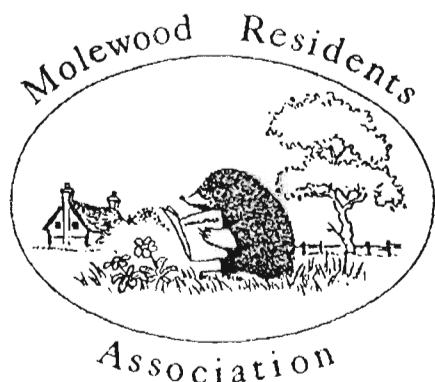


MOLEWOOD OUTLOOK

December 2008





COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman

Brian Laming 49, Cowper Crescent
Tel. 583512 blaming@hotmail.com

Treasurer

Nick Gough 11, Lys Hill Gardens
Tel. 423723 ndgough@ntlworld.com

Editor (Molewood Outlook)

Allan Streeton 22, Cowper Crescent
Tel. 423682 allboye@btinternet.com

Secretary

Joan Murrell 38, Cowper Crescent
Tel. 587595 jem.molewood@tiscali.co.uk

Other Members:-

Marie Archer 55, The Wick
Tel. 581965

Helen Graham 31, The Avenue

Kevin Beadle 24, Desborough Close
Tel. 551431 beadlekev@aol.com

Janet Moy 18, Desborough Close
Tel. 586645

Cary Portas 15, Desborough Close
Tel 411217 cary@hand-coded.com

MOLEWOOD OUTLOOK and NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH- CHRISTMAS 2008

WELCOME to the first issue of OUTLOOK after the precarious past few months when we were wondering whether The Mole had gone into permanent hibernation!

Not so, thanks to your encouragement!

We will endeavour to support your interests and return to our well tried format, with some added inspiration, although we may not always be able to please ALL of the residents ALL of the time!

The other two burning issues during the autumn were, of course.....the SUB POST OFFICE and the RAT RUN!

Both have now become less urgent, with victory for the Bengo street office having been saved from closure and the Rat Run being shelved pending further developments.

Jubilation by Bengo residents celebrating a first class result in September when it was announced that the branch in the Co-op. was one of just five branches to be saved from the 69 post offices in the cull carried out over 5 counties.

Champagne flowed in the Co-op where, alongside Councillor Sally Newton many local people gathered including two of this committee and a very happy Postmistress Kim Lynch!

A great relief all round, although our thoughts go out to the offices in other areas which will lose this essential local facility.

NOW....on with the festive OUTLOOK!

Allan Streeton. Editor

COVER PICTURE

Many thanks to Abigail Ross age 9 of Lys Hill Gardens who provides the colourful seasonal cover picture.

THE ' RAT ' TAKES IT EASY! Much has been said about the RAT RUN in the past.

Here is COLIN UNDERWOOD'S up-date on the situation :-

"At the meeting of the Highways Joint Member Panel on 13th October the following action was approved. The proposed closure of Byde Street as a temporary measure to monitor the effect on traffic will not now go ahead. Instead a computer modelling exercise will take place as part of the Hertford Urban Transport Plan in 2009-2010 to consider amongst other things the impact of such a closure.

There is no doubt that the petition of over 800 signatures provided useful ammunition for the Highways officers and those councillors opposed to the closure to achieve what could be regarded as a U turn according to the Mercury. In the meantime the weekday morning No Right Turn into Cross Road remains in place, a decision as to whether to make this permanent has to be made by next June"

(If you have access to the internet notes of the minutes of the meeting are available to read at <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=7393>)

EMAILS

Always be careful when you receive unsolicited emails from sources you do not recognize.

PC VIRUSES run rampant, and come in all shapes and sizes, so it is safer to leave the attachments unopened and not to reply!

WHAT A GUY! Coinciding with historical changes across the 'Pond', it was our Guy Fawkes night when bonfires were lit and rockets sent screaming skywards, although the wet weather and possibly the 'credit crunch' may have led to a few restraints compared to previous bonfire nights. The school held its usual annual wonderful display and the PTA once more were considerate enough to write to those living close by to warn them of the noisy event.

(With all the horrific injuries sustained at this time of year, especially those involving children, it's unfortunate that these highly dangerous explosives can get into the hands of almost anyone)

BENGEO GARDEN CENTRE Our Sacombe road garden centre is planning to serve refreshments to their customers in the New Year.

'WOODLANDS' HIGH MOLEWOOD

Following the demolition of the original house, owner Mike Edwards was hoping for planning permission to erect a garage, garden and equipment stores, playroom and wind turbine, which caused much concern to local residents. It has since been withdrawn, but watch this space!

There is currently some dispute arising over what exactly is taking place at WOODLANDS and we have tried to clarify the situation by taking the matter up with the local planning authorities, although Mr. Edwards appears to have set out clearly in letters to neighbours what has and will be done on the new development.

Unless we feel that planning rules are being ignored or that proposed works may be locally detrimental to our environment we do not wish to intervene in disputes of a personal nature.

For those interested details of the scheme are available on the website at www.eastherts.gov.uk (LPA reference:- 3/08/1445/FP/JS)

PEEL CRESCENT to COWPER CRESCENT PASSAGEWAY

Ever since the MRA was formed complaints have occasionally been made by owners of adjoining properties to this passageway. Some dog owners are apparently letting their pets foul there and not even clearing it up.

It is alleged that men and even children have urinated along there, but the local Council accept no responsibility for the maintenance of this passageway.

Even so, these acts are breaking existing laws and the police should be called if anyone witnesses such incidents and the Council may even get Dog Wardens to patrol the area to try and catch any offenders.

Apart from the above, as we understand the position there is very little the owners can do to prevent these nuisances, other than personally apprehending them or informing the police.

We re told that this, and other Rights of Way, were in existence prior to the Estate being built and which Leach the builders were obliged to maintain. Also, the continued usage as a footpath for over 20 years further enforces its legal use.

Without the footpath legal ownership of each of the four adjoining householders and garage owners would extend to half the path's width in their section.

We can only remind possible offenders of how antisocial and unhygienic such actions are and the possible fines that they could face if caught!

The posts dividing the two halves could be a slight hazard to pedestrians using it on very dark nights, although one of our committee kindly brightened them up with a coat of paint some while ago.

No doubt the adjoining shared owners will keep an eye on these to make them as visible as possible, especially for the elderly.

QUIZ NIGHT

No, we haven't forgotten!

We are still seeking a Quiz Master so, if you know of anyone out there.....ALSO, we should like to be reminded of social events which some suggested earlier.

We could now start thinking in terms of ~Spring/summer events and the longer evenings. Perhaps a river cruise-----a BBQ----a coach trip.....another event in the playing field---????

Please put any suggestions through the Ed's door or any nearby committee member, saying also whether you would be willing to help in the organising of an event.

GEOFFREY CLARK

Sadly, Geoff Clark who was a very popular committee member for some years, died suddenly early in November. Geoff who was only in his early 60's and his wife Lynda moved from their bungalow in The Avenue to Somerset to settle in retirement.

We all express our sincere condolences to Lynda and Geoff's family.

MOBILE WARNING #####

Be on your guard if you receive a mobile phone call from any person saying that they are a company engineer, or that they are checking your mobile line and asking you to press #90 or #09 or any other number. END the call immediately without pressing any numbers!

There is a company using a device that once you press these numbers they can access your SIM card and make calls at your expense. Spread the word!

COLD CALLERS

We have mentioned this many time in the past but STILL some old and vulnerable people occasionally get talked into letting strangers into their homes.

It is essential, especially for those living alone, to have a door bar or chain and not to undo this unless they are CERTAIN of the caller's identity.

Callers saying they are from a Water, or any other company, and need to check the householder's system following a reported fault, should only be there by prior appointment. (see also Neighbourhood Watch) Be safe - and not sorry!

KEEP WARM THIS WINTER (or may be next!)

On a more positive note, at the time of going to press Government Grants are being made to people *over 70* years of age for 100% of the cost of LOFT and CAVITY WALL INSULATION plus many other benefits.

If you qualify it's all completely FREE although you may have to wait for several months before the work can be done!

Much more information on available grants can be obtained by logging on to MARTIN'S MONEY TIPS website which is a mine of information on all matters relating to saving money.



CHAIN EMAIL

ALSO be on your guard when being asked to pass on any chain email!

One in question was picked up by a member and claimed that teachings about the Holocaust have been removed from the UK school curriculum because their inclusion may offend some citizens.

This is completely unfounded and the Government is not planning to do so. In fact, according to the BBC "in England teaching children about the Holocaust is COMPULSORY", but not in Scotland and Wales, although the teaching of it there is encouraged.

There has apparently also been an unfounded allegation that "the current government of this country" is "hiding the truth of history merely for the sake of political correctness".

So, please do not start passing on a 'Chain email' before verifying any contents and checking that recipients are happy to be sent that sort of message.

THE AVENUE SHOPS

Close to all our hearts and homes is our local shopping parade and the main bus stop for many over 60's 'freebie' riders heading down town.

What is frustrating to many local residents who wish to pop into one of the local shops for a last minute item of shopping is that every car parking space is often taken up on both sides of the road ! It is true that some drivers are not always able to cycle or even walk to the Parade.

Some of the 'permanent' parkers are the shopkeepers and others made up from residents who find it more convenient to park (and ride?) rather than at their homes.

"WHAT can we do about it?" asked one resident.

Not a lot it seems, unless you have some ideas?

It seems most unlikely that the Council would want to restrict people from parking unless we pay for it and any permit holding would make it even more difficult for the occasional shoppers.

We can only ask on behalf of residents generally that people try and think twice about driving to the local shops but if they have to, don't leave their cars parked in the bay for a long period at busy times, thereby preventing access to others.

It's been a long time coming but by the time this newsletter hits your mats **THE PANTRY** doors should have opened on our parade.

Let's wish them luck and hope that they are able to provide a good grocery service for many years!

PARKING

Another



vehicles

several hundred yards on both sides!

parking problem arises from all the building work on house extensions where, frequently residents are 'trapped' in their driveways their views being severely restricted by commercial as well as additional on-road cars often strung along the road for

Again, there does not seem to be any immediate solution, although the situation can often be quite dangerous when car drivers emerge blind from their driveways.

All we can ask is that householders having extensions built ensure that their Builders park their vans, cars, etc. to avoid the minimum of inconvenience to immediate neighbours, access for essential service vehicles and also damage to our lovely grass verges.

Again, we hope the situation will be improved by residents using their own driveways wherever possible.

There are still some drivers who regularly leave their cars parked near corners which creates another hazard, especially during the school runs and it is also against the Highway Code rule 243.

All this adds up to one thing - *always try and consider others!*

LISTEN TO THE BAND.....

Amongst many attractions scheduled for Hertford, Ken Lupton tells us that the **CENTRAL BAND** of the **ROYAL AIR FORCE** is coming to **CASTLE HALL** on the 30th. January 2009.

The concert starts at 7.30pm and tickets are £20 (£15 concessions for children, students and OAPs)

In aid of the RAF Benevolent Fund.

PAM LUTNER

We are still looking for a suitable memorial for PAM who ruled supreme over this Association for decades!

As Pam was such an enthusiastic gardener it was suggested that a tree be planted on one of the estate greens. An Acer was thought to be suitable as they do not grow to a very large size although, before planting, permission will be required from the EHDC. A concrete plaque would also be placed near the spot.

BARKING MAD

We are thankfully not in an area known for its criminal activities, the worst incidents usually being as a result of a few inconsiderate people, especially where car parking is concerned. Another thing that can be distressing is incessant dog barking, not only for neighbours but also the pets who normally only bark continually out of frustration!

There are of course formal powers in place to deal with these situations and anyone blighted by this noise continually should keep a note of the times, dates, etc. for submitting to the EHDC, but only if they feel this is a serious blight and the noise persists. Hopefully, the complainant will resolve the issue by having a friendly word with the dog owner who, hopefully, will find a way of calming their pooch.



SCHOOL MATTERS

This is a particularly busy time at our school as we prepare for Christmas. Our choir will be singing at several local events over the festive period and the children are looking forward to their Christmas productions and decorating their classes.

Our children really pulled out all the stops for this year's Children in Need appeal, raising £500 for this worthy appeal. Each class chose a colour and dressed in that colour for the day. They took part in sponsored events, cake sales and various other fundraising activities.

We are looking forward to receiving our first real Christmas tree this year which is being kindly donated to our school by Bengoe Nursery. I'm sure you will agree that nothing typifies Christmas like the smell of a real tree. Wishing you all a peaceful Christmas

KATH HALLAHAN – Headteacher.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

In spite of recent strong inflationary trends we have still managed to keep the annual membership subscription at £2 for many years!

Most of the 2008/9 subs have been collected for which we thank everyone. If members are not in we usually put a note through the door asking them to kindly drop their £2 round to the collector.

To save our gallant collectors marching back through more rains, freezing winds and worse, we would appreciate your cooperation in this.

Our particular thanks go to those non-committee members who voluntarily give up their time collecting subs and delivering this newsletter!

We could still do with some more collectors please (phone any committee member)

Many thanks

A Christmas reminder message from the Hertford Safer Neighbourhoods Team

Nationally, there is often an increase in home burglaries around this time of year, so police are reminding Hertfordshire residents to keep security in mind, and not give burglars an open invitation into their homes

- Lock all doors and windows securely before you go out. Ensure any UPVC doors are properly locked by lifting the handle and double-locking them with the key. . If you don't engage the security features, even if the handle is lifted up on the inside, it's as good as leaving the door wide open.
- Don't leave any possessions in sight in your car. Thieves are opportunistic, even if you know there's nothing of value there, they may try their luck
- Be vigilant with your purse or wallet when out shopping - ensure that your handbag is properly secured or zipped up, and don't keep your wallet in your back pocket.
- If you do not know the person at the door, do not open it. Please report suspicious behaviour to the police immediately with as much information as possible. Take down details of vehicles they are using and registration numbers and as much description about the people as you can. Look after the elderly and vulnerable in your community.
- Finally, when the fun is over, don't advertise your expensive presents by leaving the boxes and packages by the dustbin. A burglar will see there is something worth breaking in for.

The chances are you will take extra care; we certainly hope so and would like to take this opportunity of wishing everyone a very safe and happy holiday.

Jill Dockley

Herts Police

(The Ed. has been given access to the OWL (Online Watch Link) website to ensure that important and timely messages about local crime and suspicious activities are received correctly to MRA)

CAR JACKING

We have had news from another police source that a current ruse employed by some car-jackers is to leave a piece of paper stuck on the rear window of cars.

If the owner fails to notice this before getting into their vehicle they will normally endeavour to see what it is *after* leaving the car with the ignition keys in and often with the engine still running. This is when the car-jackers will pounce and drive off with the car AND all the contents, like purses, shopping, etc.

So, if you see a notice stuck on your rear view window it would be wise to remove it prior to unlocking your car or much later on!

NOTICE BOARDS

There is currently little to display since the worries about the Post Offices and Rat Run have subsided; but we are expecting some more notices to be around soon and we thank Bill Adams for his work on the boards!

DOWN MEMORY LANE

"THE ONION PATCH"

Some of the Committee Members, who have been resident on Molewood for longer than most, recently got talking about the "Old Days". One of us recalled the story about the so called Onion Patch. The Press used this term to describe the only remaining piece of building land in Hertford (under the then current Planning) which the Bengoe Working Men's Club, had bought for £950, after leasing it over many years for allotments, and which made the 180 members very rich when Hubert Leach bought the 10.5 acres for £98,000. This augmented the 25 acres on which the Molewood Estate was already being built. Apparently, not all of the 83 allotment holders agreed with the sale and many missed their plots. Consequently, they applied to the Council for allotments and, as a result, land was acquired for that purpose and made available for all Bengoe residents.

1960's HOUSING HYSTERIA

When we look at the housing situation, today, we longstanding residents see a very different picture to 40 or 50 years ago. We are used to there being a shortage of affordable housing for young folk but when the Molewood Estate was being planned there was very little new housing available anywhere in the South East. Having spotted a small advertisement in the Enfield local paper, put in by Norris & Duval, estate agents, I drove up to Bengoe to have a look. At that time, the Avenue had houses built on either side, only as far as where the shops now stand, and where the site office and a builder's yard then stood. Woodhall Close already issued out of the left hand side of the Avenue, to beneath the Water Tower; and on the right hand side, there was an opening into which the next phase of building would soon begin to move along Cowper Crescent. The dwellings in this phase were of three types: semis at £3,650, detached at £3,850 and chalet bungalow semis at £3,950 (these presumably "controlled" figures are quoted from memory).

Anticipating a massive demand for these new houses, the Agent stipulated that interested parties must "request an appointment in order to make an application" on the actual date of the Sale. And a supposedly strict condition was that applicants might only put in a request for an appointment by telephoning, at 9.00 am precisely, on a certain weekday morning. It was made clear that anyone attending in person would be blacklisted. Accordingly, at a few minutes before the indicated time, I began to dial Norris & Duval's number which was engaged; and remained so as I constantly redialed over the next couple of hours. Eventually, I got through and learned that all the houses had been already **sold** "to people who had been queuing all night". Apparently, it had been feared that a riot would have ensued if they had not been let in when the offices opened. I left my name on the "Waiting List" in case any of the "lucky ones" failed to arrange a mortgage. Fortunately, for me, this happened, in respect of the plot which we had chosen as most ideal, and we were very happy to "move in" at the end of 1961.

Escaped COW in Cowper !

Behind us, in what is now Peel Crescent and beyond, I used to walk my dog over the abandoned allotments and, from the front of our house we looked out over farmland, grazed by cattle, where Desborough and the Wick soon rose up. I have cine film of an escaped cow (from the farm) rampaging over the new front gardens of Cowper; but in the first few winter months there was a lot of mud everywhere. Bulldozers razed the land which became our gardens, leaving them flat but removing the topsoil to those lucky enough to live beside a depression which was then filled in.

Long-Lived Gas Boiler!

We were all glad to have gas central heating, installed by British Gas with an undertaking to provide free maintenance. Ill advisedly, I kept them to it for 30 years before fitting a modern boiler, whose greater efficiency saved the capital cost in 18 months. In those early days, any problem we found with our property was settled by a visit to the site office; and a builder soon came around to attend to it. When our boiler played up, the engineer just replaced a major sub assembly with one removed from an uncompleted house, further up the road. We were, though, very gratified in later years to discover how well thought of these Leach Houses were; and I believe that they are well sought after still.

Brian Laming

SEASONS GREETINGS! I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a merry Christmas and hopefully, a better New Year. Whilst the economic picture is bad, this is a time for relaxing with family and friends and for remembering those worse off than ourselves. 2008 has been a challenging year, though with some bright spots, not least our community's efforts to keep our excellent Post Office. That is a good example of what a community can do, when it works together.

Mark Prisk MP (Hertford & Stortford)

And from Hertford's Mayor.....

I can't believe how quickly 2008 has gone. It has been a special year for me as I began my term of office as Mayor. I have really enjoyed the first half of my year and am looking forward to the second half. I have met a lot of people in Hertford, many of them unsung heroes who do a lot to help make the town what it is – something to be proud of.

An image that will stick with me, as I'm sure it will for Kim and John Lynch, was the public meeting held to save Bengoe Post Office. And it was wonderful to have the post office saved from closure!

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you all a safe and merry Christmas and a happy new year."

Councillor KIM DARBY

AND.....

A

and A

OUR MEMBERS and HELPERS

We wish you all you wish yourselves.....



VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS

Happy New Year TO ALL



ENJOY---ENJOY!