

# The Knowle Society



Volume 48 Number 1

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[www.knowledgesociety.org.uk](http://www.knowledgesociety.org.uk)

## Peter Ellis—Our second President

I am delighted to be able to inform those of you who were unable to attend the AGM that, having been proposed and seconded, and with the unanimous support of the Trustee Directors, Peter Ellis was voted in as only our second President. Peter, as many of you will know, has been associated with the Society for many years and has held the posts of planning chairman and chairman of the Society. He has lately been responsible for the Society archive of AGMs, newsletters, accounts etc. and has volunteered to continue in that for the foreseeable future. I cannot think of a better person to represent the Society. The post will be for an initial period of five years and, apart from attending the AGM, will carry no active responsibilities as such. *[Photo p9.]*

This is the end of the first year of my chairmanship and it has been an interesting and generally very stimulating year. First and foremost I want to thank very much my fellow trustee directors and the many other members of the Society, newsletter deliverers and others who have during this year given of their time and talents so freely. Please take it from me that The

Knowle Society is fortunate indeed in the diversity of those talents and in the willingness of so many people to give of their time.

This past year has been a very difficult one in many ways for many people. The credit crunch has continued to bite hard but one of our many strengths as a Society is very high membership, over 3000, meaning that we can keep our subscriptions at what can only be described as a very low level. Our low subscription, however, can cause problems in itself. Firstly, our devoted newsletter deliverers have the job of collecting the sums of £3 or £5 as the case may be at about this time of year. If members are out on the first, second, or even in some cases third or later visit, then if it is dark, cold and rainy, it is very hard to expect a collector to continue to chase a subscription. That is why the trustee directors are urging all members to sign a Standing Order form for that purpose – please do so if you have not already. The previous newsletter contained a tear-off page for that purpose, there is a downloadable page on the Knowle Society website, and forms for the purpose can be obtained from Bryan Smart.

Secondly, you will have read in the last newsletter about the demise of the Civic Trust. Vigorous attempts are being made by some of those involved in the Trust to form a new organisation with similar aims but entirely independent. Our Society has always thought it important to have an association with a national organisation representing the interests of those concerned for the built environment. We have signalled our interest in the new organisation, but in an email I sent recently to the organisers, I made it clear that we would not pay the suggested subscription of between £1 and £3 per member. At worst, that would mean a fee of something approaching £9500 per year. I strongly suggested a stepped fee for larger societies like ours. I also suggested that the new organisation should look for premises outside London, thus saving greatly on outgoings. That aspect after all was what finally sunk the old Civic Trust. I am awaiting an answer to that email but rest assured that your trustee directors will not contemplate any commitment of the sort suggested. If we have to face the future without London backing,

*(Continued on page 2)*

(Continued from page 1)

then so be it. However we are strongly committed to the regional organisation, the West Midland Amenity Societies Association and will be involved in the re-organisation of that Association.

summer or early autumn the whole process will start again and as the Knowle Society is now leading that process, please feel free to comment on any aspect of what is now one of the main events of the 'village year'.

A commitment that the Society has taken on anew is lead organiser for the Christmas lights switch-on. With the increasing numbers of people turning up to watch this community event, and particularly the large numbers of children, the police, the Council and indeed the organisers have become concerned as to safety. By the time you read this, the event will be long past and decisions will be made as to how successful the closing of part of Kenilworth Road and suspension of parking bays has been. Next

I hope and trust that the Society will move forward during 2010 and continue to reflect the concerns of its members. The best way for this to be achieved is for you to let us, the trustee directors, know how you feel about matters in general and particular as they affect life in Knowle.

**Peter Ewin—Chairman - Knowle 776381  
chairman@knowlesociety.org.uk**

### MISS BARBARA JENNENS, DECEASED

Members will be interested to learn that the Society has recently received a bequest of £500 under the will of the late Miss Jennens. As she had not been a member of the Society for some time we thought it would be useful to learn a little about her. Our Local History Centre has done some excellent research and this is what they have unearthed. The Jennens family lived in a property where the West Bromwich Building Society now stands on the corner of Station Road and the Warwick Road. The ground floor was a ladies dress shop run by Miss Jennens' mother, Florence, and called 'Madame Florence'. When the mother died the shop became a hairdresser, Barbara Neville, but Miss Jennens continued to live in the flat above.

She herself was a nursing sister working in private houses and looking after new mothers and their babies. She was well liked and those who remember her speak of her extreme kindness. Miss Jennens left Knowle in 1988 and moved to the South Coast to live near her widowed sister. So far as we are aware her direct contact with Knowle and the Society ended then. It is encouraging to think that her memories of the area were so fond that, even after the passage of time, she wished to remember the Society in this way and we are very grateful. The funds will be used towards the development and refurbishing of the Local History Centre in the Library.

### Peter Johnson, Hon. Treasurer

*All meetings and walks are open to everyone.*

**Monday 18th January**  
8.00pm at the Village Hall

**Security and the Environment. Safety in the Home.**  
Trish Willetts, SMBC. Solihull Police Service.

**Monday 15th February**  
8.00pm at the Village Hall

**The Fascinating Life of the Barn Owl**  
G Robson

**Monday 22nd February**  
10.30am at the Village Hall

**Greswolde/Griswolde, the story of a Warwickshire family**  
David Patterson. Tea & coffee available from 10am.

**Monday 15th March**  
8.00pm at the Village Hall

**Johnsons Coaches—John Johnson**  
The story of a local coach company since 1909

**Sunday 28th March**  
2.00pm at the Guild House

**The Marinas (Canal) Walk**  
About 5 miles, visiting all the possible marina sites

**Monday 19th April**  
8.00pm at the Village Hall

**Confessions of a Pantomime Dame—Richard Westcott**  
A look behind the scenes - the trials, tribulations and frocks of life

**Monday 26th April**  
10.30am at the Village Hall

**The Restoration of Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens**  
A pre-visit talk open to all. Tea & coffee available from 10am.

**Wednesday 28th April**  
7.00pm at the Guild House

**Barston Walk**  
3 miles, out by paths and roads, back via canal

### **MARINAS**

I only wish I knew now what the decisions will be on the planning applications for the two marinas/moorings. The latest information that we have as I write this in early December is that the Council hopes to make a decision on both at a special meeting of the Council Planning Committee in late December. If this has taken place you will already know the decisions. If either has been given permission, there may be conditions that have to be met before any works can take place. These may relate to slight modifications to the plans, or to what is known as a Section 106 agreement. This is an arrangement between a developer and the Council in which the developer agrees to carry out or pay for some works which will mitigate the effect of the development. You will remember permission has been given for development of Hall Farm on the Kenilworth Road. As an example, the Section 106 agreement in this case included paying for improvements to the pavement between Knowle and Hall Farm.

Of course if either application has been turned down this can be appealed so the process could drag on for even longer. Even if the appeal is turned down, this may not be the end of the story, as there is nothing to prevent another application being submitted. We shall of course continue to monitor the situation.

### **THE BREAD COLLECTION**

One concrete piece of information about planning applications which you may have heard by now is that the application for a two storey extension to the Bread Collection has been withdrawn. We are very happy to have heard this, as we felt that it would have adversely affected both the pattern of building on the High Street and the glimpse of the Church through the gap at the side of the existing building.

### **SAINSBURY**

The other significant application in the area is that for a Sainsbury store in Dorridge. We normally restrict our consideration of planning applications to those in Knowle itself, but we do consider those outside the area that would affect Knowle, such as the airport runway extension. In the case of the Sainsbury application our main concern is the increase in traffic that we see as inevitable. This would be caused by both shoppers and, perhaps more significantly, the deliveries. Sainsbury says that there would be twelve of their own lorries delivering each day plus some specialist deliveries a few times a week. Their plan is for all these to leave the M42 and travel through Knowle to Dorridge, making at least 24 journeys, presumably through the High Street, each day. We do not think this is reasonable and will be making our views known to the Council. However the momentum does seem to be behind the application, so it may be that the best we can hope for is a reduction in the impact, perhaps through some form of mitigation. Our information is that this application is likely to be heard by the Planning Committee in January.

### **WAITROSE**

You may ask what is happening about the 'rumoured' application for a Waitrose store in Knowle itself. Well, at the moment it is still a rumour, but a pretty solid one. We don't have any details on what is planned, but we are fairly certain that an application will be submitted in January. There will be a public consultation/meeting run by the developers and The Knowle Society will also be considering whether we need to hold a public meeting to gauge local opinions. It will undoubtedly be a tricky application for us to come to a view on. We will have to balance the possible negative impact of the change against the potential positives in the developer's plans.

### **ARDEN SCHOOL**

The application by Arden School to extend the time for which they could use the temporary classrooms to the right of their entrance was withdrawn, but has just been resubmitted, with some slight changes. We are not at all happy about this, as the School has not met the conditions that were applied when they received the original permission. In particular the appearance of the site is a disgrace and has been so since the beginning. We have been pressing for it to be tidied up before any extension is considered and will do so again in relation to this new application. We see no reason why the School (and therefore the Council) should get away with flouting conditions when enforcement is taken against others.

### **SHOP LIGHTING**

One area where we continue to press is that of lighting to business premises on the High Street. We do not see why signs and fascias should be illuminated, especially when the premises are closed. We have had some success in reducing the amount of signage and illumination, but not as much as we would wish. We continue to try and preserve and enhance the village, in line with the founding principles of the Society.

**AIRPORT**

Unusually we have recently received a number of complaints from Knowle Society Members, of increasing noise between 6.30 and 7.30 in the morning: this has been taken up at the September Airport Consultative Committee (ACC) meeting and is being investigated. Preliminary findings do not appear to show any reason why this should be occurring. The Airport Environmental Department has also requested local views on how aircraft impact could be reduced. The Knowle Society, together with other local communities, has put forward a number of suggestions which have been incorporated into a draft noise action plan being prepared. The next Focus group meetings to discuss the proposed flight paths associated with the runway extension are scheduled for January and February 2010, although final approval is not expected until 2012. Finally, SMBC has given Planning approval for the runway extension

**SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

Over the last year a number of meetings have been held with SMBC and Knowle Councillors with regard to the proposed combined pedestrian/cycle paths in Knowle Park and St Lawrence Close. Also included were traffic calming measures in Station Road. This culminated in a public meeting in the village hall on 16<sup>th</sup> July where Knowle residents aired their views without fear or favour. The outcome is that SMBC has agreed to defer the proposed cycle routes but the traffic calming measures in Station Road will be implemented. SMBC is at present developing its walking/cycling strategy for the next five years and has asked for our comments. As this has had such comprehensive coverage recently, we have summarised our views and submitted them to the Council. In general we believe that when considering the way forward, walking and cycling should be considered together, rather than in isolation, which appears to be the present format. It may well be that the best solution is to build on the strengths already in place in the local community.

**LODGE ROAD—LYNNE STEYN REPORTS**

In October 2008 we reported that SMBC was looking at ways to improve road safety on Lodge Road and following another 'near miss' it has become a priority. Lodge Road residents have given their views on the recommendations and SMBC has approved traffic calming measures adjacent to the park, with work due to commence in 2010.

**POLICE REPORT—LORNA GALE REPORTS**

I'm sure many of you will have heard of the 'Policing Pledge' – a set of promises that all police forces have signed up to. On a local level, it means more time 'on the ground' for local teams and closer contact with the community. Local matters have long been a priority for our local [police] team and the pledge has enhanced, rather than changed, their focus. Number plate theft has seen an increase this year. Stolen plates are used for a variety of crimes and the thefts themselves cause inconvenience and expense to car owners. Tamper-proof screws are available and worth fitting to your number plates.

Our local PCSO, Roger Downes, has recently set up a Canal Watch scheme as canal security has been highlighted as a new priority for our police team. This covers Knowle Locks, Copt Heath, Bakers Lane, the Heron's Nest and the Black Boy boat club. High visibility and reassurance patrols along the canal will take place to support this community. Speeding is high on the agenda, with mobile signs and a police presence. Do remember: speed is a significant factor in the majority of accidents, and speeding in built up areas is potentially very dangerous. We can all do our bit by watching our speed on the roads in and around Knowle. A number of local communities in the Solihull area have set up successful Speedwatch systems in conjunction with their local policing teams. If you would be interested in setting up Speedwatch in Knowle, do contact the local team; they'll be pleased to hear from you.

Neighbourhood meetings continue to provide an important opportunity for face-to-face contact between community members and our local team. The most recent one took place in late November, in the early evening, in St John's Close. The next will be on Monday January 4<sup>th</sup>, outside the parish church, from 1pm to 3pm. Do drop in if you have any matters you'd like to raise. And do keep an eye on the village noticeboard for details of future meetings. The Neighbourhood team extends its thanks to the community for passing on information. Such information is a vital tool which supports their efforts to keep our neighbourhoods safe.

**APPEAL FOR VOLUNTEERS**

The Community Services Committee needs two new members in order to bring it up to strength. We meet monthly and deal with issues of services to Knowle from SMBC, the Airport, Transport and Police. If anyone would like to come to one of our meetings, to 'sample' how we operate, please ring me.

**John Rowley - Knowle 778289**

In the October Newsletter I referred to the sad condition of the Horse Chestnut trees on Stripes Hill. The situation with Horse Chestnut trees still remains unclear as there are essentially two main diseases which are affecting the trees. One is known as bloody canker and this attacks the trunks which start to weep causing the trunk to split and ooze or 'bleed' sap. Canker seems to be spreading very quickly. Nearly 50% of Horse Chestnut trees are thought to be affected by this disease. The Forestry Commission study found that a new bacteria is responsible. At the present time this is considered the most serious problem and many trees have already been felled. In particular two mature trees at the junction of Longdon Road and Tilehouse Green Lane have been removed. As one of the trees lost about one third of its canopy and was unsafe Solihull Council decided to take it down. As the other tree was infected in a similar manner this was also removed.

The second problem is caused by moths which originated from Asia. These moths lay hundreds of eggs and when the caterpillars hatch they drill into the leaves causing them to turn brown and fall as early as August. The trees on Stripes Hill have been affected by this less serious disease which prevents the trees from absorbing sunlight and this in turn weakens the tree. The Forestry Commission Research Establishment is working hard to combat these problems but it is too early to be sure about the outcome.

There is a third problem with a fungal infection which causes the leaves to fall early this can be identified easily by a yellow border around brown patches.

The moths and the fungal infection may gradually weaken the trees and there is a possibility they may eventually die. Even if the trees come into leaf next spring they may suffer similar problems later in the year but some trees do seem to be fighting back so they may have a genetic resistance.

The moths and the fungal infection are less serious than the canker which generally requires that the trees be felled.

**Ian Simmonds - Knowle 778692**

I hope those of you who were motivated to work off some of the Christmas turkey enjoyed the traditional Boxing Day Walk. It's in the future as I write this, but in the past as you read it, so I can only hope that the weather was fine and the arrangements worked well. We usually have around a hundred people of all ages on this walk and it makes a good breath of fresh air, often accompanied by somewhat muddy boots to be cleaned later.

We have a selection of outings planned for you for 2010 (doesn't it just seem like yesterday that we celebrated the Millennium?). The list is on the Programme Card which is being delivered with this Newsletter, but I thought I'd mention the first few in a little more detail. As I have mentioned in my Planning report, the Council should have made a decision on the planning applications for the marinas in December, so the first walk will give us the opportunity to look again at the sites where they will or will not be built. This walk is on the afternoon of Sunday 28 March. We vary the days and times of the walks in the hope that at least some of them will suit many people. If you'd really like to do one of our walks, but the arrangements do not suit, let me know and we'll see what can be done for next year.

The second walk will head towards our neighbours to the east, Barston, so will be largely on footpaths across the fields, which I hope will be drier than they are at present. This is a Wednesday evening walk and quite short, as sunset is still fairly early in April.

The Council has just issued the first draft of a policy on encouraging walking and cycling. We have reviewed this and see some very good aspirations. We have commented on some of the points in this, mainly to point out the differences (and advantages) of Knowle as opposed to much of the rest of the Borough. As with most Council initiatives it will be a while before we see concrete actions, but we'll continue to be involved in the process.

**Leighton Jones – Knowle 773894**

**MONEY MATTERS**

I am pleased to report that I was able to present to the recent AGM a very satisfactory set of Accounts for the Society for the year to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009. As required they had previously been Independently Examined (this year for the first time by West & Co, Chartered Accountants, of Knowle) and also approved by the Trustee Directors. A subset is printed below and the full accounts are on the Society's website. You will recall that we are both a registered charity and a limited company and so the Accounts have to be laid out in a prescribed manner. Unfortunately, this means that the full accounts are even longer this time. However I hope you will find them of interest. If you have any queries, then please feel free to contact me.

There was a useful increase in our Income with Donations, Subscriptions and proceeds from the sale of DVDs by the Local History Centre having all gone up. Expenditure was held and included the costs of the Lighting of the Christmas Tree (£498) and of the Festival in the Park. (£559). It is good that the Society is so heavily involved in these two major events in the Knowle social calendar.

Overall we generated a surplus of £3,282 increasing our Reserves to £20,888. Whilst this figure continues to be higher than we consider necessary in our circumstances it should be borne in mind that we have provisionally committed £5,000 towards the cost of the Knowle Green Community Project and, as explained at the AGM, we are also to provide new fixtures and fittings for the Local History Centre. By this time next year it is likely that they will stand at a figure much more in line with our Reserves Policy.

The members at the AGM agreed that in future years we would provide at the meeting only a summarised form of the Accounts. Not only would this save a considerable amount of paper and ink, it would also provide a set of figures which, whilst being comprehensive, would be easier to follow. The Accounts will still have to be produced in their full 15 page format and a copy will be available to any member who would like one and on the website.

My thanks to all who have helped in the management of our finances during the last twelve months including my fellow Trustee Directors, the Newsletter Distributors and the Accountants.

**Peter Johnson**  
**Hon. Treasurer**

**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities**  
**for the Year Ended 30 September 2009**

	30.9.09	30.9.08
	£	£
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>		
<b>Voluntary income</b>		
Donations	607	5
Subscriptions	7,687	7,043
Competition prize from SUSTAiN	-	200
Taxation refund	1,375	1,017
	<u>9,669</u>	<u>8,265</u>
<b>Activities for generating funds</b>		
Walks & visit	222	59
Social events	79	605
Local history centre	-	15
Guides	416	937
DVDs	665	29
	<u>1,382</u>	<u>1,645</u>
<b>Investment income</b>		
Bank interest	625	545
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<u>11,676</u>	<u>10,455</u>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>		
<b>Costs of generating voluntary income</b>		
Meeting expenses	298	558
Social events & visits	317	633
Newsletter	1,989	1,656
Advertising	263	327
Guides & DVDs	398	285
Gifts & hospitality	147	138
	<u>3,412</u>	<u>3,597</u>
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
Local history centre	693	796
Christmas expenses	498	498
Capital expenditure	899	1,605
Festival in the Park	559	-
Other charitable activities	1,496	890
	<u>4,145</u>	<u>3,789</u>
<b>Governance costs</b>		
Insurance	230	230
Guild House-Trustees' Meetings	180	220
Post, stationery & sundries	427	214
	<u>837</u>	<u>664</u>
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<u>8,394</u>	<u>8,050</u>
<b>Net income</b>	<u>3,282</u>	<u>2,405</u>

Page 6 Above: Detailed Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA)

Page 7 Top right: Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA)

Page 7 Bottom right: Balance Sheet

**THE KNOWLE SOCIETY**  
**Statement of Financial Activities**  
**for the Year Ended 30 September 2009**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	30-Sep-09 Total Funds	30-Sep-08 Total Funds
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>				
<b>Incoming resources from generated funds</b>				
Voluntary income	9,669	-	9,669	8,265
Activities for generating funds	1,382	-	1,382	1,645
Investment income	596	29	625	545
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>11,647</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>11,676</b>	<b>10,455</b>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>				
<b>Costs of generating funds</b>				
Costs of generating voluntary income	3,412	-	3,412	3,597
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
Charitable activities	3,545	600	4,145	3,789
<b>Governance costs</b>	837	-	837	664
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>7,794</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>8,394</b>	<b>8,050</b>
<b>NET INCOMING/OUTGOING RESOURCES</b>				
	3,853	(571)	3,282	2,405
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>				
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	16,612	994	17,606	15,201
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>20,465</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>20,888</b>	<b>17,606</b>

**THE KNOWLE SOCIETY**  
**Balance Sheet at 30 September 2009**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	30-Sep-09 Total Funds	30-Sep-08 Total Funds
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
Stocks	774	-	774	1,032
Debtors	510	-	510	144
Cash at bank	19,181	423	19,604	17,301
	<b>20,465</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>20,888</b>	<b>18,477</b>
<b>CREDITORS</b>				
Falling due within one year	-	-	-	(871)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>20,465</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>20,888</b>	<b>17,606</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>				
	20,465	423	20,888	17,606
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>20,465</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>20,888</b>	<b>17,606</b>
<b>FUNDS</b>				
Unrestricted			20,465	16,612
Restricted			423	994
			<b>20,888</b>	<b>17,606</b>





*Peter Ellis performing his only formal role as the newly elected President of The Knowle Society!  
L to R Andrew Marston (Secretary), Peter Ewin (Chairman), Peter Ellis (President) & Peter Johnson (Treasurer)*

*Gwen Masters & Betty Ewin succeed in turning the AGM into a congenial social occasion!*



*At the Henry Tonks Exhibition. This attracted a lot of interest including from family members and a Tonks biographer. Knowle Society History Chairman, Janet Eržen studies photographs of Tonks' work as an artist at a visit made by (LtoR) Wendy Richards (descendant), Elaine Zair (descendant) and Sabina ffrench-Blake (biographer). The biographer is keen to hear from anybody related to the Tonks family—contact The Knowle Society History Centre.*

It is that time of year to look back on the events that we organised in 2009 and look forward to the New Year. Almost the last act of 2009 (except the Boxing Day Walk) is the erection and lighting of the tree. The tree was put up on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November and proved to be a bigger task than usual and required reinforcements to be called in by Craig (he supplies the tree every year to the society)

After much effort, heaving and even extra help by two lads from Lyons Butchers (to whom "thank you very much") the tree finally dropped into its rightful place and could be decorated with its lights in time for the lighting ceremony on Monday 30<sup>th</sup>.

2009's events covered a wide range of topics from Bee Keeping, Shakespeare's women, energy saving, to SMBC's new wheelie bins to replace the old black bags.

Attendance at the meetings rose during the year to around 80. We managed to squeeze in 73 people at the social event where we were entertained by the Black Country duo *Dandy* which was extremely amusing and everyone enjoyed an excellent fish and chip supper to accompany the event.

For 2010 we have again tried to cover a wide range of interest areas along with a bit of fun in the shape of Richard Westcott's 'Confessions of a Pantomime Dame'. Richard comes highly recommended by people who have seen him over the last twelve months and they say that we will be in for a treat and it will be an hilarious evening.

Serious topics we are covering consist of safety and security in your home (January meeting) along with the charity work done by EducAid Africa.

The meetings are supported with a series of local walks around the village ably organised and led by Leighton Jones, the full schedule of these walks is listed in the 2010 Programme Card accompanying this newsletter.

I would like to thank the committee members for their time and hard work in planning the schedules as well as setting up the hall for the meetings (plus tidying up afterwards). The committee comprised Sue Trucchi, Gwen Masters and Martin Warr. It only remains for me to wish you a very happy New Year and hope to see you at our meetings in 2010.



*Innocent looking tree.  
In the end it needed ten people to erect !*



**Charles Robinson - Knowle 775770**

PRESIDENT: Peter Ellis

COMMITTEES

Planning

Leighton Jones \*

John Hulse

Norman Stanley

Peter Ellis

PeterMorton

Phil Vince

Community Services

John Rowley \*

Lorna Gale

Lynne Steyn

Lilla Baker +

Gary Masters \*

Natural Environment

Ian Simmonds \*

Local History Centre [# Steward only]

Janet Erzen \*

Coral Harris #

Bryan Smart \*

Elizabeth Stanley #

Pam Watson

Sue Owen

Bill Bohanna \*

Kathy Jephcott +

Colin Smith #

Susan Trucchi

Ann Wiles

Meetings, Social & Walks

Charles Robinson \*

Gwen Masters

Gill Fageant

Martin Warr

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Airport Consultative Committee &

BIA Environment Monitoring Working Group John Rowley \*

Centro Transport User Forum Gary Masters \*

Conservation Area Advisory Committee Phil Vince

Knowle Village Hall Association Council Susan Trucchi

Solihull Local Involvement Network (LINK) Lilla Baker

West Midlands Amenity Societies Association Leighton Jones \*

West Midlands Police Rural Assembly Lorna Gale

\* Trustee Director Committee chairman + Committee secretary

2009 has been a year both of sadness and gladness for the history team. *Sadness* at the sudden loss of our dear friend and colleague, Derek Mellor who worked so hard for Knowle Society and in particular for the Local History Centre. We still miss him and always will. As I am sure you will remember from previous newsletters, Derek's family very kindly asked that any donations in his memory should be given to The Knowle Society for use by the History Centre. With this in mind one of the three new display/storage cabinets we are having for the centre, will be purchased with these monies. The cabinet will be a little different from the other two in that it will have a small permanent metal plate in the framework with a suitable message inscribed to Derek's memory.

*Gladness* at the way the team all pulled together after Derek left us. We floundered for a while because he was such a valuable member of our team, but we all eventually found our own individual niches and comfort zones and have gone from strength to strength, especially with our exhibitions. We are particularly proud of the last two exhibitions 'Henry Tonks' and 'The Knowle Lodge Estate' and one has only to look at the visitor's book in the Centre to see how well received these were. Well done and thank you to my team and let's continue in this coming new year!

The present exhibition 'The Revels Drama Group – Entertaining for 60 years' has been mainly prepared by the Revels and is also an excellent and well presented exhibition. Please do try and find time over the Christmas period to see it. The exhibition will run until approximately mid-January when it will be replaced by;

'Dorothy Ward— one of the greatest Principal Boys in the history of The Pantomime'. Dorothy also starred in many variety shows, musical comedies and operettas. Amongst her legion of admirers were such celebrities as Lloyd George, the Duke of Westminster and Winston Churchill. The Crazy Gang paid tribute to "the lovely Dorothy Ward" in their celebrated number *Principal Boys*. This is another exhibition in our series of famous people who have lived in or been associated with the locality. Dorothy's father Edwin ran *The White Swan* in the 1890s (where NatWest Bank now stands) and Dorothy went to a local school in Knowle village.

Further exhibitions will be advertised later; the current schedule and our talks and visits for 2010 are all listed in the 2010 Programme Card.

We look forward to seeing you in our History Centre, upstairs in Knowle Library, where you can not only view our exhibitions, but can also look into our archives for answers to your queries on most aspects of Knowle local history, including help with local family history research. There are stewards on duty every Saturday morning at the extended times of 10am – 12am (was 10.30) to help with your queries and if Saturday morning is not convenient other times can be arranged by telephoning or emailing me (details below and at the side).

Finally, from all of The Knowle Society Local History Team may we wish you a happy & healthy New Year.

**Janet Eržen - Knowle 779040**



#### **GOOD NEWS FOR 2010**

The project for the clearance and redesign of the area where the disused toilet block and bus stop is situated is to go to a Planning Application. I have reported previously on the difficulties being encountered, and am pleased to say that these have now all been overcome. In addition appropriate bodies for funding have been identified, and once planning permission is obtained these will be processed. Please do not worry about the bus stop; it will not be affected in the early part of the year. We have to hope that we will still have a bus service that we all will be able to utilise. If you have any questions please contact me on the telephone number below.

**Gary Masters - Knowle 779955**

**Knowle Society Representative on Knowle Green Community Project**

Mr R & Mrs A Bowser  
Mrs J Carpenter  
Mr L & Mrs P Clews  
Mr & Mrs E & K Dixon  
Mrs Irene Downes  
Mr & Mrs C R Hancock  
Mrs G Hoy

Mrs Vicki Simkin  
Mr & Mrs Takwoingi  
Mrs W Temple  
Mr S & Mrs J Verrall  
Simon & Jackie Watts  
Mr H & Mrs L Wilson

At the end of my first eight hectic months on a steep learning curve as your new Membership Secretary it is pleasing to report an increase in membership of 87 new members over the year since October 2008. At the time of writing we deliver to 1816 households with a total of 3050 individual members.

This time of year is a very busy one with 66 of the 78 rounds having been received and processed so far, amounting to about 1500 subscription records individually updated together with administrative amendments to take account of members' changing circumstances.

The response to the request for members to opt into the Bank Standing Order method of payment of subscriptions was very disappointing with only just over 80 members (4.4%) submitting forms for processing. The feedback so far suggests members are worried about revealing their personal details. I can understand and empathise with the fact that you may have a concern about the security of your data but I hope that you will be reassured by the fact that no particular notice is taken of the information apart from checking that all the required details are there, that they are legible and are in the correct format before sending on to your bank. Your data is neither stored in the database nor is it copied. I would therefore ask you reconsider opting in to this method of payment. If you bank online, then just send me an e-mail requesting your reference number and I will e-mail it to you by return.

My thanks go to all the distributors both regulars and reserves who do a sterling job; we would be nothing without them.

**Bryan Smart - Knowle 779902**

**KEN HORNE**

We record with sadness the death in November of Ken Horne (91) a former Treasurer of the Society for many years in the early days of the Society.

**ENCLOSED WITH THIS ISSUE**

Your distributor should deliver a green Programme Card for 2010 with this newsletter—it can be folded into three. If it is missing, please contact Anne Smith (see panel opposite).

**STANDING ORDER FORM**

We printed a tear-off Standing Order form in the last issue, if you no longer have that, please contact Bryan Smart (see panel opposite) or download a copy.

**ONLINE VIEWING OF THIS ISSUE**

As always, a colour view of this newsletter may be seen on the website; follow the Membership and then Newsletters links. The password on the right will gain access for members, however no password is needed after three months.

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**A warm welcome to 21 new members this quarter including those listed here.**

*The Knowle Society has over 3000 members; can you encourage your friends and neighbours to join too? This may be done either by contacting the Membership Secretary or through an application form on: [www.knowledesociety.org.uk](http://www.knowledesociety.org.uk)*

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