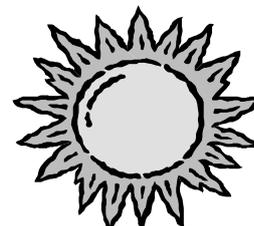


Summer 1998



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I'm sure you will all want to join me in wishing John Chaloner a full recovery after suffering a major heart attack at the beginning of May. John is not only our Membership Secretary, but also edits this newsletter and serves on the Planning and Amenities Sub-committees - as well as everything else he does in the village. We are all delighted to see him on the mend, and indeed, he felt well enough to handle this newsletter in the usual way (but was under strict instructions to tell us if he felt at all tired). Many thanks to Jane Bunclark, who was standing by to do the job if necessary. We are very pleased that John feels able to carry on with Membership, but he has resigned from both sub-committees, and we thank him for his contribution to both of them. This has included keeping a record of planning applications, backing up Ted Walden on the airport and, most

important of all, expressing sound judgement.

Our secretary, Colin Smith, is well on the road to recovery after a heart bypass operation several weeks ago. Although he has been out and about in the village for a little while now, he is not quite strong enough to handle a long evening meeting. We look forward to having him back with us in July. Many thanks to Gary Masters, who has nobly done the committee minutes for the last two meetings.

Since the last newsletter Knowle has welcomed a new vicar, the Revd. Michael Parker. The Society extends a warm welcome to him and his family and hopes they will all be very happy during their years in Knowle. It is good to see Michael already taking an active interest in village life.

Still on a personal note, most of you will know

(Continued on page 2)



Dates For Your Calendar



| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Wednesday July 1st | Local Walk: meet at 7.30 p.m. at the Guild House. |
| Sunday July 12th | Butterfly Walk: meet at 2.30 p.m. at the Guild House. |
| Monday July 20th | Meeting: "County Air Ambulance" an illustrated talk by a member of the Air Ambulance Team. - 8.00p.m. in the Village Hall |
| Sunday August 9th | Local Walk: meet at 2.30p.m. at the Guild House |
| Monday 21st September | Meeting: "Red sky at night, shepherds' delight" an illustrated talk by Tony Sames, an enthusiastic amateur meteorologist since childhood. - 8.00p.m. in the Village Hall. |
| Tuesday 20th October | Visit to the House of Commons and the Cabinet War Rooms. See Meetings and Social Committee Report on page 6 & Booking Form on page 7 |

(Continued from page 1)

that Geoff Wright resigned from the Council in May after many years as a Knowle Councillor. I recall many occasions when Geoff's efforts won the day for Knowle. We owe much to his outstanding ability to make a cogent case before a Council committee. We wish Geoff and his family every happiness for the future, and offer our warm congratulations to Councillor Mrs. Diana Holl-Allen on her election in his place. Councillor Holl-Allen has, of course, previously served on the Council for another ward, and has indeed been Mayor, so she "knows the ropes". We look forward to working with her and have invited her to attend the Society's committee meetings in accordance with our long standing practice.

Plans for the Knowle Millennium Festival are proceeding under able leadership. By kind permission of our new vicar we have booked the Guild House for our usual historical exhibition for the second week. There has been a suggestion that there should be some sort of commemorative object, something to which the Society feels it could make a contribution. But what should it be? There was a general feeling amongst the committee that it should be for all the village. If relatively modest, it could be erected (if that is the appropriate word) during the year 2000. If a much larger project, it could be started in 2000 and be on-going for several years. What are your views? Suggestions welcome.

The Planning and Amenities Sub-committees are in process of producing an initial report,

outlining our views on the likely contentious issues in the forthcoming UDP (Unitary Development Plan). We hope to have a discussion with our Councillors and Council officers before the autumn. Both sub-committees are also still concerned with the proposed Motorway Services Areas at Ravenshaw and Catherine-de-Barnes, which will come before the Council in the early autumn. The Amenities committee is still involved in consultation over the Council's Traffic Report for the area between the M42 and Lodge Road. We are pleased to welcome Paul Blackman as a member of the Amenities Committee, and hope he will enjoy serving on it.

By the time you read this newsletter, the talk which the Local History Sub-committee has been preparing will be over. We hope those of you who came enjoyed it. The wild flower walk run by the Nature Conservation Sub-committee in May proved popular as ever.

As I write the Meetings and Social Sub-committee is finalising the details of the outing to the House of Commons in the autumn, which we are repeating by popular demand. If last time is anything to go by, get your booking in early.

The walks programme is well under way, organised this year for the first time by Malcolm Brain. As you will see in his report, the July walk should be a really enjoyable and interesting evening, so come along if you can.

We look forward to seeing you at the Society's summer events.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT



Since my last report in the spring there has been little movement in the membership figures.

In fact there has been a net increase of only 3 to the Society's current membership of 1545 with 4 losses due to home movement.

May I take this opportunity of thanking the many members who have sent their good wishes following my recent illness. Because of the illness I am having to cut down on some of my committee work within the Society but will be carrying on with my Membership Secretarial duties and Newsletter preparation.

We welcome the 7 new members, listed below, who have joined us since the last newsletter was published

Mr & Mrs Bridgewater

Mr L A Gask

Mr M Keil

Mrs W Powell

Mr & Mrs L Smith

John Chaloner
Knowle 778705

PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE



The Bridgewater Hotel, Warwick Road, Knowle (bottom of Stripes Hill, near the canal bridge). Bass Taverns have appealed

against the Council's refusal (on traffic safety grounds) to grant them planning permission to extend. The appeal will take the form of a public enquiry on Tuesday 16th June 1998. The Society will be represented and will submit its objections as previously described.

1679 High Street, Knowle (former Post Office) The failed restaurant 'Phileas Fogg' has now reopened as 'Billy Budd's Bistro' and we wish it well.

Grimshaw Hall, Hampton Road, Knowle. We have discovered that the car park, recently built in the grounds, does not require planning consent for the reason that it is an improved version of the space used for the parking of farm vehicles for the last forty years, as borne out by aerial photographs.

Miniman Ltd - Warwick Road, Knowle have appealed against the Council's recent refusal to allow them planning consent to expand. Until the outcome of this appeal is known, the Council has decided to suspend any action to enforce previous planning conditions.

Service Stations on the M42, Nr. Catherine de Barnes and Ravenshaw Lane. We have objected to both these applications on the grounds of motorway traffic safety and Green Belt infringement. It is likely that both applications will be considered by the Council about October 1998. In the meantime a working party is being formed to assist the Council to

prepare its studies, on which will sit two of our Councillors, Les Kyles and Don Blake. The Society is delighted to have been invited to help this working party about aspects of the Service Stations which would impinge on Knowle.

Bentley Heath School, Widney Close, Bentley Heath. The application to expand the school by seven classrooms plus ancillary building work has been approved by the Council. Particular attention has been paid to alleviating the difficult parental parking issue by expanding the parking capacity on the adjacent Recreation ground, although crossing Widney Road still remains a problem.

Cuttle Pool Lane, Temple Balsall. It seems unlikely, for legal reasons, that the Council will give consent to an extension of a lapsed permission to in-fill this site with builder's waste.

Plume Garage, corner of Station Road/Lodge Road, Knowle has withdrawn the application to expand its operation on this site which is beset with traffic hazard implications.

Knowle School Millennium Project. We have no news to report about developments.

A new Solihull Unitary Development Plan is due next year. It will be incumbent on the Society to prepare its thoughts and policies about the impact of housing and other building developments on the structure and character of Knowle. We will begin our initial preparations in the Autumn.

**Peter Ellis.
Knowle 775261**



LOCAL HISTORY SUB-COMMITTEE

As I write (June 1st) we are still busy preparing the text of our talk 'Knowle Characters Down the Years', which by the time you read this will be all over.

We hope those of you who came enjoyed it. For those of you who didn't, we started with the de Ardens and finished with the Everitts. When preparations were not long under way, it became obvious that there wouldn't be enough time for everyone on our initial list, and equally, that deciding who to leave out from the 20th century would be almost impossible. We therefore imposed on ourselves a not very rigid cut-off date in the mid 19th century, leaving us with just over twenty people to

talk about, a mixture of the important and not so prominent. The talk has taken most of our time for the last few months, so there is very little else to report.

We duly attended the Solihull Local History Fair on April 18th. The hall was crowded (at least when I was there mid-morning), and it turned out to be a most enjoyable day. Much of the value of these occasions is meeting people from other historical societies and swapping ideas.

Interviewing continues, the latest interviewee being non other than Dr. Bower himself. As midsummer approaches, we hope to make more progress than last year in the annual cataloguing blitz.

**Elaine S. Warner
Knowle 775887**

AMENITIES SUB-COMMITTEE



Water Supply.

You will have seen that Severn Trent have been digging up the road in and around the High Street recently. Severn Trent have informed us that this is part of a major renewal of domestic water mains in the area and should cure the discoloured water and low water pressure some people have been experiencing. All the work will be done between now and next March, but as far as we can tell the only areas in Knowle directly affected will be:-

1. Newton Road, Blackdown Road, Warwick Road (service road).
2. St Johns Close and surrounds.
3. Kenilworth Road from Wilsons Road to Golden End.
4. Widney Road from Station Road to Mill Lane.
5. Grove Road from Knowle Wood Road to Rotten Row farm.

There will also be interruptions in Dorridge along Station Road, Dorridge Road and Earlswood Road and surrounding roads.

Anybody whose water supply will be affected will receive advance notice telling them what to expect, and also be notified a few days before work starts. The maximum length of time anyone will be without water will be ten hours, plus perhaps a couple of one hour periods while connections are made. Severn Trent assure us that everything possible will be done to keep disruption to a minimum.

Canal Access. With help from Councillor Les Kyles we are trying to see what can be done to improve facilities for parking on Kenilworth Road by Knowle Locks, but any improvement will cost money and take time.

Traffic. There is nothing more to report on the proposed improvements to the Lodge Road/ Hampton Road junction, and along the Warwick Road through to the M42. Detailed plans will go before the Council in August/September but the officers have said that they will consult again with the ward Councillors, the cyclists and Knowle Society before firming their proposals.

BUS CHANGES - THEY'VE ABOLISHED ROUTE 38!!

Someone in Head Office has decided that our bus service to Solihull and Acocks Green is too easy to understand! "let's make it more complicated" someone said - and they have!

Just to confuse matters they remembered that there used to be a direct bus to Birmingham City Centre from Knowle. So they are going to reintroduce it ! But to give it a new twist it will now go from Knowle via Copt Heath to Solihull, then along Streetsbrook Road to Gospel Oak and Sparkhill and along the Stratford Road to Birmingham - quite a tour!

They have also decided that we can no longer go from Knowle to Acocks Green unless we change buses in Solihull to the 37 or 71 (yes, 71, which comes in from Chelmsley Wood and then goes along the old 38 route).

BUT THERE IS ONE BIG IMPROVEMENT

Whereas the old 38 used to provide a thirty minute service, the new 41 bus will run every **twenty minutes!** Going from Knowle it will depart Knowle Green at 15, 35 and 55 minutes past the hour - with a ten minute service during rush hour.

Returning to Knowle, it will depart Solihull Station at 2, 22 and 42 minutes past the hour - again with a ten minute service in rush hour.

Detailed timetables incorporating all bus services between Knowle and Solihull are now available from Lewis Edwards, 14 Kenilworth Road, Knowle. B93 OJA on receipt of a stamped self-addressed envelope.

These changes took effect from 28th June.

There are **NO** changes to routes 40 (via Bentley Heath) and 39 (Sundays and evenings)

All this comes on top of the abolition of routes 148 and 149 between Knowle and Solihull,



NATURE CONSERVATION SUB-COMMITTEE

The wild flower walk on May 17th was a gentle and rewarding stroll on a lovely sunny afternoon to Kixley Bridge and thence by towpath to Kenilworth Road where Sunnymount Home provide their delicious cream teas. Half of our twelve strong group forged ahead with Adrian and Barbara whilst the rest of us debated the state of the Churchyard's King George V Oak, which has many more dead branches this year, even on the open side. In just one small patch of Churchyard grass we recorded many interesting wild flower species but they were mown away the next day. The far corner of the National Trust Children's Field still shows the slight ridges and furrows of the centuries' old ploughing system and the curve at the bottom of the School hedge could have been a 'turning circle' for the plough team. Kixley Lane boasts some huge old oaks, and Betty Norris and Sam have measured a whopper there that qualifies by just over an inch for veteran tree status - it is twelve foot three inches in circumference - thank you Betty, and more reports please; but you should ask the owner's permission before measuring on private land. At Kixley Bridge Adrian noted the swallows that were sitting on the telephone wire and also a buzzard high over the canal, whilst Margaret Plant saw a Nuthatch running up the tree trunks. Wall Rue sprouted from a crevice in the brick bridge and the poplars beyond were identified by the late Edgar Milne-Redhead as *Populus canadensis* in 1995, in a letter to Barbara Davies, they are said to be common on railway lines, goods yards and cressbeds etc., There is in fact an extensive watercress bed just here, which has benefited both from the removal of the large fallen willow and from last month's massive rainfall. We approached through the splendid new Kissing-gate and found the watercress growing over a foot high. Barbara Davies says it is probably *Rorippa nasturtium - aquaticum*. *Rorippa x sterilis* is probably our shop variety, which doesn't burn the mouth, as does the wild variety. Geoff Thompstone

says there used to be many natural cressbeds to eat from round Knowle - wash it very well! Liver Fluke is an undetectable nasty, which is left in the slime of a small snail on the watercress where water is not free flowing.

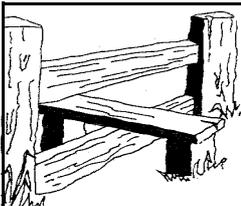
Adrian spotted the tiny orange egg of an Orange Tip butterfly just under a Lady's Smock flower head and there were also Peacock, Speckled Wood, Green-Veined White and Red Admiral. Unfortunately the canal towpath flora had already been mown. Whilst on the towpath, twelve cyclists in all passed us without warning just as they do on the pavement. Will there be a code of practice for the new, shared towpath system called the Lapworth Loop, which is being pioneered by British Waterways and local councils?

Water Butts - Still available at £18 inclusive. Please telephone - Knowle 774528.

Agenda 21 - Garden Ponds are a good indicator of sustainable wildlife in our gardens and a simple survey of Members' ponds in Knowle would be very useful. Answers to the questions below please on a sheet of paper to Knowle Library, and we do need **lots** of replies!

1. Name, Address and Telephone Number.
2. Have you a garden pond? If so, how many and where situated?
3. Age, size, construction and maximum depth.
4. Inhabitants. (If known!)
5. Visitors to and around the pond (including insects and predators)
6. Any other information, comments or suggestions.

Stella Jarman
Knowle 774528



FOOTPATHS & LOCAL WALKS SUB-COMMITTEE

A Unique insight into our Village history and exercise too!!

The first of this season's local walks was led by Angela Coleman on a warm and sunny Saturday afternoon in May. A dozen walkers had an

opportunity to explore the fields of Springfield Farm, off Stripes Hill. Geoff Thompstone, accompanied always by Charlie, guided us through the fields and gave us a fascinating insight into the changes taking place right on our doorstep. The discussion ranged from the management of crops

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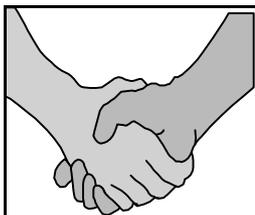
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through to the impact of local developments on waterways and wildlife. *Has anyone solved the mystery of the cellar in the barn??*

After a wet and miserable day, June's walk took place in an evening of bright, warm sunshine and was thoroughly enjoyed by the few brave souls who ventured out. We walked across the fields past Waterfield Farm to nearby Barston with some lovely views of the Blythe valley. After a brief stop to recharge the batteries at the Bull Inn we returned along Elvers Green Lane. July's walk will again provide a unique

opportunity to explore an area not normally accessible from the local footpaths. With the aid of Geoff Thompstone, we have been invited by Tom Hill to visit Springfield Farm. We will arrive in 'style' on some local rural transport and see the work done to create a rural idyll, including water meadows and a wildlife lake. I hope to see a great many of you on what I am sure will be a wonderful evening.

Malcolm Brain
Knowle 730080



MEETINGS AND SOCIAL SUB COMMITTEE

Our meeting on Monday 20th July 1998 will be an illustrated talk by a member of County

Air Ambulance. County Air Ambulance is funded entirely by the public. It serves Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire and parts of Powys and Gloucestershire and of course the West Midlands. Since it entered service in May 1991 County Air Ambulance has on average saved one life every four weeks. I hope you will come along as I believe you will find the talk most interesting.

On Monday 21st September we welcome Tony Sames who has been interested for most of his life in Meteorology. Perhaps he will be able to help you forecast the weather, instead of relying on the professionals!!

Thursday 15th October sees the return of Dr. Carl Chinn. Be sure to make a note in your diary. It promises to be a wonderful evening.

At last I am able to give you details of our trip to the House of Commons. We have only very recently received confirmation from Caroline Spellman's secretary of a date. It will be Tuesday October 20th, and the day will incorporate not only a tour around the House but also a visit to the Cabinet War Rooms. I know that many of you were very disappointed at being unable to visit the House during the trip in 1995. To be as fair as possible there is a box on the booking form asking whether you were on that trip. The Committee's idea is to give those who were unlucky last time, the chance to enjoy the experience this time. Everyone should have received their Newsletter by 14th July and therefore John Clarke, the ticket secretary will issue tickets, in the first instance, to those who did not visit the House on the previous trip. After that date the members who visited last time will be given any remaining tickets on the basis of first booking forms received. May I suggest therefore that everyone completes their booking

8.00a.m. Prompt: Depart by coach from Knowle Village Hall - Comfort stop en route

11.30a.m. Arrive at House of Commons where we shall divide into three groups for our tour

1.00p.m. Free for lunch etc.,

3.00p.m. Meet at Cabinet War Rooms (This is only a short distance away and maps will be given out). Tour of Cabinet War Rooms with time for refreshments.

5.00p.m. Depart London

Sandra Lea
Knowle 776850

Price: Adults £13.50

Concessions £13.00

THE KNOWLE SOCIETY

EXCURSION TUESDAY 20TH OCTOBER 1998

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

BOOKING FORM FOR HOUSE OF COMMONS & CABINET WAR ROOMS

I visited the House of Commons in 1995 - Yes..... No..... (tick which is applicable)

Please indicate number of tickets required in each category

Adult Rate..... @ £13.50

Concession rate... @ £13.00

The price includes a guided tour of the House of Commons and entrance to the Cabinet War Rooms together with transport to and from the above venues.

I enclose remittance for £

Your Name.....

Address.....

.....

Post Code.....

Telephone No.....

Please return promptly to avoid disappointment.

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope