MOLEWOOD OUTLOOK

SPRING 2003



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Molewood Residents Association

NAME	ADDRESS	TEL.(ALL HERTFORD)
CHAIRMAN		
GUY THOMAS	14, THE DRIVE	503443
TREASURER		
DAVID BISHOP	24, COWPER CRESCENT	423696
EDITOR		
ALLAN STREETON	22, COWPER CRESCENT	423682

PAM LUTNER	107, COWPER CRESCENT	581329
JOAN MURRELL	38, COWPER CRESCENT	587595
MARIE ARCHER	55, THE WICK	581965
JANE COOPER	3, WOODHALL CLOSE	584365
GEOFF CLARK	17, THE AVENUE	552913
HELEN GRAHAM	31, THE AVENUE	558168
JAYNE CLARKE	5, WOODHALL CLOSE	423026
KEVIN BEADLE	24, DESBOROUGH CLOSE	551431
DENNIS GOODRUM	43 THE AVENUE	422492

MOLEWOOD OUTLOOK — SPRING 2003

SPRING is once again in the Molewood air with the bleak, cold winter days but a memory - we hope !
A day we will not easily forget is ' White Thursday' when everything came to a standstill owing to a few inches of snow and ice. We hope you were not amongst the horror cases of commuters who were stuck in a gridlock on the roads, etc. for 12 hours or more or being stuck in snowdrifts !
Our normally deserted local Waterford Heath resembled a winter resort when, with the schools not operating, eager youngsters brought their dad-made sledges to the slopes.

In contrast March sunshine records were broken this year.

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Grateful thanks and a £5. prize go to 6-years old HARRIET CLARKE who provided the seasonal front cover for Outlook.

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Make a note in your diaries.....

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM has been arranged for WEDNESDAY 7th. MAY at 7.45-for-8 PM start at BENGEO COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL.

It should be an interesting evening: Come along as we have a special treat in store this year !
In addition to the usual 'nibbles' and thirst quenching liquids we have a special *musical* interlude with well known local professional musician..

JERRY HARRISON who, many will remember , held the AGM members so spellbound with his superb performance on the acoustic guitar a few years ago you could have heard a pin drop in the audience !
Jerry has kindly agreed to give a repeat performance, again free of charge.

Come along for a great evening
(Pins not supplied)
Anyone who is unable to walk unaided to the school, please have a word with a committee member who will try and arrange transport.

CAR PARKING

Once again that old hairy chestnut raises its headlights.....
We have mentioned it once before---nay----many, many times previously...PLEASE use your garages or driveways to prevent parking on some of the narrow roads.
In January there were two cars parked on either side of Cowper Crescent.
Although not exactly opposite each other there was very little room for the bus to manoeuvre round and it had to mount the pavement (highly illegal !) to avoid clipping at least one of the cars.
So.....please consider, not only your own and other cars ,but also public transport.

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With the new and much improved Co-op. in Bengeo street the area is becoming a nightmare and an accident is just ' waiting to happen', with frustrated shoppers causing obstruction by abandoning their cars ! So, if you cannot park *safely* in the spaces provided please carry on to town to the supermarkets, return when it is quieter or, even better, use *our own* shops or YOU could be the one causing damage, injury or - worse !

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New Committee Members

The Molewood Residents Association has been in existence for over 40 years.
During that time, a number of residents have committed themselves to supporting the Association by joining the committee.
As one such resident, I have really enjoyed chairing the committee over the past three years. However, due to work and family commitments, I need to *pass on the baton.* We need one or two residents to fill positions on the committee, namely as chairman and secretary.
This commitment only requires a few hours of your time; by attending committee meetings every six to eight weeks and occasional phone calls to follow up actions after each meeting.
At the Annual General Meeting in May, I shall be looking for volunteers to fill these committee positions and so ensure there continues to be a 'voice' representing the views of Molewood residents.
If in the meantime, you would like to discuss joining our committee, please give me a ring on 01992 503443, or speak to any of the committee members listed on the previous page.

Guy Thomas
Chairman
Molewood Residents Association

MRS. MOLE'S BACK .....

..... in a mood !

I keep putting off writing my bit for the Molewood News as I know I'm going to moan. I so look forward to spring and the lovely display of daffodils down The Avenue, but this year in spite of trying to protect them with bits of twig, they have been really vandalised, the count so far 68 daffodil buds and flowers trampled on and snapped off and now the 'tree destroyer' has been at it again, there's another branch broken off and left hanging just as it's coming into bud. Still there's always a bright side – I've got three vases of free daffs in the house to cheer me up !

I have been chewing over this idea of getting BBC Radio4 Gardeners' Question Time panel to pay us a visit, but when I rang them to enquire they said the waiting time could be over a year, but I thought if all the local gardening groups added their names to the application form, the BBC might give us priority; sorry I'll shut up about gardening. I did ask them about tickets for other shows – "They Think It's All Over" starts recording again in August – any other suggestions, let us know and we will investigate.

(We would mention that Mrs. Mole, in the guise of committee member Joan Murrell, gets all our thanks for her hard work in ensuring a dazzling early Spring array around trees. Also ' Mrs. Mole ' has been tidying up Notice Boards etc in different parts of our estate) In addition to all this 'Mrs. Mole' arranged the

SPRING GARDEN COMPETITION

She writes: "This year the weather was so brilliant in March, I don't think I've seen the spring gardens looking so lovely. Choosing winners was difficult ! Choosing the ' best six' I ended up with 23 nominations: it was driving me bonkers!
In the end I put all addresses into a hat and pulled out the six lucky winners below.
Idea...what about *this* year's winners judging the best *summer* garden competition ?

See you at the AGM for the prize giving !

Mr. & Mrs. Scott. ....53, Lodge Close
Mr. & Mrs. Casbard.....26, Desborough Close
Mr. & Mrs. Smith and Mr. & Mrs. Hillman
30 & 32 The Wick
Mr. & Mrs., Edge ... 24, Peel Crescent
Mr. & Mrs. Budden.....26, The Wick.....
Mr. & Mrs. Martin .20, The Wick.

COUNCIL TAX (RATES)

Once again swingeing Council tax increases notices have flopped on to our doormats.

We have repeatedly been told the reasons these hikes are necessary and that the alternative would be severe cutting back in the public services.

Sadly, this type of tax is based on ' paper wealth' i.e. inflated value of our homes as compared to the *spendable* wealth of income. Other forms of tax, like VAT leave some element of choice in what you choose to buy.
Council tax is payable by ALL homeowners even though their income may not have increased - and may even have *decreased.*
A Molewood estate example:- F Band house (3-bed det.) increase by over £16,000, that's an increase of 17.2% !
This is in ADDITION to the large income tax increases in the pipeline plus National Insurance contribtions.
How many, we ask, have had wage or pension increases of at least 20% to cover all these ?

A last minute government £1m. cash windfall came too late to stop this year's Council tax increases.

For those who cannot afford the increases AND who have minimum savings, relief can be obtained.

For the rest ?.....as your savings dwindle with all the extra expenditure you too will soon be eligible for relief !
WATER METERS: May offer relief to those residents whose consumption of water is modest, such as single dwellers and those who have no need to water gardens.
In such cases changing from the present system to a meter can result in considerably lower payments.

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BADGER BAITERS BEWARE !

Molewoodian dogs favourite spot for taking their owners ' walkies' is Waterford Heath, although there have been some unwelcome intruders to this canine paradise of late.
The Herts & Middlesex Badger Group were called to this beauty spot when two men were seen digging with their dogs for the elusive creatures.
They were disturbed and made off in a red Nissan van.
This cruel and *illegal* sport involves injuring the badgers who are then made to fight to the death against certain types of dogs, who are also badly injured.
Dog - and other walkers-watch out for any signs of possible baiters and 'phone the police immediately you see anything suspicious on *Crime line—H.533002*

Mark Prisk MP writes exclusively for Molewood Outlook, March 2003

I am delighted to have been given this opportunity to contribute to **the Molewood Outlook, and I would like to thank editor Allan Streeton for letting me raise some local issues of concern.**

Greenbelt Under threat

Since the Second World War, Hertford has been surrounded by greenbelt land, protecting the surrounding countryside from house building and industrial development. As you know, there have been attempts by some unscrupulous developers to develop some sites. Even more worrying is that the Government looks set to change its protective policy of maintaining greenbelt permanently.

When John Prescott recently announced plans for 200,000 new houses across the South East, he pledged 'to maintain or increase greenbelt land in every region in England'. This is a worrying development, as it seems to mean that the Government could de-designate greenbelt land around Hertford, while extending the greenbelt elsewhere. This could open the flood gates to development around the Hertford area, and is a matter that many local people have expressed concern over. Its why I secured a debate on the floor of the House on 26th March to discuss the issue.

Rickney's Quarry

I know that there is also considerable concern over the extension of Rickney's Quarry, and the impact that this would have on both the countryside and Bengeo's roads. The site was identified as an area of preferred future extraction in the first deposit of the minerals plan. The County Council is currently considering responses to this initial consultation phase, and will be producing the second draft plan in summer 2003. I will continue to monitor the County Councils plans, and will work with people including Peter Ruffles and Sally Newton who have been active on this issue.

Keeping our streets safe

A number of residents in the Molewood area contribute to neighbourhood watch, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks for your efforts toward making our community a safer place to live in.

Having been on patrol with the Police in Hertford town centre, I know how stretched our county force has become, and whilst recent recruitment numbers have increased, Hertfordshire is still short of the 200 officers it needs. That is why I recently questioned Ministers over their decision to hold back £5 Million of next year's central government grant to our police. Its crazy to cut back on funding like this, and we council taxpayers are having to foot the bill.

Contact Me

You can write to me with any problems or issues at Mark Prisk MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. Alternatively telephone 020 7219 6358. If you wish to book an appointment to see me, please call the Ware office by telephone on 01920 462182. Website: www.markprisk.com

C.A.G.E. Update (April '03)

The Aggregates Panel met recently at County Hall to consider objections and supporting arguments for the Mineral Plan Review. The response to these will be obtained in the 2nd. Deposit version due to be published in the summer.

A big ' thank you' to those who sent in letters of objection to the Rickneys site. We await the next round to see what transpires.

It's a question of *watch this space* for until we know the mind of the operator, it is difficult to present a case.

C.A.G.E. is ready for whatever comes forward: when it does we shall need all the support that we can muster.

John Corbett, who has done brilliant work for C.A.G.E over the years, has retired to Suffolk. We were able to make a presentation to him for which he thanked all who contributed, including Molewood Residents.

Please keep your ears to the ground and eyes alert for any signs that things are moving. A call to KEVIN BEADLE will meet with a quick response. *George Sandell*

SCHOOL MATTERS

We have had many compliments from visitors to the school on the attractive appearance of the estate; the spring flowers have been particularly pleasing this year.
Unfortunately, there have been incidents of vandalism at school recently. Our caretaker saw 3 teenage boys on roof of the Sacombe building during the February half term, they were throwing bricks, consequently breaking 5 windows including a large Hall window.
Other incidents have included breaking down fences and destroying " no trespass" signs. In fact when we replaced the sign it was lifted with it's concrete base within a week.
These incidents are a strain on our finances as the school has to bear the cost.
We would ask all residents to report to the police any trespasses in the school grounds.
Hopefully, the parking situation outside the school will improve; local police have been monitoring this recently and have issued fixed penalty tickets.
We hope you will be able to join us on BENGEO DAY, SUNDAY 15th. JUNE from 12noon until 3pm
Mrs. K. Hallahan, Head Teacher

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

A scam targeting females in particular involves a 'phone call " from the Post Office " asking them to confirm their postcode. Then they are told they have become eligible for some gift vouchers, if they would please confirm their full address. Most of the women who have given this information have later been burgled as it has been assumed that they are normally working during the day.
ALSO, if you receive a 'phone call from someone identifying themselves as a 'BT Service technician' conducting a test on that line, or if anyone else asks you to do the following, DON'T !
They will state that to complete the test the recipient should dial 90 followed by the hash key and then hang up. This will give them full access to your 'phone line, to place long distance, etc. calls eventually billed to YOU !
Many of these calls emanate from Prisons...so

DO NOT PRESS 90 FOR ANYONE !

Ecology conscious resident ANTHONY LIFFERS has some interesting thoughts on **RECYCLING:**

Most people know that you can recycle aluminum drinks cans, but did you know that you can deposit all of the following in the same recycling container:

Aluminum drinks cans
Aluminum foil (it must be clean)
Steel food cans, don't forget the top & bottom also!
Jam Jar lids
Aerosol cans: Yes really! (Remember to remove the plastic nozzle first)

Food and Drinks Cans (NOT aerosols) should be squashed flat. Otherwise only a small number of cans will fit into the container, and therefore many more containers will be required for the same number of cans deposited, and a lot of smoky diesel be wasted transporting a load of air to the processing point, in itself unnecessarily polluting our environment.

Squashing food tins is surprisingly easy when you know how. After you have removed the top and enjoyed the contents, rinse the container and then remove the bottom as well. What was a very strong structure can now be effortlessly squashed flat between two fingers. Impress your husband and children with this feat and there will be no arguments when it is their turn for the washing up.

WARNING if you are still using an old fashioned can opener these leave very sharp edges, depending on the model, to either the can's body or to its top and bottom disks. Thank you to Lou and George for the first aid and lift to casualty!

If you have children or intend to make a bigger effort with your metal recycling I would recommend you invest in a new can opener such as the "Tala Different" available at John Lewis for about £10, thank you Mum & Dad! It is made from stainless steel, with thick plastic padded handles that are ideal for arthritic hands, and it has a lifetime guarantee.

Those 'hazy, lazy days of summer ' will, hopefully, soon be with us again when we can think about getting away from it all.
ALSO looking forward to your departure is the HOUSE BURGLAR !
....so please secure your most important asset - your home, even when leaving it for an hour or so.

SECURING YOUR HOME

Most burglaries are committed by *opportunist thieves* and frequently get in through an open door or window, considerately left open for them !

Try and see your home through a burglar's eyes.
You can't be over fussy about locking all doors and windows, even if only going next door.
Do not leave cash or valuables lying around.
Use a light timer and outside security lights and, if feasible, burglar alarms..
Secure garden sheds and garages.
Be very cautious with strangers at the door, it could be a bogus caller. Satisfy yourself that their ID is genuine.

We know that we have covered these matters in more detail many times, but when the balmy breezes are blowing on a hot day it is so easy to throw all caution to the wind —and help the cash-strapped thief to earn a dishonest crust !

Which leads us, once again, to **BOGUS CALLERS.**

Enough has already been said on this subject, but an interesting case occurred in March when a man " of Indian appearance " called offering a resident an attractive Swallows hotel brochure stating that he could arrange a break for £30 if the resident could give him a holding deposit.
He spoke very swiftly and quickly showed an Id label.
The resident wisely refused the offer and 'phoned the police who were looking into the matter.
It may well be that the caller was ' pukka' but, should such a situation arise at your house please do not be gullible and part with any money before thoroughly checking out the Id., and of course do NOT let the ' salesman' inside the house whilst you are verifying it !

FLYTIPPING

No - nothing to do with those little insects which pester us later in the season, although equally anti-social !
Now that the price of second hand cars has crashed, dumping of unwanted vehicles in the countryside is becoming a growing problem, a danger and an eyesore.
The lovely countryside of Waterford Heath (North) was scoured in March by a burnt out abandoned car.

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 very hefty penalties and a prison sentence can arise from prosecution for flytipping.
Anyone who knows of perpetrators should contact the police or Council.

For those *internuts* amongst us, a very informative website dealing with local matters is:-

www.hertsdirect.org

With the welcome coming of Spring we can hopefully forget fires for a time.
But this can be but a memory in no time when central heating will again be turned up.
If you have a WOOD BURNING STOVE or burn logs on an open fire **ZILLA DRIVER of 76, Cowper Crescent has a supply of logs which require sawing, and would be delighted for anyone interested to remove them from her garden.**
Contact her on 558067

The Avenue Newsagents Janet **MOY'S** son was in the news last December after inventing a gadget to remind people to take their medication on time - a digital pillbox.
His invention was taken up by a major backer who is promoting his revolutionary product under the name of MediMinder.
Good luck with this project...GREG MOY !

CLARIFICATION ...on the article in the last Molewood Outlook, brought to our notice by a helpful reader:-
' SACOMBE ROAD DEVELOPMENT'.....
County Council Structural Plan.. should read *Structure Plan.*

" I Remember it Well "

Once more we take a stroll down Memory Lane to glance into the pages of Molewood Outlook in SPRING 1987- Chairman Trevor Cobb:Editor Valerie Sutton.

Cover picture . by 8-year old Alexander Dukcevic.

*A plea by committee member BRIAN EULER, who subsequently moved to Colliers End , to get more support from residents for social events organised by the MRA committee (*Nothing has changed there Brian !)

An article by the Rev. Christopher Wallington.

' Causes for Concern' included:-

cars parking at kerbsides causing problems .

Obstruction by cars parking at entrance to shops access road.

Overhanging branches, reminding residents that the Council has authority to cut back offending branches and charge the owners for the work.

A reminder that, with the summer coming, excessive noise should be avoided as it interferes with residents' outdoor amenities.

(Again—little change there !)

An article by local history writer Malcolm Moulding on ' THE MONK-KNIGHTS of BENGEO TEMPLE.

An article by Trevor Cobb just prior to his resignation as Chairman.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH update by Brian Euler on the saga of replacing the small N.W. signs with the larger ones.

Our ' Bengeo Beat' officer (Oh, happy days !).

He covered such matters as:-

Someone fined heavily for parking on double yellow lines: warning where some residents had been reported shooting at domestic animals and birds

Suggestion by residents of Great and High Molewoods that they may like to form their own Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

Advice to keep garage doors shut following a spate of thefts.

Mrs. Outlaw, headmistress of Bengeo Infants School, retiring after 18 years.

Spring Gardens Competition winners of 1987 were:-

Mrs. Digweed, Mr. & Mrs. Kenny,Mr. & Mrs. Alburn and Mrs. Howard.

AGM -About 70 people attended who discussed car parking, footpaths and new wheelie bins.

The other matters were as aforementioned, followed, of course, by cheese and wine.

(Not much change there then !)

Treasurer reported a hike in subscriptions from 50p. to 70p (considering the increase in the inflation rate over 16 years, £2.00 subs seems good value for money !)

Appeal for new members to help run Bengeo Youth Club.

WRVS appeal for residents to host under privileged children under the Childrens' Holiday Scheme.

(What happened to that scheme, we wonder ?)

The Pit: A proposed Equestrian Centre was opposed, for obvious reasons.

'More Rabbit than Sainsburys'.....

A report on the 'Cockney Night Out ' at Sele Community Centre, which was a resounding success ! A real pie and mash supper was laid on and a good time had by all.

(Gor blimey ! that aint a bad idea. Any thoughts - anyone ?)

On reflection it seems that we were a lot more active then ! But...there are now so many counter attractions , hence the poor response for suggestions and ideas emanating almost entirely from members *d'une certain age !*

From a regular contributor:-

A RAINY DAY

Today there's such a lot to see as rain pour down incessantly.
Like coloured rainbows I do view , swarms of umbrellas of every hue.
Golf ones, floral, animal faces, advertising pubs in places.
For I live near the school and so I watch them going to and fro.
Dancing and bobbing as kids skip along, like in the famous film and song.
They brighten up a dull wet day, and lift my spirits straight away.
We grumble if there's too much rain, but wait a moment, think again
Of countries dying from the drought, where nought but rain can help them out.
Oh why does life seem so unfair ? Why can't we all the weathers share ?
And like the story we've been told - At rainbows end find that pot of gold.

Mrs. Joan Cook

..Bless the little children !

If you know your bible, even a little, you will see the humour in these answers which came from a Catholic elementary school tests. (NOT from our local school, we hasten to add !)
Kids were asked questions about the old and new testaments.
The statements have not been retouched or corrected in any way.

1. In the first book of the bible, Guinessis, God got tired of creating the world, so he took the Sabbath off.
2. Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree.
3. Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark. Noah built an ark which the animals came on to in pears.
5. Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day, but a ball of fire by night.
6. The Jews were a proud people and throughout history they had trouble with the unsympathetic Genitals.
7. Samson was a strong man who let himself be led astray by a Jezebel like Delilah.
8. Samson slayed the Philistines with the axe of the Apostles.
9. Moses led the Hebrews to the Red Sea where they made uneven bread which is bread without any ingredients.
10. The Egyptians were drowned in the desert.
Afterwards Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten amendments.
11 The first commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple.
12. The seventh commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery.
13. Moses died before he ever reached Canada. Then Joshua led the Hebrews in the battle of Geritol.
14. The greatest miracle in the bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him.
15. David was a Hebrew King skilled at playing the liar. He fought with the Finklestines, a race of people who lived in biblical times.
16. Solomon, one of David's sons, had 3oo wives and 700 porcupines,
17. When Mary heard that she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna Carter.
18. When the three wise guys from the East side arrived, they found Jesus in the manager.
19. Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.

We wish all of our residents well and, for those unwell , a quick return to good health and we hope to see you again in the summer sunshine...

HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER.