



The Ol' Trout

No. 125

October 2007

Chairman's Word



I hope you all had an enjoyable summer despite it being one of the worst for weather in many years. We were extremely fortunate therefore to have a completely dry day for our first Summer Barbecue in the garden of Simon and Karen Post's home. It was a wonderful afternoon with a great mix

of long established residents and new ones too. Everyone enjoyed themselves and with the turnout at over 100 people it became one of our most successful events in recent times. My thanks must go to Simon and Karen again for allowing us use of their home and for all their help and also to Erica Bendall and Ann Garner for helping with both the organisation and catering. I think we may like to repeat this event next year, so if you are willing to lend your garden to us, then please call me!

Loudwater Residents' Association

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896380

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As soon as I got my girls back to school the sun came out which made it hard to turn my thoughts to planning for autumn, and of course Christmas in a couple of months. But by the time you have received this we will have organised another event for you - our ever popular Harvest Quiz Supper on 6th October. This is always a very happy and enjoyable event with our quizmasters, Buzz and Gary Coster making the questions achievable.

Our Environment Sub-Committee is still working hard to preserve Loudwater for us all. They have been lobbying the Highways Agency to get Loudwater Lane resurfaced and I am happy to say that the top half was surface dressed in the summer. The remaining part will be done next year with a more resilient "micro - porous surface". In the meantime holes will be patched as required. Speed is still a major problem especially in the lanes and the Highways Agency has also informed us that they will be repainting the slow and warning markings in Loudwater Lane and will also be putting up more signs to encourage slower speeds. Finally, we are also working with the

local authorities to try to ensure that the gypsy site is not located in Loudwater Lane and I can assure you that we are fully prepared to present our detailed objections, if it becomes necessary when the Three Rivers District Council complete their own investigations into the various sites that have been put forward.

That just leaves me to wish you all a Happy Christmas.

Penny Wilkinson Chairman

Coffee mornings

A recent development in the Loudwater social calendar has been the introduction of coffee mornings. These are aimed primarily at parents of school-age or younger children (although anyone is welcome!).

Different people volunteer each time to host at their house (I have received a regular stream of offers). I will do the publicity - by e-mail or 'phone - to make sure everyone who may be interested is contacted. Coffee mornings are well attended - numbers vary but so far average about 15.

So, if you are new to Loudwater, or have been here a while and would like to get out to meet your neighbours in a low-key, informal way, please let me have your details and I will be delighted to add you to my contact list.

Elaine Bailey

(eands.bailey@btinternet.com)

WELCOME

Ramnik and Gurpreet Atluja,
Foxhill, Loudwater Drive

Shreya and David Ramroop and baby daughter,
The Spinney, Bridle Lane

Alex and Richard Vercesi and baby Enzo,
Bantry Cottage, Sarratt Lane

Dave and Mandy Lee and children Cheryl and Gary,
Cramond Lodge, Timberidge

M. Murphy,
Sherwood, Loudwater Lane

Mr. & Mrs. Radia,
1 Hillpoint

Our Land's End to John O'Groats Cycle Ride

Oh no! It was a squally day, 1085 miles lay ahead of us, and a bicycle wheel had been broken in transit to Land's End. The Penzance mechanic said dolefully, "It's often the first stop for End to Enders." The second time at the official starting line, however, Reiner Enbergs, my son, Matthew, and I successfully set off to the cheers of wives, Sigi and Rosemary, the 'Back-up car Team'. Matthew, reading a GPS fixed on his handlebars, guided us unerringly along the lanes and minor roads. We quickly realised the scenic route we had chosen seemed perversely to cross the contours of the land, rather than trace them. Indeed, the north Cornish coast to Exmoor ride was our most challenging day, 70 miles and 9,300 feet of total ascent.

Our party of five stayed in B&B's and shared the days' experiences. This worked enjoyably well except for one night when flooded premises near Tintern Abbey obliged us to find hotel shelter. Unfortunately, it was that very wet June/July we had chosen for our retirement venture. The weather induced the frequent donning of rain jackets and sheltering from torrential down-pours.

It was novel to cross the Severn Bridge into Wales by bike. The bridge's cycle path is at its edge, high above the water, and vibrates considerably from the heavy traffic. Together with the strong cross-winds, this short journey proved rather exciting.

Back in England, the easier gradients of Herefordshire and Shropshire encouraged us along. Eating a pub lunch, we heard Chorleywood mentioned by the couple sitting next to us. A year ago they had moved from the Common - small world. Ludlow looked as attractive as ever despite its recent flooding. But Wigan Pier and the Manchester Ship Canal toll-bridge seemed locations more suited to the wet heavens.

Onward we pedalled, through the Bowland Forest, past Carlisle until, crossing a small bridge over Liddel Water, we entered Scotland. Only 500 more miles to go!

We headed diagonally across the rolling Borders to the shock of bustling Edinburgh. Then it was Perth, Brechin, with its architecturally interesting cathedral, and up to our highest point, the 1492 ft Cairn O'Mount. As we climbed we halted once or twice, so as to admire the highland views, you'll understand. More miles under the wheels took us past the Culloden Battlefield and across the Moray, Cromarty and Dornoch Firths. Now John O'Groats truly began to feel within reach. We cycled ever northward through beautiful Scottish landscapes to hit the coast at Bettyhill.



On our last day we turned east across the top of Scotland, the coastal road affording splendid views of the Orkneys. And almost too soon, it felt, we were crossing the finishing line; the End2End journey was ended. We were greeted by

our wonderful Back-up Team with their congratulations and celebratory champagne. It had taken 17½ days, without one rest day and without one puncture. We have hosts of wonderful memories and raised money for Oxfam and Asthma UK.

John Toy

What a wonderful way to start retirement, John and Reiner. Congratulations on a considerable feat. Are there any other retirement stories out there?

Summer Barbeque at Handa, Trout Rise on Sunday 22nd July

The day started well with the sunshine unusual for July. I guess it looks easy from the other side of the street, a three hour party from 3 to 6, barbeque and Pimms! When I arrived at 10.30 in the morning however the operation was already in full swing with a great number of people erecting tents, fixing fountains, blowing up castles and carrying stuff, just stuff, everywhere.



A gaggle of interested children circled nearby prodding and testing, riding and running. I was glad to retreat back home just to turn up and relax later on.

This year's summer party was held at Handa and thanks go to Karen and Simon for playing host to this event. The weather held all day and 103 people from the whole of Loudwater showed up to enjoy their hospitality in what must be one of the most beautiful gardens on the estate. Dangerously this year, for the hosts at least, it turned into a gorgeous sunny evening and the possibility of everyone staying on late into the night threatened.



There are obviously many people to thank for their part in the organisation of what was a very successful afternoon, both Karen and Simon were busy all afternoon, thanks also to Peter Higgins and James Wilkinson for slaving over (and setting fire to) a hot griddle, thanks to all those who made salads and brought chairs, glasses, openers, umbrellas, rugs etc.) and thanks to Penny for organising all the Pimms and for stage managing (enter food left etc) and I must also thank my wife, Sarah, for getting me along. I look forward to seeing more of those we met during the year and not just at the next summer party.

Mark Dodds (Farm Cottage).

Loudwater Golf Society Day 2008

A provisional date for the 4th annual meeting is 15th May at Batchworth Park. To be added to the list of members to receive full details when they become available, please Email me at Roy@Sterry.Go-Plus.net



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A Loudwater Personality:

Peter Tate, The Birdman of Loudwater-

Ladies! Did you know that sewing a swan's feather into your husband's pillow will keep him faithful? No? Then read Peter Tate's recently published book "Flights of Fancy" and you'll learn all sorts of fascinating myths, legends and superstitions about our feathered friends. And gentlemen! Please don't think this book is just for the ladies. For instance, did you know that kingfisher feathers were used as love charms?

Peter Tate (82), who lives in the appropriately named "Rooks Hill", has lots of stories to tell about some of the world's best-loved birds - and they are all bizarre and intriguing. Peter and his late wife Anne (she was Chairman of the Loudwater Garden Club) had lived in Rooks Hill since 1953.

Peter had been in the RAF from 1943 to 1947. He was a co-pilot on the Sunderland aeroplanes during the Second World War. Before the war Peter lived on a farm and it was aged ten that he first became interested in birds, when his mother bought him a book about them. Peter was a lonely child, and it was the birds that became his friends, particularly since swallows nested outside his nursery. Later on, during his missions with the RAF, he found himself fascinated by the birds of Western Europe, South Africa and the Americas. I asked whether he took pictures of the various birds. The answer was "no". He recognised them by sight, behaviour and warble - 250 birds in all! What did he mean by behaviour? "How they fed, flew and walked".

Peter's first job was on the London Stock Exchange. He was not happy there. He felt he was more of a country lad. Anne, who loved horses, said "he was the best groom and mucker-out she had ever met", Peter told me, proudly. After leaving the world of finance, Peter decided to become a writer. He wrote "Birds, Men and Books: A Literary History of Ornithology" and "A Century of Bird Books". Travel companies became aware of his talent and Swan Hellenic, and then Thomas Cook, employed him to lead tours and to lecture to bird lovers in places like the Seychelles, and parts of the United States. He was also consulted frequently by the National Trust.

Peter wrote his "new" book, "Flights of Fancy" in the late 80s. His usual publisher did not seem interested. Then Charlotte Vamos, his god-daughter, a literary agent who was born in Rooks Hill, found the manuscript, was excited by it, and took it to Random House. The rest, as they say, is history. The book was published on the 5th September 2007, dedicated to Peter's wife, Anne.

I had to enquire. How many birds had Peter spotted in Loudwater? "There were countless" Peter replied, "but because of the changes in the make-up of our district, the greater density of our houses and the less open spaces for the birds to thrive, the numbers are declining alarmingly".

I found Peter's book "Flights of Fancy" fascinating. The stories of the myths, legends, and superstitions of birds make really excellent reading.

Peter Phillips.

Thank you Peter for continuing with the occasional Loudwater Personality series you introduced when you were Editor. With 54 years in Loudwater and such an interesting and talented person, Peter Tate certainly qualifies, but if there are any other nominations, please let me know and we'll send our roving reporter to do an interview, Ed.

Nature in the raw

A couple of weeks ago we spotted a heron landing in our garden - not an unusual occurrence - but we noticed that it was holding something quite large and black in its beak. When we got the binoculars we realised to our horror that it was a moorhen with the legs and feet hanging out of one side of the beak and the head at the other. We watched, fascinated but horrified, while the heron gulped and gulped until it finally managed to turn the moorhen round and was thus able to swallow the poor thing whole - head first with the feet disappearing last. The heron's neck, needless to say, was somewhat swollen but it flew off quite happily. The RSPB informed me that although herons eat mostly fish, they also eat small mammals and birds occasionally. We have always blamed the fast disappearance of the ducklings on the pike in the lake, or cats and foxes but it seems that there is another possible culprit!

Barbara Holden

Wildlife at Chess Falls



The pair of swans, which arrived on the Chess last summer, happily stayed with us and we had hopes of seeing cygnets on the river once again. This Spring the cob unwisely attempted to build the nest directly in front of a foot bridge so I was forced to move

it a few yards down the bank; and after two attempts to move it back, he accepted the new location. The pen dutifully laid seven eggs, started the long incubation period of 5 weeks and stuck to her task "manfully" in spite of the dreadful wet conditions, fortified by feed which she gratefully accepted from me whilst on the nest. All went well for a while then one egg mysteriously disappeared, followed a few days later by a great fight involving Canada Geese when two further eggs vanished. Sad to say all their work and hopes finally came to nothing, but they are still with us and come frequently most days for me to feed them out of my hand with bread and mixed corn. Such occasions are now

scenes of chaos with a number of older ducks, a coot, four young ducks and a mother with seven ducklings, all trying to get in on the act but running the gauntlet of the powerful beaks of both swans.

Amidst all this, I have a drake from earlier years that used to sit on my lap at feeding time, still game to do his circus act of repeatedly jumping up to shoulder height to take food from my hand. We are so blessed with our wildlife here and it was much in evidence on a beautiful Sunday eve Aug. 5th when 60 people came for the annual Informal Church Service here in the garden.

Derek Woolcock



Garden Club



A big thank you to the club members and fellow residents who turned out, despite the gloomy weather, for our arboreal amble in July. Despite the lack of sun we were illuminated by the depth of information given by Paul on some rare and familiar trees growing along the length of Trout Rise. Paul also explained the reason why so many Horse Chestnut trees are turning brown and losing their leaves before the autumn is down to Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner. The culprit is an insect pest, *Cameraria ohridella*. He confirmed that it is essential to burn any fallen leaves to prevent the spread of the disease, otherwise we are facing a situation potentially as grave as the devastation caused by Dutch Elm disease. Although this was a short walk followed by refreshments, we hope that everyone who joined us found the evening worthwhile and enjoyable.

At the September meeting a very popular speaker, Dr. Brenda Harold, will be making a welcome return to the Club to talk on "Wildflower Walks in the Chilterns". We are hoping that this will be a prelude to Dr. Harold leading a walk in the Chilterns next spring.

Are you too scared to scarify? Have you ever used a hollow tine machine? If you come along to our meeting on 24 October we will be featuring a talk on all aspects of lawn maintenance, especially those measures we can take in the autumn to improve our lawns next year. Our speaker, who is fully RHS trained, owns a locally based lawn maintenance company and will be broadening the talk to include many practical tips to prepare the whole garden for winter.

If you have any problem plants or trees now is the time to take digital photos of them so that a remedy may be sought from our expert panel. November will see the return of our Gardeners' Question Time - a very popular evening and a great event to which you can invite friends and neighbours. Our panel headed up by RHS judge Jim Buttress, ably assisted by the Hatfield House Head Gardener and Robert Player, will as always be ready to field any question that you care to throw at them. In keeping with the season we will be offering mulled wine and mince pies and the meeting will be held at Mont-au-Source. Places may be reserved in advance, £5 members, £6 guests. For all enquiries please contact Sally Levinson 720778. Please let us have advance notice of your questions.

Theatre Club

Kismet at The London Coliseum.

As we boarded the coach, waiting for us at the Royal Masonic School, to take us into London, I had a feeling of foreboding. Kismet had had dismal write-ups. The critics hated it. Had we made a dreadful mistake in booking tickets? I felt even worse when I realised that our driver

had not the faintest idea as to which was the fastest way into London, and where, indeed, the Coliseum was! It was only thanks to Maurice Escow, who took over as navigator, that we reached the theatre in time - with three minutes to spare! Was there time to go to the lavatory? Only just!

Our seats at the front of the Royal Circle were excellent. Well done, Theatre Club Organiser, Penny Wilkinson. The orchestra struck up as soon as we took our seats. Had they been waiting for us? Alexander Borodin's wonderful music wafted through the theatre. Perhaps the afternoon wasn't going to be so bad after all. But then the curtain went up and, oh dear, there was one of the worst sets I have ever seen at a London theatre. "Pathetic" was the only word for it and, sadly, the sets did not improve throughout the musical. However, the music remained tuneful, (even if Maurice insisted that the orchestra was playing it "fortissimo"), and the singing was good too. Michael Ball, in a comedy role with which, perhaps, he was not too comfortable, is an excellent musical comedy star. Newcomer Alfie Boe, a Classic FM discovery, sang well, as did the rest of a relatively unknown cast. But those sets! I gather from the programme that elephants, camels and horses had been considered for the original production. Here the dancers did not even have the space to dance. In fact, there wasn't room to swing a cat! However, generally the audience, including us, enjoyed ourselves. There was a standing ovation. Was the Michael Ball Fan Club in the theatre?

Peter Phillips.

Stratford-Upon-Avon

On Saturday September 12th we went, in some style, to Stratford - on- Avon. After an early evening meal at the Alveston Manor Hotel we watched a performance of Shakespeare's comedy Twelfth Night on the apron stage of the Courtyard Theatre. The play, set in the never - never land of Illyria tracks the main characters' paths from immaturity to maturity. It's a complex, ambiguous yet compact play in which the characters are portrayed honestly but with compassion. Although a comedy, with a touch of 'gender bending' and dark and bitter moments, it was very funny. The entire trip was voted a great success by everyone.

Peter Laule

Bridge Club

On one of the rare sunny summer evenings in July the Bridge Club members and their guests held their summer party. Dennis made his delicious cheese straws and Roland made his assorted fish nibbles washed down with sparkling Cava. This was followed by a tasty cold buffet organised by the committee with wine followed by some delicious berry and fruit salads made by Sheila and Sybil. We were joined by the LRA Chairman, Penny Wilkinson and her husband James and whilst they are not Bridge Club members we were grateful for them giving up their time to join us, and who knows, now they know how friendly we all are, they may join us for Bridge one day. The whole evening was spent outside in the grounds of the small barn which made the atmosphere very relaxed and most enjoyable.

Besides our normal first and third Wednesday of the month Chicago Bridge, we plan to hold a Duplicate Bridge evening on Wednesday 31st October, so make a note in your diaries; non-members and learners are most welcome.

June Baish

Fine Dining by the River on a Glorious Summer's Day



With summer days come so many pleasures, and eating outdoors is surely one of them. So last August The Fine Dining Club journeyed to Goring-on-Thames to The Leatherne Bottel, a

picturesque riverside restaurant, where twenty-four club members enjoyed an alfresco lunch on what turned out to be one of the few hot afternoons of the season.

This award-winning restaurant serves modern European fare from the kitchen of Julia Storey, who, with husband John Abbey, took over the ownership a couple of years back. They've spruced the place up, sympathetically incorporating stylish contemporary decor with the old-world building, adding a conservatory and riverside terrace, collecting praise, an enthusiastic following and awards along the way.

After glasses of that British summer essential - iced Pimms, we tucked in to a variety of starters such as handpicked Portland crab, terrine of confit of guinea fowl, sesame-crusting carpaccio of tuna, and for the main courses, diners chose from wild seared sea bass, fillet steak, honey and apple glazed pork belly...The puddings deserve a special mention, not least because of their generous size. Shirley Garrett declared that she could have launched her brandy snap basket and sailed off down the river in it. But wisely, she just chose to eat it.

Inevitably, the seasons move on, and our next event will be in November at The Blue Orchid, a Thai restaurant in Amersham-on-the-Hill. A special not-too-spicy menu will be created just for us, and the date is Saturday 10th November. As ever, new and lapsed members are more than welcome. Flyers will be sent out in early October but feel free to call me on 01923-896198 for details.

Viv Schragger-Powell

Loudwater Wine Club

A few days ago, I was chatting with a new resident of Loudwater. Spotting some wine racks among the packing cases, I enquired as to whether he liked wine. His answer in the affirmative was quickly followed up by a hasty, "But I don't know much about it - I'm about one rung up from philistine."

It occurred to me that there may be other residents of Loudwater who feel that their knowledge of wine is of a similar level and who may have been put off coming along to the Wine Club for fear of not knowing their chardonnay from their shiraz. Perhaps this applies to you?

Let me set the record straight. The Wine Club was set up as a vehicle to help develop the social community of Loudwater, using wine as an excuse. Okay, so we quickly found we didn't need an excuse to be social, but the Wine Club has flourished, gently educating members at the same time. It's fair to say that, as with any special interest group, there are one or two anoraks* among the members.

However, most of us are perfectly normal people who want to learn more about wine in a friendly, social setting where making new friends is more important than being able to guess the vintage.

The committee strives to present a varied programme of events each year. These range from tutored tastings to purely social events where the wine and chatter flow and no-one (except the anoraks) really notices what they are drinking.

For example, our last event was a tutored tasting of wines from Uruguay led by one of our favourite tutors, Vivienne Franks. This was an opportunity to try something a bit different from a country that is fast-becoming a major player in the wine market. Later this month, we're going out to a local restaurant for an Italian-themed evening. Next year, among other things, we're planning to go to France for lunch.

If, on the other hand, you like to take your wine a little more seriously, that's okay too. There's always something to be learned from each bottle that's opened.

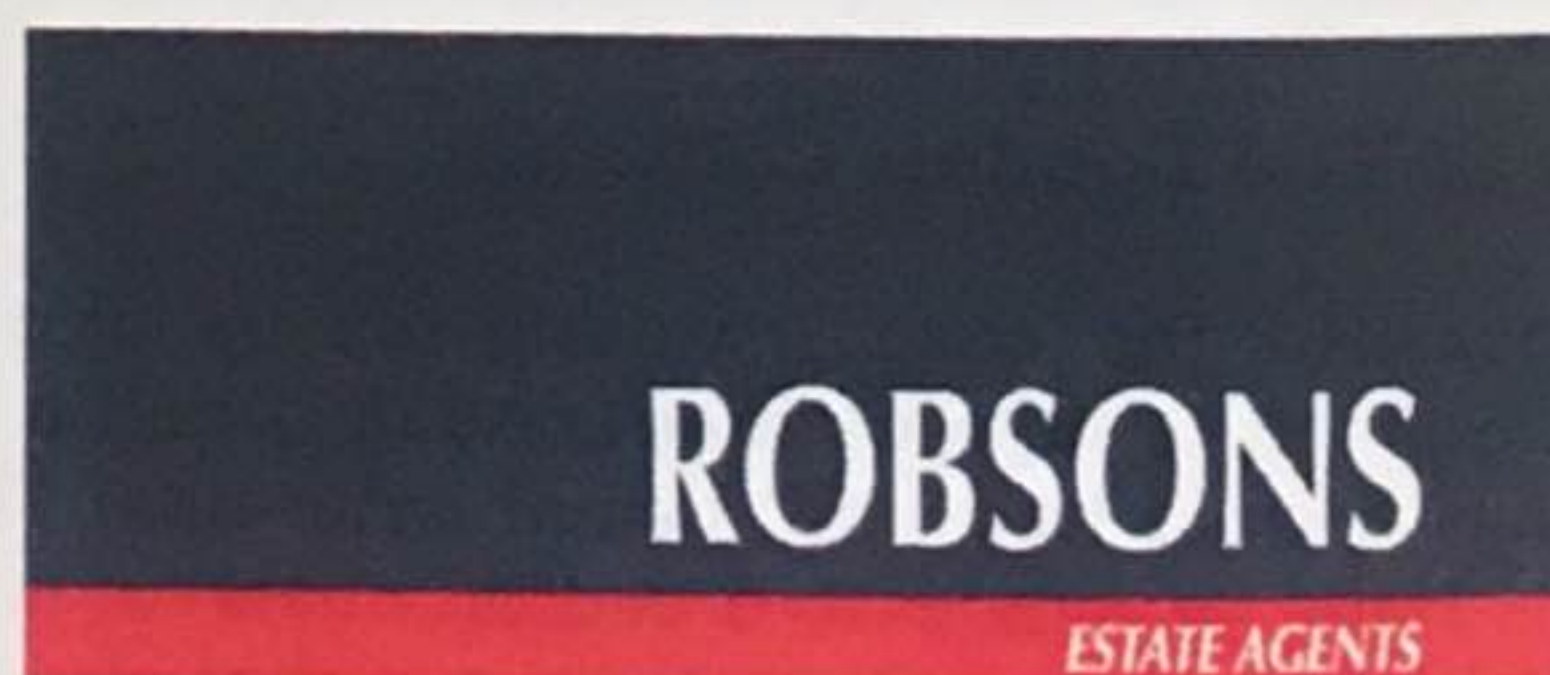
So, if you'd like to dip your toe in the water and find out more, please come along. We usually meet on the fourth Friday of the month and you can find full details of the forthcoming programme on our website: www.Loudwaterwineclub.org.uk

Buzz Coster

* - For those residents who don't know me, the Wine Club's chief anorak is my husband!

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ESTATE AGENTS

Club Scene

Chess Investment Club
Meets 5pm, 2nd Wednesday of month
Chairman
Anthony Moss (774907)

Troutstream Investment Club
Meets 8pm, 2nd Thursday of month
Chairman
Godfrey Crook (776567)

Theatre Club
Chairman
Peter Laule (778114)
Organiser
Penny Wilkinson (896380)

Wine Club
Meets 8pm, 4th Friday of month
Chairman
Tony Hale (774374)

Bridge Club
Meets 7.30pm, 1st and 3rd Wednesday of month
Chairman
June Baish (775808)

Garden Club
Meets 4th Wednesday of month
Chairman
Sue Stent (712623)

Fine Dining Club
Chairman
Viv Schragger-Powell (896198)