

Wettest 24 hours  
C/wood 131mm (May 31, 1992)  
Heathrow 59.4mm (Oct 12, 1993)

Lowest air temperature (Feb 10, 1991)  
C/wood -12c Heathrow -9c

All the above is taken from Mr. Jennings' fine article in the Chorleywood R.A Newsletter, edited by Laurence Evans.

### FAREWELL TO ROB SIMMONDS

Between the appeal by the LRA, a special L.House collection and private donations, it seems more than £1,500 has been raised in gratitude to Rob. We plan to get Rob back to hand over a cheque at a special occasion with the press (which Rob will hate!)

### BITS AND PIECES

The Observer, covering the Historic Commercial Vehicle Society's London to Brighton run, carried a picture of Michael and Joyce Scorer (L.House) in very natty period garb, Michael in plus fours, flat cap and monocle, Joyce in butch trouser suit with cigarette holder a' la Marlene D.

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And still the property booms! Chessboard (T.Way) with its lake side setting, has just broken our local record by going on the market, asking price one and a half million pounds.

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Loudwater continues well re-presented on C/wood Parish Council. Former L/Water resident Geoff Liley (ex-Bridle Lane) has been succeeded as Chairman by Margaret Jarrett, whose beaming face has featured in both local papers on occasions from manning the Parish stand on Environment Day to the ceremony of Beating the Bounds of the Common, and, yes, they do still hold small children upside down and tap their heads on the grass.

Some time ago, we asked for nominations for special trees in L/Water. With a staggering total of two replies, this was clearly not a red-hot attraction. But, after all that time, the chestnut tree in Beltwood, K.Lure, has been proposed. It is a fine and shapely specimen but a mere stripling compared to the chestnut on the lake verge drive past Mont Au Source in L.Drive.

Sadly, in recent years, massive branches have come off for safety, but the bottom of the trunk still stands. It's girth is over seven feet. It must have been one of the, if not the, biggest tree in L/water.

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### THE SHAME OF IT ALL

This will not be a popular item.

Our long-suffering Treasurer points out that although the subscription income for 1999 looks good, a fair chunk of it was back subscriptions from people who had not paid in

1998, but he had hoped that, after the subscription drive earlier this year, the message would have got through.

It has not. Almost half of our 400-plus members have not yet paid for this year.

Now some will have just forgotten, despite several reminders. But it seems many more just can't be bothered. One or two have responded to appeals by saying, huffily that paying is voluntary anyway and they get all the services so why should they? For shame!

Loudwater, and the homes, in it, has remained a very special place, with property values high. Suppose we had a heliport, a late night Country Club, a gymkhana with horse boxes piling along Sarratt Lane in a cloud of flies? Suppose twice the number of houses had been built in Lower Plantation, or twenty six houses in the grounds of Mont au Source and The Round House? Would Loudwater be the same, and properties as valuable?

Well, all these things could have happened if the LRA had not led or joined the fight against them, fights that involved hours of work on site visits, studying plans, spending evenings at TRDC meetings, and afternoons at Appeals. And who does this? Volunteers! For shame!

Loudwater used to be a very isolated place. The LRA started the Garden Party, musical evenings, and all the clubs, The LRA pays for the Newsletter. The LRA set up the Neighbourhood Watch. And who does all this? Volunteers! For shame!

Everyone of us has benefited from at least one of these activities. And yet, there are people who claim a free ride on the back of others, and say "payment is voluntary"! Can't spare a fiver? Can't remember? Come off it!

### PLANNING

- 02370/99 Tall Trees, L.Drive. Two-storey rear extension and conservatory. (Refused).
- 02374/99 Trout Rise Farm, T.Way. Extend manege, erect stables, shed, associated buildings. (Refused).
- 00070/00 Land adjacent Hillpoint, L.Lane and rear Glenhayes, C/wood Rd. Erect four detached dwellings. (Approved).
- 00072/00 Elm Cottage, Chess Lane. Replace detached dwellings, erect garage.
- 00137/00 Willow End, Chess Hill. Convert garage, one-story side extension, new garage.(Approved).
- 00147/00 Old Meadow, Wagon Way. Erect detached house and garage (Approved).
- 00255/00 April Cottage, Bridle Lane. Two-storey side extension.(Refused).
- 00264/00 Tall Trees, L.Drive. One-storey rear extension. (Approved).
- 00330/00 Flint Cottage, T.Way. Rear conservatory. (Approved).
- 00329/00 Flint Cottage, T.Way. Stable, tack room, store rooms.
- 00284/00 Mayfield, L.Heights. One and two-storey rear extension. (Approved)
- 00289/00 Troutstream Hall, C/wood Road. Demolish two garages. (Approved)
- 00293/00 Land adjacent Hillpoint, rear Glenhates. Erect one dwelling. (Approved)
- 00515/00 Trout Rise Farm, T.Way. Riding area, extend feed room, erect sheds.
- 00602/00 April Cottage, Bridle Lane. Two-storey side extension.
- 00629/00 Willow House, Wagon Way. Two-storey side extension, loft conversion, dormers front and back.
- 00680/00 Chesswood, Sarratt Lane. Demolish house, erect one detached house.

Club numbers. Bridge 778241 : Children 770633 :  
Investment 774907 : Theatre 721583 : Wine 774374