Molewood Residents Association

WINTER 1999

MILLENNIUM ISSUE

MOLEWOOD OUTLOOK

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SEASONAL GREETINGS TO ALL OUR READERS FROM THE COMMITTEE

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MOLEWOOD MILLENNIUM OUTLOOK

WINTER 1999



Apologising for its late arrival, we WELCOME you to another 'Outlook'and the NEW MILLENIUM (Well almost !)

What have YOU got lined up for the momentous event ?

There will, of course, be many events here and throughout the world celebrating Y2K.
You may have plans to see in the new year/Millennium raving it up in London or seeing it all from atop the largest hamster wheel in the world, the London Eye.
The committee has been asked whether we would be organising Street Parties or other events but we feel that most people will have in mind their own favourite way of celebrating. There *will* be many Street parties on New Years Eve so why not find out if anyone is organising a ' bash' on your corner of the Cabbage Patch?
We are hoping to provide something more permanent to commemorate this big event such as another seat or ....well, let's have *your* ideas!
Nothing momentous has occurred on the estate since our Spring issue, although we have had a TOTAL ECLIPSE by the moon of our sun (partially *eclipsed* by clouds), house prices have, once again, gone *through the roof*, as did the August temperatures which equaled the Euro hot spots, followed by an ' Indian Summer' during September with temperatures nudging 60 F right through to the end of October and beyond making the idea of *global warming* viable again.
Some progress has been made on various matters of local interest as a result of committee members *nagging* the appropriate authorities but – more on that later.
All of the subs have been paid, for which we thank all members, including the foot slogging committee and helpers. The sub's have remained the same for about a decade so next year, with your approval at the AGM, we will be rounding the sum up to £2 .

Arrivals/Departures:

Welcome to new residents and good luck to those who have sought pastures new.

We also extend a warm WELCOME to our new member, LOUIE MARVEN, bringing some much needed *young blood* to our – er - *mature* committee !

(Editor's note)

Allan Streeton would like to thank all those neighbourhood friends for their messages of condolence following the death of his beloved wife Marjorie.

A.G.M.

You could have heard a pin drop during the classical guitar performance by JERRY HARRISON at our well attended annual meeting.
After we had dispensed with the usual business matters and done some scoffing we were treated to the wonderful sounds of the acoustic guitar.
The quality of Jerry's performance was equal to any by international artists and it would have been difficult to distinguish Jerry's rendering of John William's own performance from the maestro himself !
Everyone sat entranced.
We do like to offer some entertainment to lighten up the AGM's, so we would always be delighted to hear of any local talent available for the 'millennium' AGM.

YOUR SHOUT



We have received a letter from *both* our readers (!)

Karen Wing of Widford sent us the following article about the Guide Associations Baden-Powell Trefoil Award:-

Presentation of the Guide Associations Baden-Powell Trefoil Award to Philippa Wood and Genevieve Heseltine of 2nd. Bengeo Guides on the 27th. May 1999.

Philippa, of The Avenue and Genevieve, of The Wick, have been members of 2nd. Bengeo Guides since early 1995 when they joined from the Brownies aged 10. They were close friends when they joined Guides and although they have been members of separate patrols during their years in the unit they have shared most of their guiding experiences.

They have both participated enthusiastically in almost everything that 2nd Bengeo has organised since 1995 as well as many District and County events and competitions. They attend each week on a Thursday and have been both active members and patient leaders of their respective patrols. The activities that they have taken part in during Guide meetings have been wide and varied from cooking and wide games to crime prevention and first aid and many have contributed towards their Baden-Powell Trefoil Awards.

They have enjoyed almost every camp and holiday opportunity that has come their way including the Hertford District Guides Expedition to Lochearnhead in 1996 and the 25/40 Mile Walk Club weekend where they both completed twenty five miles Offa's Dyke in rather wet weather and, true to form, when asked how they would like to celebrate their awards they chose to go mountain biking in the New Forest for the weekend. They have abseiled and rafted, sailed and hiked, completed obstacle courses and initiative exercises, and made their gadgets and bedding rolls numerous times as they have visited many areas of the UK near and far.

They have also supported 2nd Bengeo at all other events such as fundraising, for ourselves and others, church parades and the opening of the new County Guide Centre at Cottered. At this

years St. George's Day Parade they read the Guide law at the re-dedication ceremony giving them a chance to show off their sashes with all their hard-earned badges on them. They have been members of 2nd Bengeo Patrols that have taken part in the Hertford District British Legion and Christine Culham Cup competitions and the County organised Great Patrol Hunt competition. These are obviously less adventurous activities than the white water rafting at last year's camp but they are still a big part of what being a Guide is all about.

They are now fifteen and are members of our senior Cactus patrol. They are both Young Leaders with the 1st Bengeo Brownies and this July formed part of the Herts contingent at the World Guide Camp which was held at Foxlease in Hampshire where they shared a weeks activities and fun with Guides from all over the world.

They have worked very hard for their BP Trefoils, particularly over the past year when they have gained the more difficult and time-consuming interest and service badges to complete the award. They have leaned emergency aid and new crafts, taken an enthuiastic part in sporting and adventurous activities, learned new skills and improved on existing ones, organised wide games and contributions to the Brownie Packs programme, and looked into the history of the Guiding movement, amongst many other things.

As I said at the beginning they joined Guides at the age of 10 in 1995 and since then, while they have been busy doing all of these things, we have watched them grow into confident, happy, capable and enthusiastic young women of 15 and we like to think that guiding has contributed to that in some measure. Now as Young Leaders with the Brownies they are passing on not only some of the skills and lessons that they have learned along the way but also their enthusiasm for guiding and for life.

So, it was with great pleasure that on Thursday May 27th at a special celebration evening, with all their family and friends present, Val Morey, Hertford District Commissioner, presented them with the Baden-Powell Trefoil Award, the highest award for Guides to achieve, and the first we have presented since taking over the unit in 1990.

Karen Wing – Guider

Helen Rawlinson – Assistant Guider

Joanne Norfolk – Assistant Guider

Joan Bradford – Unit Helper.



The other letter was from Beverley and David Ellam:-

A big thank you to everyone who gave to the raffle in memory of NADINE at Maureen and Sid's garden party on the 13th July. We were able to send a cheque for £150 to the NATIONAL ASTHMA CAMPAIGN , who are very grateful for all donations.

Thank You.



SCHOOL MATTERS !

(September 1999)

Once again Sandie Ford, Headteacher of Bengeo Primary School makes a welcome contribution:-

" It has been really pleasant to come back to such lovely weather instead of the usual chilly autumn days.

I am sorry the grounds contractors were unable to trim the perimeter hedge in the holiday, but it certainly looks tidier now.

Last term Mrs. Purrett our Deputy Head started a " Wild Club" (nothing to do with behaviour !)- to encourage children to look at the wild life around the site.

This term we are starting a school council. This will introduce our pupils to the democratic processes they will meet as adults and encourage them to take an interest in all aspects of school life.

You may have heard, our Caretaker left during the holiday. We now have a new Caretaker who lives much nearer to the school, this will obviously help if we are troubled with intruders again.

Please remember to let us know if there is a problem, we will try to solve it and build on the good relationship we try to maintain with our neighbours."

PETSDogs and cats:- Yes, these are getting a mention once



more, but before your eyes start to glaze over, remember they have already suffered with the excessive noises on Guy Fawkes night. The millennium celebrations will inevitably mean an extra dose of massive noise to petrify some of them, so please take care and give them some comfort at such times…they just don't understand what's going on.

CARS – Road Safety A petition was organised in October to try and get the speed limit on the estate reduced to 20 m.p.h. A noble cause which we hope will be successful and has our



full backing.

A **Road Safety Meeting** organised by the Parents Association and Governors of Bengeo School where the meeting took place at which representatives of E. Herts Council, Local

Councillors, Bengeo School and the public attended.

As a result of the meeting, which was to highlight concerns and discuss possible solutions, it was decided that residents in the local area would be canvassed to get their views so that a consolidated report could be sent to the Council expressing concerns regarding Road Safety in our area.

At the meeting the Herts Council representative stated that the following improvements would be made in Bengeo Street. These would be in place by the end of 1999.

a) Installation of a Pelican crossing near the Co-operative Society shop.

b) A build up and widening of the pavement in the area in front of the Bengeo Working Mens Club.

c) A build up and widening of the pavement area opposite the Greyhound Public House. The roadway will be narrowed up to a maximum of one and a half feet. This will reduce the road width to two car widths as opposed to the three at present. It is hoped that these measures will improve road safety in these areas.

One of the problems with the latest vehicles is that with all the safety features built in they give the owners the feeling of invulnerability and encourage faster motoring.

One cynic suggested that, rather than an airbag, there ought to be a sharp knife sticking from the steering wheel.

That would certainly make the driver control his speed!

Zero tolerance by the police on drivers exceeding speed limits by even 1 mph seems draconian, unless one considers that this could reduce the daily death toll of OVER 70 on the roads.

There would be a few drivers on this estate whose licences would soon fill up with penalty points!

An accident waiting to happen is on the bend in Bengeo Street near to 'The Firs' where more cars seem to be parked of late restricting the views of drivers from both directions, some of whom appear to try for Mach 1!

CARS &*CHILDRENS'* SAFETY WHAT could be more important?



There have been incidents reported to us of very young children on bicycles shooting past driveway entrances when cars have already started to pull out.

Obviously no legislation can be passed to prevent accidents happening and we can only urge

GREAT CARE on behalf of car drivers *and* parents.

Some will back into their driveways finding that it gives them a better all round view when pulling out forwards.

Drivers *please* be extra cautious when emerging from your driveways and make sure windscreens are not misted/iced up these winter mornings, and parents *please* watch or warn their kiddies when riding past driveways.

It only takes one thoughtless moment.....

Talking of which.....**PARKING**

(Oh, yes, it's back again !)

Vehicles are still being parked irresponsibly.

Please, for *safety* reasons, observe road markings.

NOTES OF CONCERN !

1.One particular area of concern is the junction of Cowper Crescent and The Avenue (shops end). We have been asked to point out through the Residents Association that vehicles are being parked too near the junction on all three sides, including commercial vans. THE WHITE HATCHED AREAS MEAN NO PARKING !

By not observing the above vehicles are causing others to drive on the wrong side of the road going into and out of the junction with vision impaired by vehicles.

This corner is also used by lorries for turning on when they have visited the shops. It is also a BUS ROUTE and they also have difficulties at times.

There have been two near head on crashes recently..

The police state that if an accident occurs *as a result of* a badly parked vehicle restricting drivers' views the *owner of the parked vehicle could* be liable to prosecution.

2. We have also been requested to ask residents NOT to park on a long-term basis in the shops laybys rather than their own premises. Some of the shopkeepers have seen their customers give up trying to find a space and seen them drive away without stopping. This will affect their livelihoods and in the long run effect us residents.

Please think and be considerate of others on the above to avoid more ***draconian*** *measures being taken.!*

There are usually ways of making extra space for cars on existing properties.

WINTER is once again well and truly here restricting our visibility at the wheel, which means that we cannot safely drive in the same way we do in the summer. Watch out for those nice sunny mornings when the sun is very low in the sky sometimes obscuring *all* !

We also have to be aware of the different road conditions and watch for leaves, ice, ***and*** greasy

surfaces..

As we said before – mums *please* don't leave the car door on the roadside wide open when helping the kiddies out of the car, this is an extremely dangerous practice!

Moving from the highway on to the *Super-highway*.....



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

More on....Mobile 'Phones:-

Since the Spring issue of M.O. there has been a further massive surge in these adjuncts to modern living, the latest ones incorporating multi- functional tasks and mounting fears of possible harmful effects.

More people are walking around the estate with these stuck to their ears and what a boon they can be in times of trouble, in fact life-saving in some instances!

However, neurologists claim that mobiles could be causing headaches, nausea, tiredness, sleep problems and users might even be at risk of Alzheimer's disease, MS or Parkinson's disease

Over 17 million are now in use – and counting! (Lowrie's *matchstick men* would now be drawn with one arm bent, holding a mobile !)

An eminent physicist has called for a ban on transmitter masts in and around schools for fear of harmful emissions of radiation to children.

Apparently the 'phones themselves may even harm other parts of the body damaging DNA and increasing the risk of cancer.

Don't cheer yet if you are not one of the 17 million and have a cordless 'phone, these apparently could still emit potentially harmful waves.

An occasional call home to say that the train to Hertford North has been delayed may be harmless but *excessive* use, although reports are inconclusive at this stage, is a chilling – or over-heating - thought!

There are many other household appliances which emit *electro-magnetic fields* such as hair dryers, but we wont go into that now – after all, it is Christmas and the new millennium!



BUGGED by the MILLENNIUM?

Our fears of the Y2K great meltdown may well be unfounded.

Inundating The Shopping Basket and other shops to stockpile up with food and other

provisions on the basis that everything relying on computers will grind to a stop may in itself cause more of a problem than it solves.

Also 'planes from Stanstead shouldn't be falling out of the skies!

No major disruption of services should occur at the millennium as, say the Government, Industry is well prepared for the big changeover.

The main fear was that P.C.s which use the last 2 digits in the date –99 would cause mayhem when going forward to the year 00, as in 1900, but the years of preparation should avert this.

If you are on the cutting edge of technology with up to date state of the art equipment you probably have no worries about booting up in to the new millennium. If not get help on ' Action 2000 'website on http://domesticbug2000.co.uk .

WATER

We are assured by the Three Valleys, owned by Vivendi the world's largest water company, that there will be no problems associated with the millennium bug as far as our supplies of water are concerned.

As the British water companies are allegedly also gushing out some of the highest *profits*, it is a comforting thought!

We are also pleased that, even with some long dry summer spells, we did not experience the frustrating banning of hosepipes and it looks as though we may not have to splash out so much in charges in future.

The national press have, from time to time, printed reports of cancer being caused by *fluoride* which has been added to water supplies on the basis that it will contribute to less decay in childrens' teeth.

We were anxious to establish whether this is the practice of Three Valleys and they assure us that *no fluoride* is added to their water and that the very minute amount in the water is found *naturally* in the bore holes.

So this Christmas - drink and be merry!

HOUSE & GARDEN

Growing Pains.....(Leylandii)

We wrote in a previous MO about these trifid-like scourge of suburbia giants which can tower over 50 feet . Apparently there are likely to be new 'right to light' laws to stop neighbours being left in the shade and gloom and new rights to appeal to local councils for being left in the dark and where roots cause subsidence and drainage problems.

One new estate in southern England even makes buyers sign a clause that they will not plant Leylandii.

So, if you wish to wall yourself in with very high growing plants look away from Molewood to fresh fields and more remote areas !

One area where planting *is* required is..... **WATERFORD HEATH**

These dark and dismal days may not be the ideal time to stroll around our little eco-system, although some locals have been planting young trees out.

Another reminder to those who can differentiate between weeds and self-set trees such as oak, ash, hornbeam, field maple, hazel, silver birch or wild cherry – do not consign them to the wheelie. Get in touch with **George Sandell** of Clusterbolts, Stapleford.



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

As a Residents Association we try and tackle the matters which you, our members, wish to see rectified/improved with a modicum of success on occasions.

But the most important constituent part of our functions is SAFETY and SECURITY which comes under NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH.

Remember, as we are in a Neighbourhood Watch area we all qualify for reductions in household insurance premiums with most Companies and further reductions are given on premiums where safety measures are in place such as approved locks and some burglar alarms.

Any burglar worth his salt is going to avoid houses which appear to be occupied.

So, if you are taking a millennium trip, or even just out for the evening, take the following precautions:-

Leave lights and a radio on and a timer light switch if away for a few days.

Leave the curtains open and take in milk, papers etc., or ask your friendly neighbour to do so. (And don't forget to cancel papers before departing)

Have infrared sensor lights fitted at strategic points. (Even if he thinks the house may be empty no prowler likes being floodlit !)

Have five lever mortice locks fitted to all external doors.

We did suggest once that you may also want to ask that same friendly neighbour to leave one of the family cars in your driveway.The police are *against* this practice as they maintain that it is a give-away to potential burglars who have familiarised themselves with the layout.

It's *your* choice!

Make sure that garages and sheds are well secured with any valuable tools taken in to the house.

There are many other precautions which people take when leaving their house unoccupied, but the above may be helpful.

Fortunately we live in a low house crime area which may, it is thought, be due to a large number of households being continually occupied, many of the residents being retired.

It is just a year since the introduction of **Voicemail** for residents living in the area.

At that time a very large proportion of residents opted to be put on Voicemail. Since then there has been a number of new residents who may wish to be put on the system or indeed anyone who missed out earlier may now wish to do so.

For further information on Voicemail or Neighbourhood Watch please ring Ken Lupton on 586037 or make contact at 23, Desborough Close.

A *disturbing* occurrence took place recently when a local resident received an anonymously written threatening letter accusing him of vandalising cars in the vicinity about which the retired recipient had *no knowledge whatsoever*!

Even though the letter, left on the doorstep in the middle of the night, may have been a 'sick' joke or written by a *'fruitcake'* it was never the less unnerving.

The resident did not wish to make a fuss but we advised him to contact the local police immediately.

This type of action has no place in our neighbourhood and anyone receiving such letters should not hesitate to contact the local police.

CCTV

You are being watched!

Hertord town centre is one of the increasing number of places monitoring the streets deterring would-be criminals and recording evidence of any crimes being committed.

The system installed by Hertford Town Council is endorsed by East Herts Police and, as equipment becomes more miniaturized and sophisticated there will be more and more of these, including private residences disguised in all sorts of ways which will make it more difficult for offenders to detect and possibly disable.

They can't lie there way out of seeing themselves on telly, can they (your honour)?

BATTLE of BRITAIN (Wings Appeal 1999)

On behalf of the Hertford and District Branch of the Royal Air Force Association (RAFA) I would like to thank all those in the local area who contributed so generously to the above appeal.

The house to house collection amounted to £251. 61 and the box at the Shopping Basket £1. 21. The total of £252.82 was a large contribution to the overall total collected of £3,186. 28 which was a record amount.

Ken Lupton – Vice President.

MATTERS of CONCERN

Your committee is constantly following up matters about which you have expressed concern,

some of these being: -

ESTATE GREENS etc. We are endeavouring to get the council to 'crown lift' (remove lower branches) of the trees on the green near the old Avenue in order to create a flower bed, which needs to be done in the autumn/winter months.

Lyshill Gardens We met on site with E. Herts Council and Councillor Richard Ovenden to discuss the siting of a garden in the grass area adjacent to where the willow tree was removed. It was agreed that, subject to finance being available (?), work would be completed by the end of the year. The plan was to feature shrubs but if work was completed in time then it was hoped to plant bulbs as well. Since the meeting however the ' grape vine' has it that there is - er - no finance available to do the work.

We will continue to press for this work to be carried out.

Watch this space.....(well - we are *trying !)*

GRASS CUTTING. We are still *nagging* the relevant Authority about the anomaly on which we have written previously and hope the outcome will be smarter greens for next summer!

BULBS. More bulbs will be planted by the committee and helpers in The Avenue, the results of which were very much appreciated by all.

However, the idea of protecting the planted areas by placing holly on them was not, understandably, so well received by mums with children who could scratch themselves on the holly. All we can ask is *please try and not damage the areas immediately under the trees* -for everyone's sake!

Our thanks to **Caroline Thomas** who has planted sets of bulbs in The Drive.

Well, the new millennium heralds in many new horizons.

Global warming resulting in the melting of the ice caps followed by great floods, harmful radiation from 'phones etc., genetic modification of our everyday meals, unusual British weather patterns such as hurricanes, and *Illegal* poisoning of many staple foods like fruit and vegetables from pesticides, fungicides and insecticides (to be found in most of the major supermarkets). New dangers of overhead power lines.

Even worse - our grass areas are not being cut regularly!On the other hand new cures are being found for deadly illnesses, although new syndromes are being discovered all the time.

So are we approaching *Apocalypse?*

Hardly: there have always been doom merchants forecasting the ending of civilisation which was due to cease on more than one occasion *this* year with the next Armageddon due on 1st January. (But don't hold your breath).

We will survive!

Leaving all the apocalyptic fever aside, let us hope that the new millennium will herald the same *unselfishness* as demonstrated in this little anecdote: -

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room.

One man was allowed to sit up in his bed by the only window an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs.

The other man had to spend all his time on his back.

They chatted for hours about their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, military service, holidays etc.

The man by the window would describe to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window.

The other man lived for those graphic descriptions when his world would be broadened and enlivened by the colour and activity of the world outside. They brought visions of the park outside with ducks and swans playing on the water and children sailing their model boats, flowers of every colour, majestic old trees gracing the landscape and the grand city skyline in the distance. They were all described in exquisite detail. How he loved those moments when the world outside was brought into sharp focus for him by his friend's paintings of pictures in words.

Sadly, one day the nurse came in to find that the man by the window had passed peacefully away in his sleep.

Later the other man asked if he could be moved to the window bed where, painfully, he propped himself up to take his first look at the wonderful vista outside and there he saw.....a blank wall !

He called the nurse who then told him the other man was blind and couldn't even have seen the blank wall.

She said " Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."

Today is a gift, that's why it is called the present..

We hope you all have a wonderful CHRISTMAS and a **VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR at the start of our NEW MILLENNIUM!**

(In all the excitement let us not completely lose sight of WHAT we are celebrating !)

SUCCESS Either do not attempt at all, or go through with it.

Ovid.