



Molewood Outlook

Spring 2010

50th Edition!

MOLEWOOD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

NOTICE OF

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

In the infants' school hall at Bengoe School

On the 29th April 2010 at 7.30pm

AGENDA

1. Introduction
2. Minutes of 2009 AGM
3. Any matters arising
4. Chairman's report
5. Financial report
6. Election of Officers:-

Chairman: Brian Laming is available for re election

Secretary: Joan Murrell is available for re election

Treasurer: Treasurer Nick Gough is available for election

Auditors: David Brooks and (new vacancy for 2nd auditor)

7. Election of Committee Members:

The following existing members have agreed to continue: Marie Archer, Brian Ayres, John Edwards, Janet Moy and Allan Streeton. More nominations are invited to bring us up to strength.

8. Campaign Against Gravel Extraction update
9. Invitation to any elected representatives present to address the meeting.
10. Bengoe Rat Run update by Colin Underwood
11. Any Other Business

Entertainment will take place after the conclusion of the formal business.

**Come along and enjoy some lovely FREE fish and chips
and slake your thirst on fruit juices...or something stronger!**

Molewood Residents' Association Committee members are:

| NAME | ADDRESS | TELEPHONE | EMAIL |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| Chairman Brian Laming | 49, Cowper Crescent | 583512 | blaming@hotmail.com |
| Treasurer Nick Gough | 11, Lys Hill Gardens | 423723 | ndgough@ntlworld.com |
| Editor Allan Streeton | 22, Cowper Crescent | 423682 | allboye@btinternet.com |
| Secretary Joan Murrell | 38, Cowper Crescent | 587595 | Jem.molewood@tiscalli.co.uk |
| Marie Archer | 55, The Wick | 581965 | |
| Janet Moy | 15, Desborough Close | 586645 | |
| John Edwards | 8, The Wick | 558247 | j.suttill@yahoo.co.uk |
| Bryan Ayres | 5, Cowper Crescent | 586512 | |

From the Editor:

Our cover picture lets us take a peek below ground to see a family of moles as drawn by **Charlotte (11) and James (7) Bird** of Desborough Close who are both at Bengoe School. What a lovely picture it is too!

It's easy to forget that we faced the harshest winter weather for at least 30 years now that the spring flowers are out in bloom and our minds turn to the great outdoors again. With the frequent falls of snow it turned our countryside into a winter wonderland and a tobogganing paradise for our kiddies in a setting like some of this year's Christmas cards, although most of the senior residents were not sorry to see it all go away!

Allan Streeton

Fun night out – with special guest: Dave the Postie!

In mid-January your committee, partners and helpers had their belated Christmas lunch at the Salisbury Arms, this year with the addition of a special guest, Dave the postman.

Through all kinds of weather Dave delivers the mail to three-quarters of the estate with a smile and a cheery greeting and, as the picture shows, he could not have faced worse conditions!



Postman Dave said *"First of all I would like to say a big thank you for the lovely evening and meal which I shared with the MRA committee.*

I feel a part of them as I spend a lot of time doing my deliveries and feel I know you all, it's like a community of which I feel so much a part!

I've been a postman for 18 years of which the last 6 have been yours and it was the best move I've made.

I live on my round and wake up in the morning to look out of the window at some of the houses to which I deliver, not a bad thing! I get to work at 6am, do the sorting in the delivery office, prepare my walk, wait for the mis-sorts and leave just after 9am to start my deliveries.

It's like a job in two halves, in the office you are part of a team to get the work done and you can have a bit of banter as well and then you are your own boss when you are on your rounds. My delivery is made up of about 500 calls which include The Orchard, Bengoe House, Bengoe Mews, Shepherds Court, Wadesmill Road and then onto part of The Avenue including Woodhall Close then in to Cowper Crescent, Peel Crescent, Desborough Close and finishing in The Wick over three and a half hours later.



I've travelled a lot around the world, to Australia 4 times, New Zealand and all around Europe and South Africa too many times to remember! Also the USA and most recently I went on the Rocky Mountaineer train across the Canadian Rockies which was a truly wonderful holiday! I am the son of Sheila and Warwick Kidson and I have a daughter called Jessica.

Again, I would like to say it's a joy to be your postman and the friendship built up over the time will go on!"

SNARL-UP ON THE SCHOOL RUN

It was coming up to 3.30pm one Friday in mid-January when the arctic conditions were temporally receding, the snow on the local roads largely washed away or turned into a messy slush.

The kiddies' *chauffeuses* had either parked the car in any space available in Cowper Crescent and The Avenue inhibiting traffic, including the poor old bus driver.

Occasionally he is prevented from following his scheduled lap around to the shops. His and other drivers' exit and entry to Cowper is made even more difficult by cars parked in The Avenue opposite Cowper.

As the days have now lengthened would it not be better for some of those close to the school to get the exercise in walking to and from school?

One would assume that any hidden dangers to youngsters walking home, probably in company with other kiddies, should be less than the hazard of crossing roads jammed up with cars reversing with their drivers possibly stressed by resulting delays, etc.

We hate to bring this up in EVERY newsletter, but the above is complicated further by other drivers who will persist in leaving their cars on the road when there is ample room on their own driveway.

Generally, school run drivers are skilful and considerate but, we wonder, *do they all feel it essential to ferry their kiddies to and fro over, for many of them, such short distances?* And so the on-going parking problems go on.....and on.....and on !

Arguments have been exhausted over many years and little change is likely to take place unless there are *legal* restrictions (one suggestion made was to make it illegal to

park outside a house where there was a garage or space on the householder's drive.)
A nice thought – IF it could be made enforceable!

It would be interesting to get some feed back on this problem, especially from the *chauffeuses* and perhaps the School Head.

It is my view that legally parking all day outside The Avenue parade is not being fair to the shopkeepers or for those few less agile who need their cars to access local shops and are often forced to continue down town to make their purchases. We know that older or infirm drivers around endorse this plea so, to whom it applies, please be considerate!

It may be that a visitor to a house is not aware of being on a bus route. If it is *your* visitor please make sure he is not causing a problem. One suggestion is that parking on the bus route is permitted on ONE side of the road only. A more bizarre idea was to ban parking cars on a bus route. Great, but hardly enforceable!

Allan Streeton

Emails for Neighbourhood watch and police notices

We now have about 85 email addresses on our database and Notices from the Police Neighbourhood Watch have been circulated to all those members, rather than them having to wait months for a newsletter from us!

That includes anyone who had previously notified us of their email address but has *not* received Neighbourhood Watch/ Police notices, which may mean that the email address notified to us was inaccurately read by us. Anyone who wishes to be added to the database please send an email to:- blaming@hotmail.com

LOADS OF (ACCUMULATED) RUBBISH

We hope by now that you have all become familiar with the new ARC system but, should you wish to have a reminder, the colours of the East Herts District Council ARC rainbow are as follows:-

BLUE box – plastic bottles, food, drink and pet food cans, aerosols, aluminium and steel cans and tins.

GREEN box – newspapers, magazines, junk mail, white paper and envelopes, catalogues, brochures, phone books, Yellow pages, glass bottles and jars.

BROWN bins – raw and cooked food waste, newspaper and paper bags for wrapping food, cardboard, garden waste, animal bedding.

KITCHEN caddy – (collect food waste in here before putting it in the brown bin)

COLLECTIONS:- Blue box, Green box and brown bin will be collected fortnightly on the same day.

BLACK BIN (non recyclable waste) fortnightly collections on the alternative week to the recyclable boxes. If you have any questions, phone EHDC on 01279 655261 or email recycling@eastherts.gov.uk



Allan Streeton



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH - LOCALITY MEETINGS

These meetings are now taking place at regular intervals the last one being at Hertford Fire Station, the minutes of which have been sent to us and are available for anyone to see.

Hertfordshire constabulary booths are being used at the street surgeries which are being held in Tesco, Waitrose, Boots and M&S, Hertford. Currently these surgeries are advertised on line and new posters have been designed to place in prominent places, i.e. council offices, Housing offices, in the stores. Please feel free to attend if you wish to speak with the police for any reason.

The web address for further information is www.herts.police.uk

There has been no mention in the current minutes of crimes on our patch, although we know of one or two incidents. Please do not hesitate to report any criminal or nuisance behaviour direct to the police and/or come along to the Neighbourhood Watch meetings.

Do not forget that, as a member of our Neighbourhood Watch scheme you should be entitled to a reduction in your household insurance/Contents premium!

If not, try website www.confused.com.

A new email alert service that enables residents to receive regular email updates from Hertfordshire County Council has been launched. People can register to receive general information or updates on a specific range of topics, such as roads and highways, schools, education or trading standards.

For more information, or if you are interested in subscribing, please visit <http://www.hertsdirect.org/emailalerts>

When retiring at bedtime please remember to hide your car keys from display otherwise a grateful burglar may use the car to transport the valuables which he has just deprived you of!

Campaign Against Gravel Extraction REPORT



Thanks to George Sandell for providing an update on Rickney's quarry extension plans.

You may have seen recently in the Mercury an article about the decision by HCC to give permission for the extension of the gravel pit at Rickneys. In May 2007 the County Council's Development Control Committee recommended the grant of permission subject to conditions and a legal agreement. Over two years have been spent

negotiating these documents with the operators (Hanson) and the County. A great deal of protection is now afforded to local interests: for example, the levels of noise and dust and the problems of HGVs on the B158 will be much less than when the pit was last operational.

None of us – apart from the owners of the land – welcome continued gravel-digging around here, but the realities are that we have to live with it, probably for at least thirty

years, because we have chosen to live in an area where high-quality concreting aggregates occur in high yield and considerable quantities and other such resources are nearing exhaustion locally. The only prospect of avoiding further permissions at Rickneys will be if it is shown that, in the present small extension, the operators cannot meet the very stringent requirements we have negotiated with them. Hanson are confident that they can meet them. We shall see. If they cannot, then it will be important that we can show that the failure is recurrent despite their being told, so that there is every opportunity for them to get things right, and, moreover that the failures of compliance are comprehensively documented. We are therefore setting up a communications and monitoring system, using e-mail, so that local residents know what is going on and what they can expect, and can tell us what is going wrong as soon as it happens.

We cannot communicate direct to each resident who might be interested or affected. We shall aim to work through the various local residents' associations. What we need are the e-mail addresses of local people who are willing to act as a point of contact for when we have something to communicate; for example that beginning on such and such a date there will be traffic controls and delays on the B158 at certain times because the old processing plant is being taken away (that is going to happen some time during this year) and a new one brought in. It will then be up to the association concerned to let others know. For some things there will be no rush and newsletters will do. For other more urgent matters it might be worth thinking of having a system using other e-mail contacts and a telephone cascade. It will make sense if as many people as possible are in our list of contacts and that those should include residents most likely to be affected: in the roads opening off Sacombe Road for example, or those who walk their dogs around the pit itself.

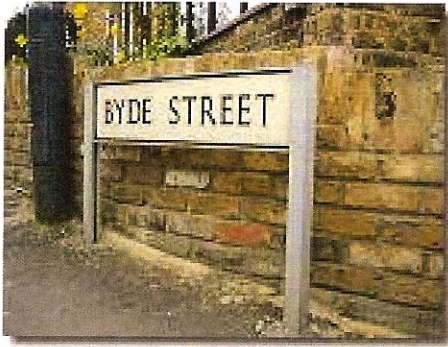
If things are seen (or heard) to be going wrong, we shall ask that, unless there is something that needs the emergency services or other urgent action, complaints should be addressed through the same e-mail system so that we can deal with the local pit management. That will ensure that everything is documented. If anyone is interest in being such a e-mail contact, would they please send an e-mail, expressing interest, to tony.vickers@ntlworld.com.

We shall all be glad to see the old processing plant go. It has become an attraction for vandalism and worse and it has always been an eyesore. It will be removed only when planning permission has been given for a modern and smaller replacement. The planning application will come in any day now. We want it waved through, without any local opposition please.

There are now conditions that require site security far better than has been the norm recently, and when the communications system is up and running, we shall ask for any nuisances to be reported to us, so that corrective action can be required. The only other activity that is likely to be noticed during 2010 will be trial drilling for further extensions.

George Sandell

Proposed Rat-Run Closure of Byde Street



'The Urban Transport Plan for Hertford and Ware has now been published and every household in the Molewood area should have received an explanatory leaflet. This leaflet includes a question on the Rat Run which offers two options; 1) Temporary Closure of Byde Street or 2) Do Nothing. The proposal is that once Sainsburys opens in Hartham Lane a temporary closure should be put on Byde Street at the junction with Farquhar Street for a period to be determined, but probably at least three months. During this closure the effect on the traffic in Bengoe Street and Port Hill would

be monitored to establish the impact of the closure. If the impact of the closure does not significantly affect the peak hour flow from Bengoe Street to Old Cross consideration will be given to making the closure permanent, otherwise it will be cancelled and the status quo will apply. No other options are considered suitable for the problem of the rat run and are not up for consideration. Details of the full report are available from the website at www.hertsdirect.org/urbantransportplans. This includes the figures from the studies that have been carried out. Any household that did not receive the leaflet can get a copy from Colin Underwood, 33, The Avenue. It is important that Molewood Residents make their feelings known on this issue as there will undoubtedly be strong pressure from the residents of Lower Bengoe to approve the closure.

Colin Underwood

Know Your Onion Patch?

Regular Outlook readers will know that our estate was built in the 1960s and that part of it was an onion patch owned by the Bengoe Club. In our November 2009 edition we told you that the Club was founded in 1878 as the Bengoe Working Men's Club. The present clubhouse was built in 1963 from the proceeds of the sale of allotments where the southern end of The Avenue and Lys Hill Gardens now stand.

Thanks to a tip-off from a neighbour I managed to track down some fascinating photos of the area in the 1930s and '40s. They were kindly supplied by Marilyn Taylor and Hilda Saggars.

Here is one showing the 'new' water tower built in 1930 as described in the Spring 2007 Outlook. Over to the right you can just see the old tower it replaced still standing at the corner of Duncombe Road and Tower Street. The clump of trees round the new tower is the spinney it still stands in. And in the foreground you can see vegetables growing in the 'onion patch'.



We'll have more of these for you to look at at the AGM on 29 April.

I contacted the builders Hubert C Leach Ltd or Leach Homes as they are known now. They told me that they paid £98,000 for the 9.8-acre plot at auction. It made the national press because, a bit like the first million pound football transfer, it was the first time £10,000 per acre had been paid. In October 1960 the Daily Mail featured a cartoon by Varney with a woman reading the headline 'Onion patch brings in £98,000' and saying to a neighbour 'Now that's what I call green fingers – they put in a couple of rows of onion and up comes a block of flats'. Thankfully the fertiliser wasn't that strong and we stopped at 2 stories with the odd loft conversion.

Paul Leach, the current Chairman and Hubert's son, kindly sent me 10 photos of the estate under construction. We'll have them all on display at the AGM on 29 April so come along and see what your house looked like. Please bring any photos you've got to share with your neighbours.



Here is one showing the Avenue on a winter's day from outside where the school would be built. That's the site office on the right with the 'Molewood Estate' sign. The houses you can see are all occupied to judge by the curtains and smoking chimneys. Of course the number of cars was not a good clue back then.

According to Brian Laming (Outlook December 2008) the site office and builder's were where the shops now stand. He bought his house on

Cowper Crescent from new in 1961. This was the second phase of the development. There were three types of house for sale: semis at £3,650, detached at £3,850 and chalet bungalow semis at £3,950.

One of the last phases to be built was The Wick. Here is an aerial photo looking west with Desborough Close on the left and the playing field devoid of swings, goalposts and basketball net nearest the camera.



If you want to know more, here are some of the sources of information I used;

- Discover Hertford website <http://www.hertford.net/>
- Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) <http://www.hertsdirect.org/libsls/ure/heritage1/HALS/>
- Leach Homes <http://www.leachhomes.co.uk/>
- Wikipedia article about Bengeo <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengeo>

Is there anybody out there who would like to set up a website for the estate? It would be good to have somewhere to put all the information we've gathered for others to look at and even add to. Please get in touch if you're interested.

Nick Gough

SCHOOL MATTERS

From your local BENGEO Primary School:-

We are now half way through the school year and the children and staff has been as busy as ever.



We continue to raise funds for several charities. At the end of September we enjoyed fabulous Harvest assemblies at which all the children sang beautifully. The items donated by the parents were sold after the Harvest Coffee Morning and raised £260.25 for the Macmillan Cancer Support charity. We raised £108.18 for the Poppy Appeal from collection boxes in school.

Also, the children took part in the Rotary Shoebox Scheme, which endeavours to send filled boxes to deprived areas of eastern Europe. I am delighted that all 75 of the boxes provided by the Scheme to the School were filled. I was impressed at the generosity shown and the considerable thought that had obviously gone into their content.

In addition, we have raised money for Children in Need (£515.51) and Help for Haiti (£416.00)

PE at Bengo has been as busy as ever, with netball and football matches taking place, a tennis club and gymnastics club running after school and speedstacking and multi-skills competitions in full swing! We have also been delighted to hear that we have been awarded *Primary Sports School of the Year* and for this achievement have been given a voucher to spend on sports equipment. We are very proud! After one recent match, our football team were commended upon their conduct and sportsmanship, obviously excellent ambassadors for the school.

Our annual Curriculum event on 2nd February was entertaining, fun and informative. This year our focus was Mathematics and about a hundred parents attended. The evening was led by Mrs. Janet Ranford KS1 Leader and overall Maths co-ordinator, together with Mrs. Catherine Smith KS2 Maths co-ordinator. Marcus Cooper, a National Strategy Consultant, gave an inspiring presentation which provided an invaluable insight into how to help our children grasp new and sometimes difficult concepts. It was wonderful to see so many parents, staff and governors 'enjoying and achieving'.

On Monday 1st February, 7 members of Wild Club assisted Mr Downie with the annual RSPB Big Bird Watch in the school grounds. Together they recorded 16 species of birds in one hour (+ 1 – a blackbird who appeared as they were heading back into school!).



Finally, I will be leaving Bengoe School at the end of the summer term to begin my retirement.

I have been head of Bengoe School for ten years now and have thoroughly enjoyed the challenges and rewards.

I will miss all the children, staff, parents and governors but am looking forward to some new challenges and a different pace of life!

**Mrs KR Hallahan,
Head Teacher**

Thank you for all you have achieved Kathleen. We all wish you a very long and happy retirement!

The Story of Bengoe Women's Institute

Five facts:

1. Bengoe WI was formed on a blustery autumn night on the 18th October 1972
2. The largest meeting was back in July 1973 when over 100 women turned out to hear about the latest in food trends
3. In recent years 18 members have enjoyed a variety of courses at the WI's own residential college, in Oxfordshire
4. Last year members made Victorian-style aprons & bonnets for Hertford Museum's educational unit
5. This year (for the first time) a resolution written by a member has been accepted for discussion at the National Federation's AGM. The subject is food labelling.

On those dark evenings thirty-eight years ago, young women came looking for an organisation where they could meet others to share their spare time and interests. Over the years there are still some of those original members (no longer young) but still interested in the women who have come to live on the Molewood estate and in the surrounding area.

Women new to the area face the same problems we did nearly 40 years ago. And the WI is still here to help overcome a lack of local connections and loneliness. Our meetings are informal, friendly places to make new friends, to find out what's going on and learn something new. The friends I made when I joined in the late 1970s are still my friends today. Being a member has enabled me to build up my confidence in talking to new people, speaking to groups and sharing my skills.

These days we are a smaller group but we still meet on the third Monday in every month, at the Church Hall in Duncombe Road.

To find out more please contact me on 01992 586558.

Barbara Payne

PETER RUFFLES REMEMBERS Bengeo, when he was a boy...

Copy of Photo of Duncombe Road in 1913 supplied by Derek Parrott



By the time the Molewood estate arrived Bengeo had well and truly established its reputation as a 'quality place'. The 'village feeling' of hilltop Bengeo has remained and east and west of the dividing street (or 'straight') Bengeo has remained sought after.

I was well established as a paperboy when the Club Allotments were sold for development, and had become 'spare boy'. This was a prestige position among the twenty paper boys (there was the odd privileged girl among us) because the role included showing new recruits around their round and with the need to know the oddities and idiosyncrasies of the customers and their properties. Major Woodhouse at Bengeo Lodge had his paper delivered to a bucket on a rope suspended from a first floor window, for example. I would probably to this day, not know where 18a and 18b Bengeo Street are, were it not for the paper round. Do you know their idyllic spot?

The Bengeo shopping parade meant that when it finally arrived, our pioneering Molewood estate customers understandably transferred to your present newsagent.

Good news for us boys really. It was a long cold slog up to the top end of Bengeo Street and into Wadesmill Road a little way. Then to bump over the really muddy builders' site which constituted The Avenue to our best customers in Woodhall Close was quite a downer. But two or three customers remained loyal to our boss at Farnham's of Old Cross, so, although the bag became lighter there was still the final pull to the 'loyalty club members' in the middle of the development site to reach, before breakfast in the valley of the Lea in Hertingfordbury Road, again."

Peter Ruffles

Our Long serving EDITOR SIGNS OFF after 50 Editions of the Molewood Outlook



I have been on this committee for about 20 years, most of the time as editor of this newsletter. Having become an *octogenarian* I feel that it is time for 'younger blood' to which the baton can be handed.

The committee would therefore like to appoint someone to take up the reins commencing with the next Molewood Outlook in the autumn.

It's been an interesting journey spanning a part of two millennia and I would like to thank all those who have contributed articles, pictures, etc. and also those committee members who helped me with the production. Thanks especially to Cary Portas from Desborough Close for her work in helping make the newsletter look professional and easier to read. Cary is happy to work with whoever would like to take on the editorship to help put it together.

Unless we get a replacement editor, this publication may have to fold.

Please email Brian Laming or myself if you are interested or know someone who might be. No experience is necessary, just enthusiasm, an interest in local matters and access to a computer (with email if possible).

The newsletter is only produced about twice a year so it will hardly be a time consuming task.

Many thanks and best of luck to all.

Allan Streeton

Chinese Proverb:

When someone shares something of value with you and you benefit from it, you have a moral obligation to share it with others.

From all of the Residents' Association, past and present, we would like to thank Allan for his dedication and effort made into producing the Molewood Outlook for the last 20 years. We hope you have been informed as well as entertained by Allan's wit and local knowledge that provide interest and insight into our Molewood Estate. **THANK YOU ALLAN!**