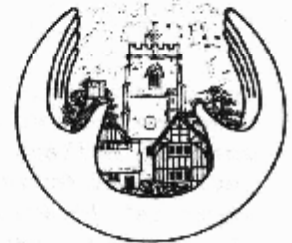


The Knowle Society

NEWSLETTER



SPRING 1991

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As I write there is a hint of spring with blue skies and a touch of green in the fields. The snowdrops and crocuses are popping up everywhere. In the garden the sparrow hawk left a circle of feathers on the lawn and we saw him fly like an arrow along the boundary trees. We can look forward with confidence to see the emerging buds in the countryside around.

Knowle is safe due to the vigilance of the Planning Authorities. But continued threats exist such as a Police Training College and Football Stadium for 80,000 spectators near the NEC. Both have or will be resisted by Solihull. Heaven help the motorway if the latter arrives. In Knowle the Health Authority has recently applied to build a 24 bedded unit on the Green Belt along Grove Road outside the Hospital grounds already released for housing. We and the authorities have opposed it, but being crown land we have also asked for the support of the M.P., Mr. Iain Mills. Some of the present Hospital grounds should be used.

A golf course between Heronfield and Chadwick Manor has been proposed. Your Society is not opposed to this use of the Green Belt here but has made strong representation that the Club House should be commensurate with the playing of golf only. No additional functions such as swimming pools, restaurants and conference centres should be allowed.

The Education Forum was a great success and we are very grateful to the highly expert team and learnt a lot. The most surprising fact was that on a straw poll only a very few supported the proposal for regular testing of children. The impression was that the audience were well satisfied with education in Knowle. Well done teachers!

Finally we must thank Mr. and Mrs. Tingle of Milverton Road for the magnificent Christmas tree. It successfully survived the gales and blizards but not the theft of thirty light bulbs. There was an excellent collection during the carols of £83 for the Edwards Trust.

DR. R. J. BOWER
Knowle 772648

DATES TO REMEMBER

Mon	April 22nd	General Meeting: Talk "Travels in India" by Dr. P. Jacobs, illustrated with slides.
Sun	May 5th	Local Walk (Bob Holden) 2.30 p.m. from Guild House
Sun	May 12th	Knowle Nature Reserve Twentieth Anniversary celebration picnic lunch at the Reserve (See Nature Conservation Report) <i>Sunday Lunch</i>
Thurs	May 23rd	General Meeting: Talk "Nurseries of Solihull M.B. Council" by Mr. D. Cox.
Tues	June 4th	2.15 p.m. Visit to Solihull M.B. Council Nurseries led by Mr. D. Cox (See Social Sub-Committee Report)
Tues	June 11th	Local Walk (Roy Heyworth) 7.30 p.m. For details phone Roy on Knowle 776365.
Wed	July 10th	Local Walk (Jack Deakin) 7.30 p.m. For details phone Jack on Knowle 772796

MEMBERSHIP

The outstanding feature of the last three months with regard to membership has been the work of John Oxley, our Newsletter Distributor in the area of Broadfern Road and Holland Avenue. Having recently retired, John decided to undertake a recruitment drive in his area and has produced some amazing results. He has recruited 70 new members which, together with a few newcomers in other parts of the village, means that our membership now totals about 1340. Well done, John!

I wonder if some of our other Distributors or any one who has time to spare would like to try out the same exercise in other parts of the village. We constantly meet people who say, "Oh, I would have joined a long time ago if I'd known about the Knowle Society". Let us at least make sure that everyone in the village does know of our existence.

Finally, I must apologise to Mrs. B. Jennens of Lodge Road for mis-spelling her name in the last Newsletter. Sorry about that.

Needless to say we have a long list of 90 new members this time, but we welcome them all and hope that we will meet them at some of our activities.

Mr. and Mrs. I. Alexander	Mrs. W. Laughland
Mr. and Mrs. M. Aston	Mr. and Mrs. Legg
Mr. and Mrs. Bird	Mr. and Mrs. J. McCausland
Mr. and Mrs. Bryan	Mr. and Mrs. G. Mafsh
Mrs. G. Burden	Mr. and Mrs. Midani
Mr. and Mrs. Canning	Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery
Mr. and Mrs. Church	Mr. and Mrs. Moores
Mr. and Mrs. E. Close	Mr. and Mrs. R. Moss
Mr. and Mrs. Cobb	Mr. and Mrs. Murley
Mr. and Mrs. Coles	Mr. and Mrs. Neal
Mr. and Mrs. Davies	Mr. and Mrs. J. O'Donovan
Mr. H. A. Edkins	Mr. and Mrs. Pearson
Mr. R. A. Forbes	Mr. and Mrs. Pratt
Mr. and Mrs. R. French	Mr. and Mrs. Rowe
Mr. P. Gardner	Mr. and Mrs. Scattergood
Mr. and Mrs. D. Graham	Mr. and Mrs. Smith
Mrs. M. Greathead	Mr. and Mrs. Temple
Mr. and Mrs. J. Gray	Mr. and Mrs. Thacker
Mrs. E. Handley	Mrs. Thompson
Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Heaps	Mr. and Mrs. Thompson
Mr. and Mrs. R. Henshall	Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull
Mr. and Mrs. P. Jacobs	Mr. and Mrs. Waight
Mrs. D. E. Jones	Mr. and Mrs. Watkins
Mr. and Mrs. P. Kenmore	Mr. and Mrs. Weale
Mr. and Mrs. Laird	Miss S. J. Westwick

Michael Evans
Knowle 774203

PLANNING

Early this year we reminded the Local Authority that there had been a lack of action on three planning applications. The Elora restaurant had not removed external lighting, the Bilash restaurant had not received planning permission for fascia boards with lettering and the lights on the frontage of the Easy Shopper were not shown on the original plans. The authority promised action on these applications.

The proposed office building at the rear of the Bay Tree shop had two serious defects. No reduction in the car parking space had been made that was sufficient to ensure the survival of the Yew Tree. We also considered that the architectural treatment of the frontage seemed scarcely to enhance the conservation area. The conservation architect agreed to pursue these points and other amendments to detail.

The Society has become increasingly concerned about the pressure for offices in the village centre, where shops are converted to offices. In a letter to the local authority we have asked for refusal of office permission to be strongly considered if the property is in an area of retail outlets. Parking guide lines should be rigidly enforced as the public car parks are officially designated as 'shoppers' car parks'. Should a development be allowed, it should visually enhance the village scene and be in scale with the traditional image of the village.

Mercury PCN have applied for planning permission to erect a 30 metre high tower and equipment cabin for telephone signal transmissions on land in Hampton Road. The pylon would be 30.0 metres high (100 feet) and clearly visible for many miles around, dominating the landscape. A member of our society has asked whether tall office blocks could be used for this purpose to avoid spoiling the countryside.

A planning application for a twenty-four bed geriatric unit in Grove Road has been submitted. The site is in the Green Belt and not within the curtilage of the existing institution.

Myffy Parsons
Knowle 772967

LOCAL HISTORY

We are very pleased to welcome Mrs. Ann Arnold and Miss Stacey Westwick to our team. Both have kindly agreed to help us with research. We hope they will enjoy their work with the sub-committee.

The Sub-Committee has continued to work hard since the last Newsletter, but there is little specific to report.

The bowling green continues to occupy the Society's attention. As I write (March 4th) we are in process of preparing a small exhibition about bowling in Knowle for the Conservation Fair, to be held in Solihull on March 16th/17th. We hope some of you will manage to see it, but by the time this newsletter is distributed the fair will probably have come and gone.

Work continues on the farms exhibition. We have already accumulated a considerable amount of material, both from written sources and by talking to members of local farming families. We are still looking for photographs. If anyone would be willing to lend any for copying please contact Dr. Bower or myself.

Elaine Warner
Knowle 775887

NATURE CONSERVATION

Tree Preservation Orders do not necessarily protect trees from pruning operations. Those on the Middlefield Embassy Homes site on Station Road, already damaged by the February snowstorm, have now been pruned, by agreement with Solihull Council, for landscaping purposes. Garages have still to be built within the tree area, on ground at present occupied by a line of Sycamores which are not protected, but further felling will be required for the drive-in and parking area.

Two other TPO trees, namely a pair of very tall Oaks behind Widney Service Station have had branches removed to accommodate the new garage canopy. I have actually found these particular trees on the 1887 1st Edition 25" OS map which plots every individual tree, though perhaps not with great accuracy! Also plotted is the Yew tree in the Curtis's back garden behind the High Street. A TPO is being placed on this Yew to protect it from any possible future development of the allotment garden next door (behind the Bay Tree). Many of the trees recorded for the Knowle Tree Survey are shown on this 1887 map, and will be a feature of our display at the Solihull Conservation Fair of 16th/17th March.

Solihull Council informs us that the Society will have to pay for any clearance of damaged trees or branches in Knowle Reserve, as the Parks Department now have to place all their tree work with outside contractors. However, we shall leave

as much fallen wood as possible, where it is covered with living ivy, as it makes such a valuable ecological habitat. In fact Dr. Oliver Rackham, the country's leading authority on ancient woodlands, complains of 'tidymindedness' in his article in the February Tree Council magazine... "To promote tree-inhabiting wildlife, we need to take care of ancient trees and trees that are going to be ancient to resume coppicing; and not to tidy away dead trees. The majority of storm-damaged trees remained alive. Most trees were killed by the clearing-up operation not by the storm. An uprooted tree, left alone, probably had a greater chance of survival than the tree transplanted to replace it".

The Reserve has suffered more vandalism than ever before to its perimeter fencing, with practically every post now uprooted and thrown down, even the re-inforced straining posts. There is little point in trying to replace any of it until the Council are in a position to begin their own scheme.

However, we hope the Reserve will look its best on Sunday 12th May (not Saturday 11th as in the programme) when we are going to celebrate the Reserve's 20th birthday with a special Sunday lunch picnic event with nature trails, stalls and plant sales. Come with the children - and we extend a special invitation to members of Knowle Church to walk across the Park to join us after the Family Service! - bring your own picnic - we can supply cakes, biscuits and drinks - and let us enjoy together the special ancient woodland flora of this tiny remnant of bog pasture set against the 'Merabroc' - the medieval 'Boundary Brook' (now Purnells Brook) which divided the manor of Knowle from the manor of Longdon in the once great Forest of Arden!

Stella Jarman
Knowle 774528

AMENITIES

We are fortunate in having one of the Knowle Councillors, Ron Scannell, as a member representing Solihull Council on the Airport Consultative Committee. Councillor Scannell is very ready and willing to take up the cause and voice our protests over the increase in aircraft noise over Knowle. It is understood that he has told the airport's Committee how concerned we are and, to demonstrate this, he read them extracts from the last Knowle Society Newsletter. But for this to be any use he must be backed up by specific complaints from residents! Therefore if the noise of aircraft is annoying you, ring the Airport Operations Manager with your complaint, giving time, date and direction (see last Newsletter for details). Also please do not forget to tell Ted Walden, 776742, too, so that he can log our complaints and liaise with Councillor Scannell. Unless more people actually protest, nothing will be done about it and when the new Terminal is opened later in the year, matters will certainly get worse.

There is little to report on the road traffic front. The third pedestrian crossing in the High Street has hit a snag, because the proposed location (on Curtis' corner) is too close to an existing crossing but as the position of the proposed crossing resulted from a Council survey it is not clear at the time of writing what will be done. Meanwhile the procedural process has been gone through, and the three hour limit on the shoppers' car park by Tesco's has now been implemented. It is understood that the Council will be keeping a watching brief on the effects of this restriction before applying it on any of the other car parks.

Peter Morton
Knowle 778688

SOCIAL

We were sorry to have to cancel at very short notice our Valentine Dinner on February 9th, but the weather made this event impossible. We were able to make a reasonable settlement with the Red Lion and believe the cancellation fee of 75p per head will be acceptable.

For the last few years, the theatre outing to Hidcote Manor has been a headache to your Committee and culminated in last year's loss of £26. Although the National Trust have largely met our requests for changes in procedures this year, we have concluded that this outing, which attracts fewer and fewer members, no longer justifies the effort involved, and we have therefore decided not to go ahead with it this year. Now for better news:

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Monday, April 22nd 1991 at 8 p.m. in the Village Hall.

Dr. P. Jacobs who is one of our own members, will talk to us and show slides on the subject of 'Travels in India'.

Thursday, May 23rd 1991 at 8 p.m. in the Village Hall Mr. David Cox, who is the Supervisor of the Council's nurseries at Tudor Grange, will talk about the nurseries, their ongoing functions and his work there. He is hoping to have some slides available to show us. This will be followed by:

An afternoon visit to the Nurseries on Tuesday, 4th June, followed by afternoon tea at the Technical College Meet at Nurseries car park at 2.15 p.m. Entrance is in Monkspath Hall Road on the town side of its crossing with Whitefields Road. Or by bus if you really prefer it. The tour of the nurseries will take approximately 1½ hours, and it is then some 400 yards to tea (or cars can be moved). These teas are put on by students and have an excellent reputation for quality. Numbers are limited, so please ask Iris for your ticket - cost £1.80 inclusive - using the attached form, as soon as you can.

Thursday, September 26th at 8 p.m. in the Village Hall This marks the start of the autumn season. Our subject is "Warwickshire Village Names", and our speaker will be Dr. Margaret Belling who is an acknowledged expert on this most fascinating subject.

Esca Allday
Knowle 776062

LOCAL WALKS

During the spring and summer months the following walks will take place:

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| Sunday 5th May | Led by Bob Holden. Commencing at 2.30 p.m. from the Guild House. Distance - approximately 6 miles. |
| Tuesday 11th June | Led by Roy Heyworth. Commencing at 7.30 p.m. Please phone Roy on Knowle 776365 for details. |
| Wednesday 10th July | Led by Jack Deakin. Commencing at 7.30 p.m. Please phone Jack on Knowle 772796 for details. |
| Saturday 7th Sep | Led by John Jarman. Commencing at 2.30 p.m. Details in the summer Newsletter. |

Richard Drinkwater
Knowle 772664