MOLEWOOD OUTLOOK
SPRING 2009

MOLEWOOD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**



Waterford Heath from the south

In this issue - **AGM, Local Crime, Parking, Local WI, OWL Reports, Brian Laming on Home Movies, Mrs Mole's back, School Matters, Janet Moy Reminisces, Red Cross, Avenue Shops**

This is to give notice that the 44th Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday 13th May 2009 at 7.30pm (sharp!) at Bengeo Primary School. Following the formal meeting we will watch a film of local interest and indulge ourselves with some 'nibbles' washed down with not excessive amounts of wine or soft drinks. So do come!

Molewood Residents Association

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

Editor's Comments: -

After a long very hard winter, in more ways than one, spring is around the corner; if it has not already ***sprung*** *by the time you read this! We can only hope that a warm summer will make up for the winter's stretches of sub zero temperatures and heavy snowfalls and that, in time, financial constraints will ease for us all.*

- *Crime has never been a major worry in this neck of the woods, although lately there seem to have been an increase in thefts on our estate, so vigilance is the key word!*

- *Later on, our committee teams will move amongst you rattling their tins for the £2 annual subscription which remains the same after all these years.*
- *Our special thanks go to those willing helpers who give up their time assisting with the various rounds but we STILL need some more helpers.* ***VOLUNTEERS PLEASE!***
- *We look forward to seeing you at our AGM, on the13th May!*

Let's hope we get another magnificent display of wild flowers this year, like those shown on the cover picture taken on Waterford Heath

Allan Streeton

Next JOAN MURRELL tells of Mrs. Mole's stirrings from her winter sleep and her day outside Mole wood: -

Good Lord, it must be spring again, the sun's out and it's a beautiful day!
Mrs Mole must come out of hibernation and get cracking. I've decided I must start getting more adventurous (with my bus pass). I do enjoy meeting everyone on our local 333 and the bus drivers are so nice and friendly but there are all these interesting places to visit in London. On my first planned trip I decided to go to the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square where they were exhibiting the great Titian paintings.

GETTING THERE

- So I worked it out to get the **310 bus** from Hertford to Waltham Cross, then catch the **279 bus** to Manor House Underground Station, I wasn't sure about which buses went where, at Manor House; anyway I could always cheat and get the tube from there. But I was so lucky, I met this lady on the Waltham Cross bus; we got chatting and I told her about my planned day out and believe it or not she knew exactly which bus to catch and where.
- So I got the **No.29 bendy bus** at Manor House which went all the way to Trafalgar Square.

THEN RELAX

- It was so easy and the paintings were wonderful, there were so many masterpieces beside the Titians and you can get nice refreshments at the Gallery, actually my kind bus lady friend advised me to go to the Ritz for a cuppa she could recommend it, but Horatio (Nelson) wanted me to stay with him. It was a great day out and I will plan another visit to London (when the clocks alter) as it got a bit scary coming home in the dark.

- **Advantages:** It's all free travel if you have a bus pass.

- **Disadvantages:** Finding the right bus stops, returning home and walking up Port Hill in the dark.

A quick route suggested by a U3A member is the 797 Green Line coach from The Galleria, in South Hatfield, to Marble Arch or Hyde Park Corner. You'll need to get the 724 over there from Hertford North.

SHOE MENDING TIP

I was crossing the road the other day and my shoe got caught in one of the pot holes which pulled the sole off from under my toes. So I took the busted shoe to the mender but he said he could not fix it together again as it wouldn't hold. I was really fed up as they were lovely comfortable shoes, but then I had a brainwave.... why not try 'NO MORE NAILS'.

I expect everyone knows about this amazing adhesive. I just squeezed it on to the sole and pressed the two bits together, and then I wound loads of elastic bands round it very tightly, left it a couple of days and it has stayed put so far for six weeks. So there you are... don't go throwing those favourite shoes away unnecessarily.

And don't forget to get the pothole filled by ringing 01438 737320. (See also, note on page 7)

SCHOOL MATTERS!

Message from Bengeo Primary School

- Thanks to the recent offer in the Mercury, our school was able to collect 10 nest boxes from Van Hage's. They have now been put up in our grounds. We are hoping that they will attract more birds on to our site. We recently had a batch of 'Living Eggs' which hatched into lovely chicks. The children, parents and staff loved watching them develop over the two weeks we had them. They have all now gone to good homes!
- Our Chamber Choir have been busy once again and were performing in the Hertford Music Festival at Castle Hall on 24th March 2009 with other local schools. Music continues to be an important part of our school ethos and we are all looking forward to seeing the choir perform. We will also be holding two instrumental concerts in school this term, when our young musicians get a chance to perform to an audience.
- On Saturday 7th March we held a quiz at the school hall to raise funds to update our Library. The whole school community was represented, governors, staff and parents. Everyone commented on what a great evening it was.
- Do not forget that Bengeo Day this year is on Sunday 28th June!

Kath Hallahan – Headteacher

Here are some thoughts of Chairman Brian, who is on the 'cutting edge' of home movie technology!! "How to make a movie"

Although I am often guilty of inflicting my "video productions" on other people, I am nevertheless conscious that it is too easy to assume that all the scenes and personal events, which are immortalised after passing before our camera lens, will be of interest to quite unconnected people, who may not feel able to relate to what endears an amateur producer.
On the other hand, if one conforms to a few simple rules, it is possible to make any totally mundane event very viewable to an audience; and, of course, no form of artistic expression (including film making) is worthwhile unless it can excite interest in a group of otherwise disinterested people.

The rules which I suggest are as follows:-

- ☑ Keep the "Show" short and do NOT give in to even ardent requests for a second feature. It also helps if, at the outset, one can promise that, at some point during the ensuing entertainment, something will appear which is of common interest for the viewer. This helps to keep everybody awake and looking at the screen.
- ☑ Get in close! Try to ensure that the "movie" has some images which register the subject in close detail, by filling the screen.
- ☑ Avoid sudden changes of scene, except for dramatic effect. And try to ensure that each image leads on naturally to a succeeding one.
- ☑ Tell a Story. It need only be a simple one and there should appear to be some chronological sequence. If possible, let the flowing pictures speak for themselves. This avoids the need to add a commentary or insert distracting titles.
- ☑ Background music can set the right mood and this can be achieved by means of an unsynchronised cassette or CD player.

In the old days of Cine, when 3 minutes of film cost (eventually) around £15, there was an incentive to limit the duration of each "take"; and the viewer of the classic "Baby on the Lawn" film was thankful when the film ran out. Since then, the availability of Camcorders has put us at the mercy of the £1 per hour video tape; and the dreaded invitation: "Come and see our holiday film" will make even the very best of friends seek some excuse for declining it. And, today, most families have a digital camera which can capture thousands of high resolution images which can easily occupy an hour long slideshow. Throughout the last 40 years of my "movie making", I have succeeded in retaining most of my friends and they have been remarkably convincing in saying that they have "enjoyed" my latest production. The purpose of this article is to suggest how anyone else with similar ambition might do the same; and, in this article to suggest how to make a short Slideshow.

• Selecting the Material

Nothing is easy in "Life" and "Making a Movie" does require some effort to master the fundamentals of the equipment you have available. In the following description, I am assuming that the reader has a Digital Still Camera and access to a PC; and has just taken a batch of pictures of the new baby (or it could be a car, boat or anything of which you are proud).

- Upload the pictures from camera to PC. By merely connecting the camera to the PC, by a cable, you will have not found it too difficult (in this age of "plug and play") to view the photos which are on the memory card in the camera; which may amount to several hundreds. And if these are of any value, you should by now have invested in a card reader; so as to copy all your pictures from the card into the PC (and as a further back up, thence to a CD). And, hopefully, you will know where, or in which folder or sub folder (in the PC) your pictures are located.
- Now you need to open a new sub folder and copy into it just those pictures which you wish to have in your Slideshow. If you discover that you need images which do not exist; just go out and take some additional photos and copy these into your "Our New Baby" sub folder. Without getting technical, the above assumes that you have the basic computer skills to move these images about in the PC but if you don't, then, someone will help you initially; and once you are hooked on making movies, you will find that you will want to acquire enough computer skills to do it yourself.

• Arranging the Material

Having assembled your selected images, consider whether there are too many. If viewed at 3 seconds each, 100 could be rattled through in 5 minutes; which is probably long enough for a first effort and, if desired it could always be played twice! Now, give thought to the sequence in which they are to appear, bearing in mind that the first few slides need to clearly establish in the viewers mind: what he/she is looking at, when it happened, where it took place and the identity of the major players. Depending on the nature of the material, it may be necessary to answer some of these questions by making up a title page, photographing it and adding it into your sub folder.

To ensure that digital files are selected by the slide show program in the desired sequence, it is possible to re-name each jpeg file with a new consecutive number: eg.10.jpg, 20.jpg etc. Re-naming is another computer skill that it is worthwhile to learn; and numbering at intervals of 10, makes it easy to subsequently insert additional images; eg. Below, nos.9 and 19 have been added, later; and now appear on either side of number 10



• Viewing the Material

Many digital cameras come with a CD of software to install on your PC, for viewing your images folder by folder; and there should be a tool bar button for initiating a slideshow.

From within the software:

- Locate the folder containing your "movie", open the first picture in the sequence and (with your audience assembled and a suitable music track playing on a tape recorder, or CD player, for background)
- Click on "slideshow" and stand back to watch your story unfold. You can give a verbatim commentary, to accompany the screening of your images exactly as you decided to present them.

No more will you get out a packet of photos to hand around, for limited individual viewing; by people who will get them all mixed up for the next person, as well as smearing them with fingerprints. You are 100% in control and, if you get some well deserved applause and a "buzz" of satisfaction, you may well want to move on to more sophisticated productions:

- modifying pictures,
- making them "move" and "zoom" and adding fancy transitions.

With a very modest expenditure (and the dedication of rather more time, learning how), you can buy (or perhaps acquire "free" online) software which will allow you to aspire to quite a professional movie making experience.

Good Luck! *Brian Laming*

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Gone, it seems, are those halcyon days when John Baldwin was our very own beat bobby who took a personal interest in all aspects of our Association, attending most of our committee meetings and some social events.

The world has moved on to a less personal approach where constraints prevent the police from moving amongst us and nearly everything is transmitted through PCs

The latest medium of information is through OWL (Online Watch Link) an email system that gives up to date local criminal activity to N/W Coordinators, one of whom is your Editor.

This is currently sent by Andrew Nash, Police Community Support Officer, and Neighbourhood Watch who will also make calls on people where problems arise.

Bad News? Contrary to official figures, there seems to have been a spate of local crimes of late.

The proprietor of ***Good News*** our local confectioners was brutally attacked when thugs put him in a headlock then carried out a robbery. Burglaries as well as break-ins took place in Cowper Crescent, The Avenue and other roads adjacent to this estate, although we believe that one or more culprits have been traced.

The emails usually contain timely reminders about taking care not to let ANYONE inside your property unless you are certain as to their identity, plus many other precautionary measures most of which we have published time and time again in this newsletter. Use your imagination and think whether ***any*** potential burglar could easily gain access to your property; and then take measures to at least make it as ***difficult as possible!***

We have mentioned that thieves will often strike twice; the second time being some months later when the victims may have had their Insurance claim settled on a 'new-for-old' basis (rich pickings indeed!)

The OWL system has very much to commend it as a warning to be vigilant, although the precautionary steps must be down to householders themselves.

Our own Neighbourhood Watch committee seems to have become dormant following Ken Lupton's resignation, as Chairman; although there are still some individual road groups which meet to discuss security matters.

The town's new police station only opens on a part-time basis, but we are hoping that we can re-commence Neighbourhood Watch meetings again, soon.

If anyone has any information of ***any*** sort of criminal activity, please contact Andrew Nash on 0845 3300222.

The Police say that they would rather have any information, however insignificant it may seem, rather than people turning a blind eye to something which later turns out to be a criminal offence .

A new initiative has been launched by Herts Constabulary to try and reduce burglaries in East Herts.

It gives the police a greater opportunity to trace stolen property to the owners while securing a conviction.

The scheme involves householders registering their property for free on the http://www.immobilise.com/ website where they can create their own account. Any loss can be recorded through the person's own account and information is then made available to all forces.

For further information contact 01992 533950

We would like to say: -" *Bring back the bobby on the beat ",* but there's no substitute for electronic communication ----- or IS there?

SAY " NO" TO 0870?

- We have warned you to watch out for phone numbers starting with 0870 but we are now glad to see that these have been included by BT in free call packages. **So it's now....say "YES" to 0870!**
- BUT remember, in these credit crunching times there are now many services where you can save yourself *loads-a-money* by switching energy suppliers. Keep a close look out in various papers and websites like *Martin's Money Tips, confused.com* and others for some useful advice.

COLD FACTS.....

- Did you know that ICE on your phone is a great idea?
- ICE stands for *In Case of Emergency*.
- Apparently, if someone is involved in an accident or other incident, the emergency services will look at their mobile phone and if there is an ICE number they will ring it, to tell whoever answers what has occurred.
- In fact it's a good idea to put the numbers of all close members of family on your phones (ICE 1, ICE 2, etc.), if possible the mobile numbers as well.
- It could save precious minutes for family or close friends to get along to see you.
- (However, we hope the situation will never arise!)

BALLET INTERESTING.....Janet Moy

Now that summer is fast approaching I wonder how many of you, now adults and still living in Bengeo, have fond memories of Care Bears, Bees, Dancing Flowers, Rabbits, Maypole Dances, Smurfs and many other different characters?

- Yes, it is fête time. And for the ballet school I ran all those years ago, it was time to take to the stage, even if it was only a grass field, instead of Covent Garden on which to perform.

- I expect parents dreaded those pieces of material with instructions how to make this or that costume. Thank goodness for Alison Vince and Sylvia Karim, who helped put my ideas together. My lounge floor was always covered with paper, plastic, cardboard, glue etc. whilst I made the props.

- I remember one year I had twenty-four Noddy cars to make - at least they only had to be stepped into and foot-powered. Another time we were having a maypole practice in my back garden when new neighbours moved in. I think they wondered what they'd let themselves in for.

- As fete day approached I kept my fingers crossed for a dry day and spent many minutes phoning the weather centre for up to date forecasts. We were usually lucky and only once had to squash into the school hall to perform.

- Do any of you remember the year we entered a float in the Hertford carnival and won first prize with our Smurf theme? I even dressed my youngest son, then about two, as a Smurf to head our float in his pushchair. Not something now, at the age of thirty with a son of his own, he would like to be reminded about!

I hope this has stirred a few happy memories and I wonder if any of those 'potential dancers' carried on with their pliés, sautés and pirouettes or are now living those experiences with their own children?

THE AVENUE SHOPS

It's good to see all the units up and running at last.
Corinne and her smiling team at The Pantry are brightening the bus stop area up somewhat.

ALSO our intrepid team at HEADLINES are turning heads again by entering a client in the final of a national hairdressing competition final at Earls Court in June.
We wish them all the best of luck and hope that the message is getting through to those few motorists who leave their cars permanently parked outside the shops, thereby preventing those, who must have transport, from getting to the shops; and also taking trade away from our shops.

The Mercury are running a campaign to lure people back to their local small shops, endorsing what we have urged before –' Use 'em' or lose 'em '.
Often we can save a little in the multiples on certain lines until you take into account such things as parking, petrol, your own time, etc.
Also, how often do check-out staff in big stores have the time to chat about the weather or take an interest in clients' personal circumstances ? **Seldom, we think** !

We wish them all the best of luck and hope that the message reaches those very few motorists who leave their cars permanently parked outside the shops, thereby preventing those that must have transport from gaining access; and also taking trade away to others.

LOCAL W.I.

- Ladies! Need to make a few more friends?
- Want to get out more?
- Are you new to the area?
- Why not come along on the third Monday evening, each month, to the Church Hall in Duncombe Road and meet some other friendly local ladies?
- We have a speaker most months, on all sorts of interesting or fun topics.
- We have a Christmas party; and either a barbeque or strawberry tea each year.
- We run classes in all sorts of things from craft to cookery.
- We go on outings.
- We have access to our own short term residential college in Marcham, Oxfordshire, with the chance of a bursary to help you attend any of the hundreds of courses.
- We can even have a go at trying to run a class on something you especially would like to learn, but we haven't tried before; we're always willing to give it a go!
- Yes, and you get a cup of tea and a biscuit too. We will even try and teach you to make jam if you want to!
- Does this sound attractive? Unexpected? Come along and give us a visit, 8.00pm every third Monday in the month at the Church Hall in Duncombe Road.

Oh! I forgot to mention, we are *Bengeo* WI, and would love to meet you!

Contact Colleen Elliott 558579

POT HOLES

We have been in touch with the County Council about the large and *extremely dangerous* surface damage to most of our roads (especially for 2 wheel machines). We understand that if any resident logs a pothole via the Website (http://www.hertsdirect.org/actweb/hfr/default.cfm) or calls 01438 737320, it should be filled in within 48 hours. **Watch this space.**

DOGS – PLAY MISTY FOR ME

No, not another dire warning about fouling, fines, dog wardens, barking, etc. but a heart warming true tale that happened to a local dog owner some time ago whilst the family were on holiday Master had dived off the jetty for a swim.



Their lovely old English sheep dog, Misty, who hated water in all its forms saw him go and bounded to the end of the jetty and launched herself high into the air to land near her master in the sea.

Her great big hairy paws wrapped round her master's neck in an effort to save him from drowning, which of course, being a strong swimmer, was unnecessary but the intention was.....oh so very warmly appreciated!

(Who said dogs don't have hearts?)

COUNCIL TAX

As the new Council Tax notices recently dropped onto our mats ,so did our faces; only to find that, whilst the current credit crunch had forced many prices down, the Rates had, as always, gone UP !

But – help is at hand !

The Council is sending notices to companies telling employees how much benefit they can get if they are on a low income.

If you know of anyone, says the Council, who are struggling to pay their rent or Council Tax, (who isn't ?) then contact them to see if they can help.

Already single dwellers obtain a 25% reduction in Council tax, which could be reduced considerably further if they fulfill the qualifications.

To find out more tel. 01279 655251

There are a number of other ways you may be able to reduce the burden of this tax.

1. Make sure you are in the right Band by checking on other similar houses on the estate to see if they are banded lower than yours.
2. If you are disabled or have special needs you may be eligible for a reduction
3. And also if you claim pension credit, income support or jobseeker's allowance.
4. You can find out more by visiting www.dwp.gov.uk

A SIMPLE PLOT !



Some may have read in the local 'rag' of the Editor's attempt to avoid more physical work than necessary, by advertising on the ***Hertford freecycle community website*** a small plot behind his garage on which for someone to use Mercury spotted the ad. and thought it to grow their own vegetables. The on with other householders, who was a good idea; and might even catch similarly lack green fingers and have a disdain for honest work ! Hopefully, this summer will see at least one part of this garden, weed free and productive for the benefit of his gardening colleague and himself! **Obviously, caution is advised** before allowing anyone whom you don't know onto your property.

Always be sure of any potential users and make certain that your house is ***secure***.

(Some people maintain that the best alarm system.....has four legs ! Editor's note)

The ARC of rubbish !

Wait for it.....yes, **MORE changes** in store for us all in the autumn.
Having just got into the stride of ***black, brown and green bins*** and their respective collection dates, plus what we can and cannot chuck into them; **"Alternative Refuse Collections"** will enable us to "recycle things more easily ", **so "Let's get on with it"**..

- Food waste and cardboard can be added to garden waste in the ***brown*** **bin** and it will all be composted.
- THEN you will add to your colour chart with a new ***blue*** **box** for plastic bottles.
- The ***black*** **bin** collection will then change to once a fortnight, with the **brown bin** on the alternate week.
- You will be given a **'kitchen caddy'** to collect the food waste in your kitchen, before emptying it in your ***brown*** **bin**.
- **Confused ?** then go to www.wasteaware.org.uk for further information (NOT here, please !)

THE RED CROSS

Sadly, the long standing Transport and Escort Service of the Red Cross is coming to an end, owing to 'lack of funding'.
Your Editor has been involved in taking local people from their homes on hospital visits and returning them after treatment for well over a decade. Some who may be partially disabled have also been able to access this service for social events, or just visiting other patients.
Many of our residents have had this service over the years and will be disappointed at losing it, although the local Red Cross have written to many advising them of alternative arrangements in the County.
Drivers have got to know many people under the old arrangement and will miss the friendliness of personal visits. **Times are a-changing !**

PEEL CRESCENT to COWPER CRESCENT PASSAGEWAY

Following further problems with building works being carried out on one of the adjoining properties, a committee member called on the four neighbouring householders. He explained that between them they are responsible for the upkeep of the passage, as it is on their land and has not been formally adopted by the County Council as a Right of Way. This would be a long and complicated process and any request from Molewood would have to be added to the long Register of Applications from across the county. To find out more, contact the Rights Of Way unit at County Hall, or read about it at http:/www.hertsdirect.org.

Concern has been raised over dog fouling and obstruction by builders' materials which could make it hazardous to pedestrians using the alley. As your Residents' Association we can only appeal for this to be kept clear and clean.

From old Chinese philosophy:-

When you keep saying you are busy
Then you are never free.
When you keep saying you have no time,
Then you never will have time.
When you keep saying you will do it tomorrow
then your tomorrow will never come!
Life is like a river:
You cannot touch the same water twice
Because the flow that has passed will never pass again.

ENJOY EVERY MOMENT OF LIFE!
(Back in the autumn)