



January 1998



A Happy New Year to all our Readers

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Congratulations to Knowle Traders and everyone else concerned for making the village look so attractive this Christmas. No doubt everyone who attended the ceremonial 'switching on' by Jasper Carrott, with the Church and Junior School choirs leading the carols, enjoyed it as much as I did. The Christmas tree was put up in time for the ceremony, so all the lights in the village went on at the same time. Many thanks once more to Geoff Thompstone, who acquires, fells and erects the tree (and eventually takes it down and disposes of it) as well as putting on the lights. Our own ceremony of carols round the tree went ahead as advertised this year.

The Boxing Day walk was enjoyable as usual. Again, thanks to those who gave up their time over Christmas to organise it, or made mince pies, but particularly to Ted and Diana Reville who slaved away from early on Boxing Day morning for the umpteenth year running making the mulled wine. The numbers for this event vary widely, and we have to be prepared to cater for up to a hundred.

Turning to 'work' and the Knowle Primary School Millennium Project. Whilst the Society would welcome a leisure centre in Knowle, we are becoming increasingly disquieted about this particular scheme. Even if considered primarily educational, it would inevitably affect the Council's leisure provision for the general public. It should

therefore be contemplated only as part of a Borough wide plan, and not be confined within narrow parameters determined by one project. This is a matter for our elected representatives. The Society has written to the Chief Executive accordingly. A copy of the letter is available to members at meetings or from me.

Otherwise the Planning scene has remained light. The Amenities Sub-committee is about to discuss the Traffic Consultants' report with our Councillors.

For the second year running the committees have seen numerous changes. On the Executive committee we have lost Alan Morrison, who died earlier in the year. Michael Evans left Knowle for Cornwall on November 19th, just one day too early to say goodbye at the AGM. We wish Michael and Heather a very happy life in Cornwall. Matthew Hunter and Esca Allday have both resigned as the years catch up with them. Matthew has served on the committee since 1984. He was a member of both the Planning and Amenities Sub-committees as well as our representative at MASA, of which he was the auditor. Esca joined the committee in 1985, doing a long stint as Chairman of the Meetings and Social Committee, which he raised from the nearly dead.

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Jackie Thompstone left the same sub-committee earlier in the year; Iris Griffiths, who has nobly sold all the tickets



Dates For Your Calendar



Monday January 19th	General Meeting: "Soho House" - an illustrated talk by Shena Mason about the restored house of Matthew Boulton, the industrial pioneer.
Monday February 16th	General Meeting: "Trials and Tribulations of a Wardrobe Mistress" - a talk by Christine Adderley.
Monday March 16th	General Meeting: "The Warwickshire Avon - from Warwick to Baginton" - an illustrated talk by Shirley Reading
Wednesday March 25th	Visit to Soho House - See Meeting and Social Report and Booking Form on Page 5.

Jackie Thompstone left the same sub-committee earlier in the year; Iris Griffiths, who has nobly sold all the tickets for over 10 years, has given up through eye sight problems. We wish her well for her operation in January, which has a good chance of success. Iris will stay on the sub-committee, but Alan Sutcliffe has resigned for personal reasons. Angela Coleman and Pam Elliott, who have run the local walks since 1992, now feel they wish to give up.

On the plus side, we are lucky to have found some very good people: Gary Masters (Amenities) and Phil Vince (Planning) have both joined the Executive Committee; the walks have been taken over by Malcolm Brain; Julia, his wife, has become the assistant administrator of the Local History Centre. Tickets will be handled by John Clarke, and Jack Brook will be our representative on the Village Hall committee. Desmond Charles has become the Meetings' Sub-committee secretary (as well as doing the newsletter distribution).

To those people who, for whatever reason, have resigned, our heartfelt thanks and we shall miss them. To those who

are joining us, welcome, and we hope you will enjoy your time with the Society. Every organisation needs new blood from time to time. New ideas, new contacts, new perceptions. It helps the Society to make progress. You will find a complete list of the committee and sub-committees at the end of the Newsletter.

We look forward to 1998. As usual the Meetings and Social Sub-committee have compiled a varied programme, including two outings. (under Sandra Lea for the first time). There should be something for everyone, and we hope to see you, particularly at the general meetings. This is your best opportunity to put your point of view, as there are a few minutes at the beginning especially for the purpose. It also helps the committee to know what your current concerns are.

Elaine S. Warner
Knowle 775887



FINANCIAL REPORT

Total income for the year to 30th September 1997 amounted to £3,316. Expenditure was £2,394 and, in addition, donations amounted to £2,273. Included in this figure was a £2,000 donation to the Knowle Traders Association towards the capital cost of the Christmas lights. Total expenditure was therefore £4,667 producing a deficit for the year of £1,351.

On the Balance Sheet this deficit reduced the

Accumulated Fund at 30th September 1997 to £2,562 and the Reserve Fund remained at £5,000 giving total funds of £7,562.

K. Hornby - Hon Treasurer
Knowle 776300



MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

At this, the end of my first full year as Membership Secretary, it is rather disquieting to report only a net increase of 10 to the Society's 1510 membership during the year. However 28 new members have been recruited since the last Newsletter was published which serves to reflect the large ebb and flow of movement which tends to show at this time of year when subscriptions are being gathered. The losses cannot always be matched by an equivalent number of new members without extra recruitment efforts being made.

It is noteworthy that we have 37 distributors delivering over 900 Newsletters every quarter and the collection of subscriptions during the winter quarter can be quite an onerous task - especially when it is sometimes necessary to

make a number of calls before finding members at home. A very special **'thank you'** to all distributors.

I am pleased to be able to report that, following the appeal in the last Newsletter, Mr & Mrs Israel have taken over the Hallcroft Estate from Mr & Mrs Grainger, our sincere thanks to them.

I hope you will like the new format of the Newsletter. I am always seeking new ways of making it more easily readable and hope that the use of columns will be better to read than having to scan right across the page.

Having adopted a rather gloomy note at the start of my report it gives great pleasure to be able to welcome the 28 new members who have joined us since the last Newsletter. They are listed below and we hope that we shall have the pleasure of their company at some of our functions.

Mr & Mrs F Attwood	Mr & Mrs S Bradley	Mr & Mrs A N Wilson	Mr & Mrs Harris	Mr & Mrs Harrison
Mr & Mrs A L Herrick	Mr & Mrs R A Herring	Mr & Mrs Murch	Mr & Mrs Royle	Mr & Mrs R Sheldon
Mr & Mrs Simmons	Mr & Mrs D Summerfield	Garcha Stores - Browns Lane		Mr & Mrs Bailey

John Chaloner
Knowle 778705

PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT



A number of old chestnuts feature in this report.

The Bridgewater Hotel, Warwick Road, Knowle (bottom of Stripes Hill, near the canal bridge). A year ago I wrote that the Bridgewater Hotel had applied for permission to

operate a public bar in the hotel, and to expand the car park to handle the potentially increased customer traffic. We opposed this application because we were concerned that the increased traffic in and out of the car park would be a road safety hazard. Vehicles travelling North over the canal bridge have little time to react to cars entering and leaving the hotel car park. The Council agreed, and for this and Green Belt reasons refused permission. We are experiencing something of a re-run now, with the hotel applying to expand its accommodation to include a restaurant and the Society expressing the same road safety and Green Belt concerns.

Pool Meadows House, Pool Meadows Close. Also a year ago, Pool Meadow House lost their application to convert this private house to a residential Care Home for the elderly because the Council agreed with the Society, and others, that it would overlook neighbours' private properties in what is essentially a residential area; the applicants appealed and lost that too, although significantly the Inspector indicated that he had no objection in principle to such a development which would be acceptable if the overbearing aspects of the design were reduced. This they have now done and the new planning application has been approved by SBC, albeit reluctantly.

Land off Bakers Lane, Warwick Road, Knowle.

Applicants have lodged a third application (having had the first two refused) to erect a glass house nursery on this Green Belt site. We are objecting on the same grounds, i.e. that this is a commercial development contrary to the Council's Green Belt policy.

Knowle & Dorridge Lawn Tennis & Squash Club, Grove Road, Dorridge have secured planning permission for a revised floodlighting system covering three tennis courts.

1679 High Street, Knowle (former Post Office) has been refurbished as sit-down restaurant, not a take-away. We are pleased that the front and fascia appear to be in keeping with the Conservation Area.

Cuttle Pool Lane, Temple Balsall. The applicants have applied to extend planning permission, without time limit, to complete the land-fill. The site was granted permission for mineral extraction as long ago as 1948 and is defunct. Filling and restoration were approved in 1973, but little has been done. The Society maintains that with the passage of time the site has been reclaimed by Nature, and now has value for its species of flora and fauna. We are supporting the objections to this land-filling application, which would, if granted, involve the traffic of large lorries down country lanes to the site, constituting a hazard to road safety, and a detriment to the environment.

Peter Ellis.

Knowle 775261



LOCAL HISTORY SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

Once more we are pleased to have helped with the Junior School local studies project. This is done in two stages: first the children pay a

visit to the library to see relevant material from our collection - mostly photographs. Members of the sub-committee are on hand to answer questions. This is always a very enjoyable (if exhausting) afternoon. A few weeks later fifteen to twenty long-standing residents visit the school and the children ask questions on pre-arranged aspects of Knowle history. Very many thanks to those of you who gave up your time to come. We sincerely hope that the children benefit from this annual exercise as much as those of us who take part enjoy it.

In June the sub-committee is to give a talk on 'Knowle Characters Down the Years' as part of the Society's own programme. Bearing in mind all the other unexpected jobs which crop up, the preparation will keep us busy for the first half of the year.

In view of the talk there will be no main exhibition at Chester House this year, but from October onwards a display by Michael Harrison to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of the Great War will be in the display cases.

The second Solihull Local History Fair, at which the

Society will have a stall, takes place on April 18th. It should be a good day, so how about paying it a visit? This is a family day, with a programme of events both inside and out. Possibilities include craft demonstrations, folk and Morris dancing, early music, period children's games and a maypole. In the exhibition hall in the library complex, organisations with an interest in local history will have stalls to browse. The second St. Alphege Fair - a revival of the old medieval market - takes place on the same day, with a street market, craft stalls, street theatre, Morris dancing and events at the Parish Church. This is the last newsletter before the event, so look out for the Council's own advertising nearer the day.

We are pleased to welcome Mrs. Julia Brain to the sub-committee, as the assistant administrator at the Local History Centre, working with Elizabeth Stanley. A much needed extra pair of hands. We hope she will enjoy it.

Elaine S. Warner

Knowle 775887



AMENITIES SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

Christmas Lights - The highlight of the end of the Amenities year was certainly the new Christmas lights put up in the village by the Knowle Traders, and the formal switching on by Jasper Carrott. The Traders have put in an enormous amount of work in gaining the approval of the dozens of shopkeepers involved, raising the money, choosing and buying the lights, fixing them all in position and making the necessary arrangements with the Council. The encouragement and active support of the Knowle Society with a donation of £2000, was also an important ingredient, as was the help of Councillors Blake and Kyles in getting Solihull Council to connect up the supply and fix the tree lights. A real community effort. Congratulations all round.

Traffic and Parking - As I write, the Council's Traffic and Highways Committee is due to discuss the Knowle and Dorridge Traffic Survey at a special meeting on December 10th. Hopefully the consultants' recommendations will include firm proposals to get started on the work in the New

Year. The same committee is also due to discuss our parking problems shortly; by then the Christmas shopping rush will be over, and we will have seen just how short of car parks we have become. In both traffic and parking matters it has been rewarding to see the benefits of the close collaboration between the Knowle Society, our local Councillors and the Council officers.

Buses and the Airport - Discussions are ongoing with Centro and others to try and link up the bus service to the train service from Birmingham International. Likewise the Airport's Environmental Monitoring Group are battling on to try and reduce noise and air pollution. Routine maintenance on the runways has brought a reduction in night traffic (diverted to Coventry) during the winter, but we must expect it to start again in the spring, albeit hopefully quieter.

Peter Morton
Knowle 778688



NATURE CONSERVATION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

Freezing weather has at last overtaken the warm/wet spells we encountered in November. Our own nut feeders are in continuous use, even by the opportunist

starling, also a pair of nuthatches and the whole range of tits including a flock of the pretty longtailed variety. Plus an unidentifiable bird, all over brown except for a dull red front, slightly smaller and thinner than a song thrush but with a thrushes long fine beak. No head or wing markings. It flew off the feeder and sat on the laburnum for several minutes. Any ideas?

Another order for six rainwater butts brings the total to past 50. We are most grateful to our Ward Councillors Les Kyles and Don Blake for their efforts on the Dickens Heath Working Party regarding both water butts and composters for the new housing there, and we are still hoping to interest developers on an even wider front. Indeed Redrow Homes tell me "We are hoping to employ such measures on this and other sites." A water butt in every garden by the Millennium?!

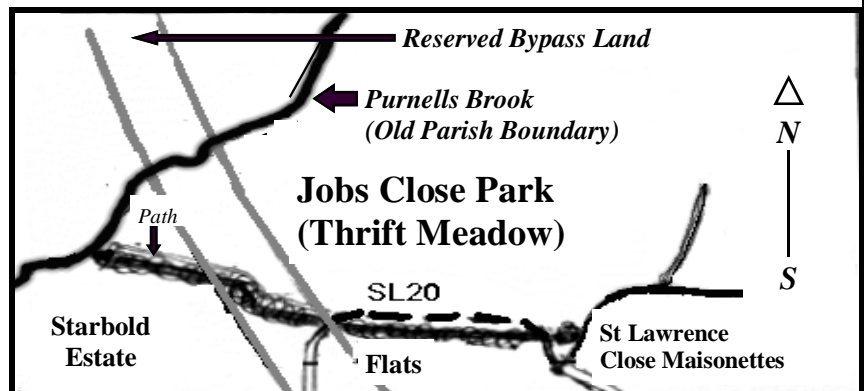
A project that might attract members is the "Trees of Time and Place" campaign to grow your own personal tree for the millennium. Just collect a few seeds from your own special tree - a childhood tree, a local landmark, an ancient tree - and grow them on ready to be planted back into their original landscape in AD2000. Phone for your free information pack to 0345 - 078139.

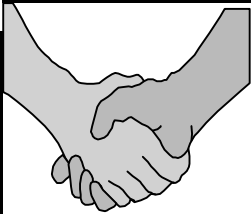
A new initiative in Knowle has been undertaken by the sub-committee to help C.P.R.E's

experimental Hedge Survey. Nine hedges were surveyed before leaf-fall, and records sent to Dee Tracey, the Warwickshire secretary, for analysis by WARNACT. The survey technique is quite simple, but it certainly helps to go with a more knowledgeable partner! A sketch of my first hedge is reproduced below. We could get together to look at methods and skills and arrange partners or group forays. Many thanks to Pauline and Barbara for their special help. It really is great to know that our ancient and species-rich hedgerows could soon be on computer for instant referral if threatened with grubbing out. The scheme is being set up in every County, so do join in and give me a ring. Records of Knowle hedges will also go into Knowle Society Archives.

Stella Jarman
Knowle 774528

Sketch Location Map





MEETINGS AND SOCIAL SUB COMMITTEE

At the time of this newsletter going to press the Christmas tree is in place, a little earlier than usual so that it can be lit at the same time as Knowle lights are turned on. I hope you will enjoy seeing the Christmas tree a little longer than usual this year. Our thanks must go to Geoff Thompstone for his hard work in ensuring that the tree was in place in good time.

The first meeting of 1998 takes place on **Monday 19th January**. Mrs Shena Mason is coming along to tell us all about the history of **Soho House**, Birmingham, once the home of Matthew Boulton, the industrial pioneer. He lived there from 1766 to 1809. Mrs Mason was very involved with the project to restore this beautiful house, which has such a tremendous history. Do come along to hear her speak as I believe it will whet your appetite for a visit to the house.

The visit to Soho House will take place on **Wednesday 25th March 1998**. The Booking Form is printed below and the itinerary is as follows:

Depart Knowle Village Hall	1.30p.m.
Arrive Soho House	2.30p.m.
Depart Soho House	5.00p.m.
Arrive Knowle Village Hall	6.00p.m.

Our Speaker on **Monday 16th February** will be Chris Adderley. I am sure many of you know Chris and I am sure it will be a full house. Chris kindly agreed to postpone her talk in October so that we could accommodate Les and Moira Kyles. The title of her talk will be **'Trials and Tribulations of a Wardrobe Mistress'**

Monday March 16th sees us welcome another speaker who was unable to visit us last year due to an unforeseen circumstance. Shirley Reading's talk is entitled **'The Warwickshire Avon-from Warwick to Baginton'**

I look forward to seeing as many members as possible at our meetings in 1998, and please, if you have any ideas for speakers or any thoughts as to how our meetings can be improved please let me know.

Sandra Lea

BOOKING FORM FOR SOHO HOUSE EXCURSION 25th MARCH 1998

To: Mr. J. Clarke
57 Langfield Road
Knowle
Solihull
Tel : 01564 - 778401

Please indicate number of tickets required in each category

Adult Rate..... @ £7.00

Concession rate..... @ £6.50

The price includes entrance fee and transport to and from Soho House

I enclose remittance for £

Your Name.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

Telephone No.....

Please return promptly to avoid disappointment.
Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope