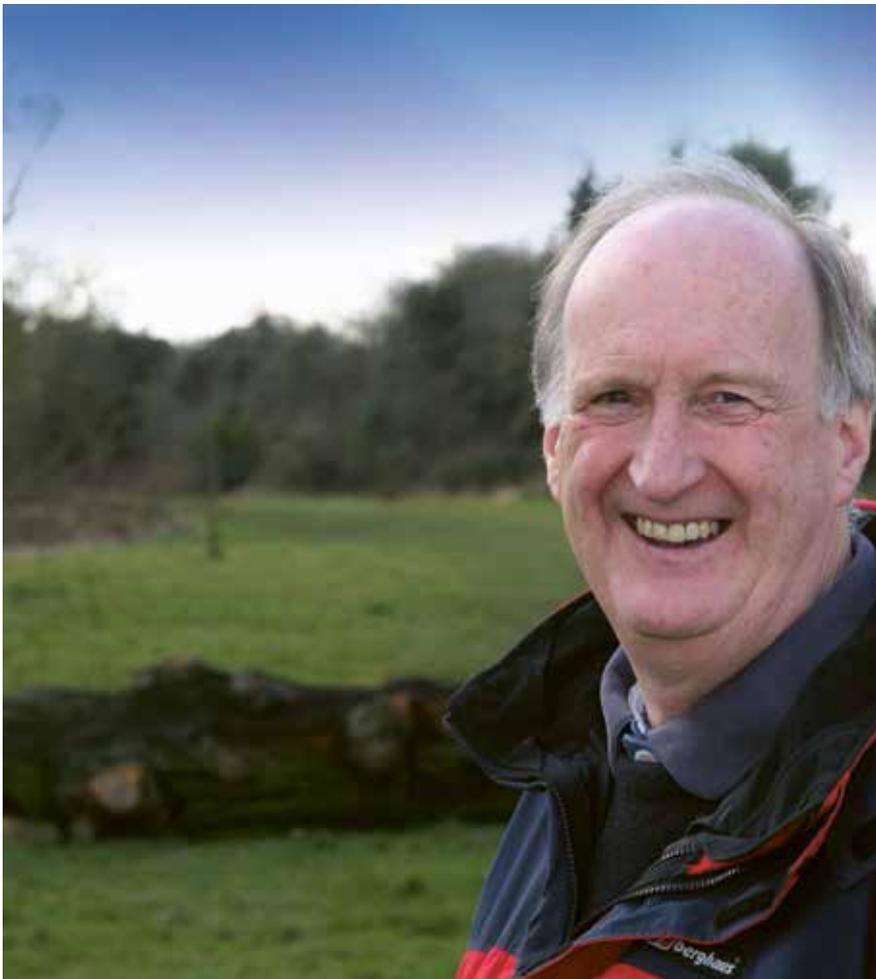




NEWSLETTER

Volume 51 Issue 2

APRIL 2013



Leighton Jones surveys the bypass route at Langfield Road

It is now almost certain that the idea of a bypass will be abandoned and the land that has been reserved, as outlined in the last two Newsletters, will become available for other uses.

In the present atmosphere of building houses in any available patch of land we are very concerned that much of it will disappear under concrete. We are therefore extremely busy gathering the evidence that we hope will prove that several parts of it should be preserved as green space.

Whilst Knowle has the clear advantage of being next to the Green Belt, oddly enough it does not have its fair share of open public space, so it is important to preserve what we do have.

We are therefore carrying out an exercise to demonstrate that some parts of the route, which are in the ownership of builders etc, should be registered as a 'Town & Village Green'. In order to do this we need to be able to show that local people have used each of the pieces of land freely over 20 years or more.

(continued on page 3)

Have Your Say on Bypass Route

Events Diary

Monday April 15th

8.00pm in the Village Hall

Tuesday April 23rd

2.30pm at Knowle Church

Wednesday May 22nd

7.00pm Meet at Bentley Heath

Monday June 17th

8.00pm in the Village Hall

Wednesday June 19th

7.00pm Meet at Copt Heath Wharf

Monday June 24th

10.00am at the Village Hall

Monday July 15th

8.00pm in the Village Hall

Murder and Manslaughter

Richard Churchley

Conducted Tour of Knowle Church:

No charge but donations for church upkeep welcome

Brueton Park & River Blythe Walk: 4.5 miles

Starting at the recreation ground car park on Widney Road, 4.5 miles

The History of the Knights Templar

Mrs Dixie Atkins

Canal and Fields Walk via Henwood Mill & Ravenshaw

Starting by canal at Old Barston Lane, 3 miles

Another Funny Thing Happened at the Register Office

John Yates

Trouble in Store

Carol Regan

Looking Good, Making Progress

As this is the post-AGM edition of the Newsletter, I thought I'd bring you up to date with the changes that took place then.

The first one should be pretty obvious – the change in the appearance of the Newsletter including our new logo. We have been aware for some time that we needed to refresh the look of this, our main way of communicating with you all and the opportunity to do so came about when David Bower stepped down as editor and Dave Pinwell took over.

Thanks to David for producing it over the last nine years and to Dave for taking up the challenge. We hope you like what he's done with it. Please let us know what you think – should we continue with full colour and what about the content?

Three Trustee Directors have stepped down this time. Ian Simmonds looked after the Natural Environment Committee and has done a good job of improving our green areas, especially that around the Wychwood roundabout. More significantly he launched the project to preserve the former by-pass route as green space. More about this later in this edition.

Anne Smith has been one of those working behind the scenes, being responsible for the distribution of these newsletters for a number of years. I'm glad to say she has agreed to carry one with this, as evidenced by the fact that you are reading it!

Our Secretary Liz Linker has also stepped down as, due to other commitments, she felt that she could not do justice to the post.

Thanks to all three for the work that they've done for the Society.

It does mean that we are short of Trustee Directors so I would be delighted if YOU would be interested enough to contact me so I can explain what it's all about. There are a number of other opportunities to get involved to a greater or lesser extent and we really do need more people; your Society is getting more and more active in defence of Knowle and we cannot do that without people.

Unfortunately we have lost a significant figure in the Society with the death of Gary Masters in February, he will be sorely missed by friends and family. I paid tribute to him at the AGM; a copy of what I said can be read on Page 6. We had decided to make Gary an Honorary Member of the Society some time before he died and I presented a certificate marking that honour to Gwen, his wife, at the AGM.

On a more cheerful note I was also able to mark a magnificent 25 years of service by Dr Peter Morton in presenting him with his Life Membership certificate. I cannot imagine anyone in the future coming near to devoting such a long period of time to the Society.

I'm sure that if you'd asked them, Gary and Peter would have said that they had thoroughly enjoyed being involved in the work of the Society and that they found it very worthwhile. Being involved doesn't have to be time-consuming, there is such a range of activities that there's something for everyone to do and help keep Knowle as such a great place to live.

chairman@knowlesociety.org.uk
Knowle 773894

A Day Out from Knowle

This new series looks at worthwhile day trips from Knowle to places with a heritage interest further afield. We start with Gloucester Docks.

These were important to the Midlands, in the days when goods arrived in Gloucester by ship and transferred to canal barges bound for destinations like the Cadbury factory wharves or Gas Street Basin.

The regenerated Docks are now a fascinating way to fill a day, taking a cruise on the Sharpness Canal, visiting the Antiques Centre and, especially, the splendid Waterways Museum. Find out more at www.gloucesterdocks.me.uk.

What is more, it is just a short stroll from the Docks to the delightful Gloucester Cathedral, with its splendid cloisters, more familiar to us since the Harry Potter films featured them so prominently.



Recording the Use of the Bypass Land Over the Years

(continued from page 1)

We have contacted those who live near the land and asked for their memories of using the land. We have also recruited local people (members and non-members) to help those who have used each of the pieces of land to record their uses.

It is important that we gather as much information as possible to ensure our case is made, as this is the only chance that we'll have to do so. We need the help of anyone who has used this land or has recollections of others doing so, and can assist with our questionnaire, a copy of which can be found on the Society website.

If you've not been contacted and can help, please let us know, contact details below.

The areas we are particularly interested in are: -

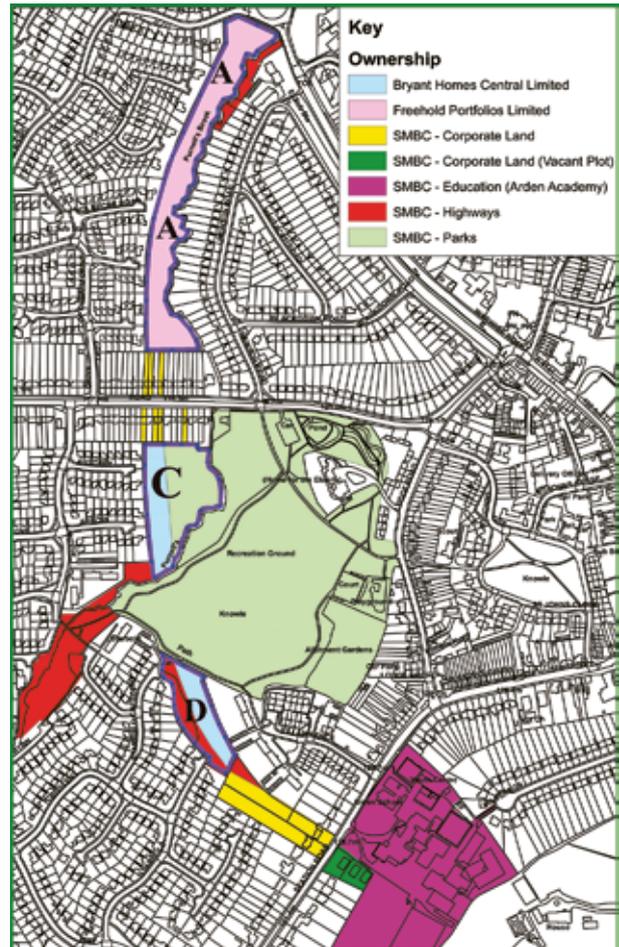
AREA 'A' - From the Warwick Rd at the Wychwood roundabout running between Newton Rd and Langfield Rd/Copt Heath Drive as far as the rear of the houses on Longdon Rd.

AREA 'C' - Part of the Nature Reserve in Job's Close Park adjoining Austrey Close and Arrow Close.

AREA 'D' - Part of the land south of the park itself and running up to Starbold Crescent.

There were photographs of these areas in previous issues of the Newsletter, which can be found at <http://www.knowlesociety.org.uk/newsletters>.

As well as these areas, we are talking to the Council about our preference for the other areas that adjoin the park, and which are owned by the Council, to be formally incorporated into the park.



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We recognise that there are several houses on the route and we have no interest in disturbing them. We are also not looking to do anything about the rest of the route that runs through the grounds of Arden Academy and on down to below Stripes Hill.

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Natural Environment

No Brummies Needed Here?

There was an interesting, possibly tongue in cheek, observation found in the Local History Centre Comments Book regarding our latest exhibition 'John Bowen, his life and his works', which read:

'Enough Knowle people worthy of an exhibition, Brummies not needed or wanted in Knowle'

But, of course, John Bowen was no Brummie, he was very much a Shropshire lad. More significantly for us, John Bowen & Sons moved their business to Station Road, Knowle when they bought Corbetts in 1924 and were here until 1970. That was 46 years of employing many local people!

Indeed, two of John Bowen's former employees still live locally, in Bentley Heath and Dorridge.

In addition one of John Bowen's descendants who helped run the business in Knowle, married locally and lived locally.

We can, therefore, stand confidently by our decision to put on this exhibition, which has been very well received by many people, as indeed Anthony Collins talk on John Bowen was on 25 February.

There is always room to suggest more Knowle people worthy of an exhibition, suggest some and we will consider your ideas.

Meanwhile, of course, a significant number of people in this village are ex Brummies, yours truly included!

Janet Erzen, Local History

Whatever Happened to The White Swan?



The White Swan on the High Street before its demolition

One of the many questions often asked of the Local History team is “Whatever happened to the timbers etc from the White Swan after it was demolished in 1937.”

None of us really knew and what’s more none of the locals (born in Knowle) that we asked knew for sure, some said they had been used at Baddesley Clinton, some were sure they had been sent to America, others, rightly said they had been stored “somewhere” to be re-built at a later date, but where had they been stored?

However, looking through one of our many scrap books recently I stumbled across the answer in the form of cuttings from The Solihull News and The Birmingham Post.

In 1937 Ansells Brewery owners of both The White Swan and the adjacent Red Lion decided they did not want two pubs so close together so sold the White Swan as de-licenced property to whom, no one knows. This beautiful 550+years old building with so much history, was demolished and carted off by Fletcher’s haulage firm to await re-building with no known record of where the fabric of it had been stored.

The war intervened and it was forgotten about. However, the last landlord Fred Hotchkiss had a daughter Myffy Parsons who had very fond memories of the White Swan, (her birthplace), and she became determined to find out what had happened to it. She made various enquiries over the years with no success.

Her only link with childhood memories she associates with the Swan is a 12” x 6” antique snuff box reputed to have hung outside a Nottingham coach house in the days of Dick Turpin. Her father kept the liberally filled snuff box on the bar of the Swan.

In the late 1960s Mrs Parsons was talking to former Councillor Owen Grove who said that the rubble of the Swan lay in a field behind Haycocks farm in Bakers Lane.

Speaking with Mr Harold Haycock he confirmed that the Swan was laid out behind his father’s farm. All the pieces were numbered and altogether

it was about 4ft high and 60 – 80yards long.

He said “I saw it last just before I joined the army in 1940 and the bricks then were sinking into the ground”. Mrs Parsons contacted the local newspaper who had been helping with the search and armed with a map and accompanied by the Solihull News team set off in the snow for Haycocks Farm.

No one was in so they went next door but enquiries about a pile of timber and rubble were met with a puzzled shake of the head.

Despite the biting cold every likely looking mound was investigated in vain until eventually traipsing back over the fields, Mrs Parsons admitted defeat saying “I think over the years various people have helped themselves, but this is the nearest I’ve ever come to solving the mystery. If there is anything left it’s probably all rotted away by now.”

However a few more enquiries led to a return visit to Haycocks Farm where they again spoke to the lady from next door. During the conversation it dawned upon them that on their earlier visit they had been within inches of the Swan - in the form of this lady’s house.

Apparently some years previously the house had been renovated and developed with the aid of the still stout remains of the “Swan” which had indeed been in a field behind Haycock’s farm, which was owned at that time by the lady’s father-in-law!

[The White Swan, a 15th century inn, stood on the High Street where the National Westminster Bank is today until its demolition in 1939.]

Around the Shops

The empty shop below Tesco, once Denise of Knowle, is now occupied by yet another estate agent.

Vito's restaurant in the precinct has changed hands and is now "Luna Rosa", serving both Italian and Spanish food with occasional inhouse entertainment.

The little shop in Kenilworth Road just above what used to be Knowle Builders is now, wait for it, a.....
"Tattoo Parlour"

Out of interest a local resident told me that in the last 75 years this shop has been, in her memory; a sweet shop, a recording studio, radio repairs, camera shop, antique shop, ladies boutique, sweet shop again, taxi firm, mobile phones and now a tattoo parlour. A "varied life."

Out of further interest, the same resident told me a little story about the shop when it sold sweets after the war.

Opposite the shop was an off licence/general store which also sold sweets and was run by Miss Minnie Scragg. The local farm lads used to come into the village on their night off to visit the cinema in Station Road. After the film they would all go to Miss Scragg's shop to buy bottles of pop and sweets and, as lads do, hang around for a while. One day the lady in the shop opposite complained that they made too much noise and were waking her children up - sweet shop rivalry?

A couple of nights after the complaint Miss Scragg went outside to see if there were any empty bottles lying around and almost jumped out of her skin when



The new Luna Rosa restaurant in the heart of Knowle

a police constable popped up from behind a bush in the garden (surveillance!). Miss Scragg was not one to cross lightly, and pandemonium broke out with the police constable coming off the worse.

The upshot of the story was that the cinema owner heard of the problem and solved it by deciding to have a break halfway through the film in order for the farm lads to leg it up to Miss Scragg's, get their bottles of pop and sweets and leg it back again. How times change!

If you have any true, funny stories from the past and would like to share them, please contact me.

Janet Eržen
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Local History

Walks Season Starts with Snowy Stroll

The first walk of the 2013 season went ahead on Sunday 24th March despite atrocious conditions and a very low turnout, but the route was shortened and limited to the canal bank to ensure safety.

The deluge of snow that followed the Spring Equinox was still having its final flutter as the dogged few set off for a bracing amble along the Grand Union, followed by warming refreshments back at the Heron's Nest.

We hope that the going will be firmer for the next walk, at 7.00pm on Wednesday 22nd May, for the riverside stroll down the Blythe. Meet at Bentley Heath Recreation Ground.



Leighton Jones and Susan Trucci at the Black Boy canal bridge

A Tribute to Gary Masters

Transcript of A Presentation at the AGM by Leighton Jones

This is a sad item to deal with. Most of you will know that Gary Masters has died after a very long period of increasing ill health which he bore with remarkable fortitude. In recent months his health had deteriorated rapidly and he was undergoing regular dialysis, on top of his other health problems. In the end it seems that his body was just not able to keep fighting on.

Gary had always been a fighter and was always ready to stand out, never being reluctant to say what he really thought and, in the process, making the rest of us test our views of the item in question.

He was always a very good servant of the Society, first getting actively involved in late 1996, having retired early due to ill health. He almost instantly became a member of what was then called the 'Amenities' committee, now renamed as 'Community Services' as well as a member of the Executive Committee.

He soon started his rise through the ranks, becoming Chairman of the 'Amenities' committee in 1998, taking over from Peter Morton. Despite a period of ill health he remained in this post until 2006 when he became Chairman of the Society, a position he held for two years, until his increasing ill health meant that he felt he could not do justice to the post.

Even then he didn't let go, staying as a Trustee Director for another 4 years, getting involved in all sorts of additional activities, such as the Christmas tree

arrangements, participation in the Festival in the Park and other one-off events. He was never one to sit quietly.

In his time with the Society he saw and contributed to many changes. When he started we had 1447 members, now there are well over 3000; the Society's income rising from £3,600 a year to £10,000. Our activities also increased over that period. There were also changes which he very much contributed to. In 2003 he was one of the people who decided that the Society needed to take advantage of a training programme run by the Civic Trust for members who might become future leaders.

I don't know why, but I was one of the three who were sent on the training programme. I hope I've repaid his faith in me, I think that remains to be seen, but I'll always be grateful to him for that.

He was also one of those who realised that the Society needed to change its structure and become, not just a charity, but also a company limited by guarantee to give us more certainty over the financial stability of the Society, a very significant change.

At the meeting of the Trustee Directors in November we decided to award Gary honorary membership of the Society. He was very pleased to be recognised in this way and it is a very great pity that he could not be with us tonight to enjoy the greetings of you all.

To mark our appreciation of everything Gary gave and meant to the Society I would like to present this certificate to Gwen and family with our love and best wishes.

In Memoriam



YOUR SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!

Knowle Society needs your help to look after the village.

We are dealing with a number of important matters all at the same time:

- The by-pass line
- A neighbourhood plan
- Lots more housing
 - Parking
- Monitoring the Waitrose construction
- PLUS all the routine things

WE CANNOT DO THEM ALL WITHOUT MORE HELP

If you could help in any way to ease the load on the existing helpers, there are a range of opportunities to suit everyone's abilities and available time.

CONTACT: - Leighton Jones 773894 or chairman@knowlesociety.org.uk to discuss what you might like to do.

Life Membership for Peter Morton

Transcript of A Presentation at the AGM by Leighton Jones

We must record the remarkable contribution to the Society over such a long period that I doubt that anyone will ever get anywhere near repeating it.

Peter's active involvement in the Society began way back in our silver jubilee year of 1987 when he joined the Amenities committee and was promptly made Chairman of the committee and a member of the Society's Executive Committee. He served in both roles for many years, eventually relinquishing the chair of the committee to Gary Masters in 1998, although staying on the Executive Committee until 2007, a remarkable 20 years.

He soon transferred allegiance to the Planning Committee, serving on that until his recent retirement, by which time he had been actively involved with the Society's activities for an amazing 25 years. We really should have celebrated Peter's Silver Jubilee last year alongside our Golden Jubilee.

As I've only known Peter for a relatively short period I asked a few who would have known him for longer. Peter Ewin's comments were: -

From when I joined the committee, I had the impression of a fine intellect and Peter always was ready to take a point of view which quite often conflicted with the opinions of others but which invariably led to our final committee view being better balanced.

Every committee needs a Peter Morton!

Colin Smith described similar qualities: "An outstanding feature of Peter's work in committee was his sharp mind. Peter did not attempt to dominate discussions but when he spoke, everyone listened because his comments were always perceptive and incisive. His contribution often persuaded the other committee members, but if he was unsuccessful, he accepted the majority opinion and supported the outcome.

"He was generous in his praise of a job well done. This was often done privately. He would take the officer aside and offer his congratulations."

My first real involvement with Peter was when Peter Ewin inveigled me into becoming Chairman of the Planning Committee, despite my knowing nothing about planning.

If it hadn't been for the help of the committee members, especially Peter's vast knowledge of planning and everything related that had happened in Knowle in the previous decades, I'd have really floundered. His passion for the good of Knowle came over very clearly. He might not have been the most talkative member of the committee, but I soon learnt to listen when he did speak.

In recognition of what Peter has done for the Society and Knowle over a magnificent 25 years, I am very pleased to present him with this certificate to record the award of Life Membership of the Society with our thanks.

Life Membership

Communicating by EMAIL

During February we sent out an e-mail to members concerning the meeting to be held later that month to consider SMBC's parking proposals for Knowle.

The use of e-mail addresses in this way was a 'first' for the Society and it appeared to work successfully. We realised however that we currently have addresses for only around one third of our members. There is clearly potential for us to use this method of communication more, especially when time is short or on matters of importance. It would however always be our intention to use it sparingly!

If you did not receive the information on the meeting and would like to be contacted in this way in the future would you please send your e-mail address to membership@knowlesociety.org.uk. It would be helpful if you could include your name and postal address.



Needless to say, members' addresses will not be revealed to anyone outside the Society nor, indeed, to other members.

Peter Johnson
membership@knowlesociety.org.uk

From 2012 Social to 2014 Programme

Your Monthly Monday Evening Programme



Quiz Teams in Action

We finished off 2012 with our annual social event which was a Quiz of general knowledge with a sprinkling of questions of a local Knowle flavour. As usual the event was fully subscribed and everyone enjoyed a fish and chip supper and a round of "Heads or Tails" for prizes of M&S vouchers.

You can see from the picture a good time was had by all. Our social event for 2013 is an evening with the ever popular Black Country Duo "Dandy" who have entertained us previously and give an evening of comedy and songs, the date for your diary is October 21st.

The year finished with a talk by Acorns hospice, this was the first November meeting for a long time as this is usually the month for the AGM which has now moved to February. Joanne Danagher from Acorns presented an excellent overview of the work that Acorns Hospice perform in the community.

At the end of her presentation and questions the audience donated over £100 to the hospice showing the generosity of our residents in Knowle.

Unfortunately we had to cancel our January talk as the weather was so bad that week. It should have been Warwickshire Wildlife by Graham Harrison however we have rescheduled this talk for January 2014, same time, same place just a year later!

Our schedule of talks for this year and the first quarter of 2014 is available on our website <http://www.knowlesociety.org.uk>. We have covered a wide range of topics from the National Memorial Arboretum to "Murder and Manslaughter", a talk on strange and unexplained deaths in Warwickshire and Worcestershire, as well as "Trouble in Store", showing both the amusing and serious side of being a store detective.

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Knowle 775770



Joanne Danagher of Acorns Hospice



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Previous Issues
are available at our website, www.knowlesociety.org.uk

Next issue
Copy deadline: 1st June 2013
Distribution commences: 1st July 2012

A New Hand on the Tiller

John Rowley hands the Community Services Portfolio on to Lilla Baker

Lilla Baker is taking over as Chairman of the Community Services Committee from April 2013. We all thank John Rowley very much for his dedicated hard work over the last 6 years particularly in relation to the Airport. We are pleased he will be continuing as a Trustee and remain a committee member. Here is their combined report:

AIRPORT - Proposed Aircraft Departure Routes



For those of you who braved the weather in January, to attend either of the two consultations held in Knowle Village Hall, you will have seen that the new routes taking off to the South on runway 15 have had the existing 20 degree turn towards Knowle removed.

Therefore, aircraft will pass further away from Knowle, which is to be welcomed. It is proposed that the date for implementation of the new routes is 12th December 2013 which fits in with the construction programme for the Runway extension.

The Knowle Society believes the changes are beneficial to Knowle and have written to the Airport giving the changes our full support.

John Rowley

TRANSPORT

The Rural Partnership Forum is proving to be the best conduit to raise concerns over our bus services. Changes are being discussed by Centro and planning for the foreseeable future no details yet. Bridget Sproston has taken over as our representative and is keeping a watching brief. Any concerns email: traffic&parking@knowlesociety.org

SOLIHULL COUNCIL

Parking and Traffic - an open meeting on Feb 25th was held in the Village Hall and saw Paul Tovey (Chief Planning Engineer, Traffic and Transport) give a presentation on SMBC's Strategy for introducing free ticketing and charges for parking where it is currently free in Solihull which includes Knowle.

The aim is to raise revenue following government cuts to maintain these car parks and to improve congestion. The Society wishes to achieve a balance for all users and minimise pressures on residential roads. Paul, as part of the public consultation, said he was looking at 3 hour free ticketed parking then 50p an hour for the remainder of a stay in the village centre.

He would monitor the situation closely following implementation - most likely late summer. He also stressed alternative means of transport and traffic flow within the overall picture. Questions, comments and suggestions were invited from the 63 attendees and 39 feedback sheets were returned which showed a majority favouring a 3 hour free period.

All the comments and questions have been noted and will be further discussed and looked at. There will be a further opportunity to make comment when formal SMBC notice is given in the press and on parking regulations boards, most likely May 2013.

Lynne Steyn continues to manage the community notice board and will be inviting Kerry Mountjoy (SMBC) to do a walk round in the Spring which will include further checks on A boards which have to be licensed

POLICE

There has been a slight increase in burglaries from garages and outhouses, mainly bikes, and attempted burglaries around the Wychwood area. A few sneak thefts of mobile phones and wallets have also been reported. Police advice is to think security and consider the immobilise register (www.immobilise.com) a free service.

The next Police surgeries are on:

| | | |
|------------|----------------|-------------|
| 25th March | Knowle Library | 1.00-3.00pm |
| 15th April | Knowle Library | 1.00-3.00pm |

Lilla Baker
communityservices@knowlesociety.org.uk
 Knowle 739073

John Rowley/Lilla Baker, Community Services

Recent Developments on the Planning Front

Along with Change on the Committee

I first wish to inform Members that long-serving member of the Committee, Peter Morton, has retired. Consequently, I take the opportunity of thanking Peter for not only his long and valued service but also for being someone firm in his view and the lively discussion this invariably brought to our Meetings. He will be sorely missed on both counts but I wish him well.

Developments concerning current applications lodged with the Council have resulted in:

- the approval (after much discussion) of the Bread Collection's revised rear first floor extension;



- four new houses behind 35A, 37 & 39 Hampton Road;

- a refusal for the locating of large BT boxes on the junction of Kixley Lane with Kenilworth Road;
- the conversion of offices at 21a and 21b Croft House (off Station Road) into four flats, and
- the construction of a block of eight apartments in the Green Belt in lieu of a replacement house at 1359 Warwick Road.

The appeal decision by the Planning Inspectorate to up-hold the Council's refusal (part of the appeal process for non-determination) of Crest Homes' application for housing at Four Ashes Road has resulted in an Appeal to the High Court, thus putting on hold the Applicant's second planning application.

The Hearings into the Deposit Draft of the new Local Plan have now been completed and it will be some time before we hear the Inspector's decision. Part of the overall process is for Neighbourhoods throughout the Borough to produce their own Plan and preliminary discussions have been held with Council officers regarding one for Knowle. I will keep you apprised as this matter continues to be progressed in the future.

Finally, should anyone reading this Report wish to consider joining our Committee, please do let me know. Thank you.

planning@knowlesociety.org.uk
Knowle 774082

Andrew Marston, Planning

What is Neighbourhood Planning?

The concept of a Neighbourhood Plan was introduced as a part of the The Localism Act 2011. This new legislation allows communities to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan for their area. It is intended to give the people of a neighbourhood more of a say in the development of their local area (although that is more about what is developed, rather than what should not be built!)

In principle it can allow a local community much more of a say in and choosing where new homes, shops and offices should be built and what new buildings should look like, and to set these out in the Neighbourhood Plan. After that, the local community can grant planning permission themselves for the new buildings they want to see go ahead and are covered by the Plan.

Where a Parish or Town Council exists, they can

develop a Neighbourhood Plan and assume these new powers. Where none exists, as here in Knowle, a community group acknowledged by the local authority as being representative of the community and designated as a Neighbourhood Forum can assume this role. Existing residents' organisations, voluntary and community groups are able to put themselves forward for the role providing they can demonstrate that they represent the whole community.

Once drafted by a Forum, Neighbourhood Plans are subject to independent expert examination and then to a local referendum within the community where approval needs a majority vote. It then becomes part of Local Development Plan for the Local Authority area.

Find out more at <http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/neighbourhood-planning/>

A Stroll Around the Blythe Valley Countryside Park

The first in a series of local walking opportunities



As well as providing a home to some of Solihull’s most prestigious business offices, like those of Arup and Oracle, as well as the Virgin Active Fitness Centre, the Blythe Valley Park has a 257 acre Countryside Park.

This is maintained as a publicly accessible haven for wildlife in a mixture of woodland, grassland, hedgerows, streams and wetland.

Whilst there are a selection of paths and walks, the best way to sample is the gentle stroll around the waymarked Nature Trail. It takes about 45 minutes to an hour, longer if you rest on some of the seats conveniently dotted around the route.

There are a host of wild flowers and grasses in the open areas whilst birds and insects are prolific. Many bird boxes have been installed around the park, even some larger ones in the woodland area, suited to owls and kestrels. Skylarks, robins, tits and nuthatches can often be spotted, whitethroats and blackcaps enjoy the heathland.

A bird hide, down by the largest lake in the pasture beside the River Blythe, offers a great opportunity on a quieter day to see some of the birds.

The River Blythe itself is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest as “a particularly fine example of a lowland river on clay”. The wetland areas of the park have been designed as a solution to protect it. They form part of a Sustainable Drainage System, a technique which uses natural land to absorb and filter surface water, particularly after heavy rains, and compensate for the impact of urbanisation on natural drainage.

Despite the background hum of the motorway, this is a delightful stroll with plenty to spot and a number of helpful information boards to help with interpreting the varied landscape found along the route.

It can be accessed by parking in one of the spaces allocated for Countryside park users at Cornwall House, the Park headquarters.



A Warm Welcome to our New Members

who have joined the Society since our last Newsletter

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Mr & Mrs J E Ayto | Mr & Mrs J G Grieves | Mr & Mrs D F Norman |
| Mrs S M Bateman | Mr D A Griffiths & Miss L Power | Mr & Mrs W Overton |
| Mr & Mrs K Bayley | Mrs G Groves | Mrs R S M Owens |
| Mr & Mrs R H Blasdale | Mr & Mrs Henderson | Mr & Mrs C D Owens |
| Mr & Mrs D G Bower | Mrs A Hitches | Mr & Mrs N I Palmer |
| Mrs J E Boyle | Mr J Hollely | Mr & Mrs N Parkins |
| Mr & Mrs M D Bragg | Mrs H Horsfall | Mr S Parlow |
| Ms R Broughton | Mr & Mrs R A Howson | Mrs A Pelekanau |
| Mr & Mrs T Broughton | Mr M Hughes | Mr & Mrs P A Pitt |
| Mrs C J Brown | Dr & Mrs J Hulme | Mr T Pocklington |
| Mrs M Bytheway | Mr & Mrs L Kavanagh | Mrs G Prew |
| Ms H Cannon | Mr & Mrs A W Knightley | Mr & Mrs D J Roots |
| Mrs J Christopher | Mr & Mrs I F Laing | Mrs S A Sheppard |
| Mr J Clarke | Ms A Lloyd | Mr & Mrs P R Siddall |
| Mr M Clarke | Mr & Mrs S Lyle | Mr & Mrs B Smith |
| Mr A R Collins | Mr & Mrs K Mackay | Mr & Mrs T Smith |
| Mr D C Cottrill | Mr & Mrs Q MacLaurin | Mr & Mrs G Sola |
| Mr & Mrs S P Curtis | Mr B Martin & Miss K Fisher | Mr & Mrs D Steventon |
| Mr & Mrs E Davis | Mrs J E Martin | Mr & Mrs J Stewart |
| Mr & Mrs S Day | Miss Z Martin | Mr & Mrs S Tomnie |
| Mr K Dayman | Mr D M McKowen | Mr & Mrs D M Walsh |
| Mr B Drew | Mr & Mrs J H McPhun | Mr & Mrs R J Walton |
| Mr S Durbin | Mr & Mrs O D Morgan | Mrs V Willmott |
| Mr & Mrs R Edwards | Mrs J Murchington | Mr C Wilson & Mrs E Wilkie-Wilson |
| Mr & Mrs R W Filor | Mr & Mrs T Neal | Mr & Mrs R J Wilson |
| Mr N M Fowler | | Mr & Mrs G Wood |
| Mrs J Gramsby | | |

Our Growing Membership

I am very pleased to report that following some very successful recruiting by Martin Warr, and as a result of members joining us in support of our proposals for the 'By-pass' land, our membership has reached new levels. At the end of February it stood at 3,331.

We have 131 new members since the last Newsletter and we welcome them. Their names are given above.

It is sad that despite these astonishing levels of support, we are still unable to find volunteers to fill some of the essential roles in the Society. Please consider whether or not you can help us?

I mentioned in my article a year ago that we were attempting to increase the proportion of our members who Gift Aided their subscriptions.

I am pleased to say that our campaign

has been very successful and we are now in the happy position where over 76% of our subscriptions are Gift Aided.

This will bring in very useful additional income to the Society at a time when we have plans to be even more active on a number of fronts.

The Trustee Directors will also be giving thought to the possibility of encouraging members to pay more than one year's subscription at a time.

The amount of the annual payment has become relatively modest over the years and to pay, say, 2 years at a time could bring benefits to the member, the Distributor and the Society. There will be more on this topic in the July newsletter.

Peter Johnson
membership@knowlesociety.org.uk
Knowle 770268

The Knowle Society has over 3300 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 our website (address below).

Established to maintain the character of the Village .

Website:

www.knowlesociety.org.uk

Membership:

Peter Johnson
1 Barnbrook Road
Knowle
SOLIHULL
B93 9PW
01564 770268
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knowlesociety.org.uk

Online copy password

until July 2013 is
F9wM72

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