

THE  
KNOWLE  
SOCIETY

Established to maintain the character of the Village

Registered Charity No: 238524



Volume 39 Number 2



# Spring 2001



## Chairman's Report

Despite the volatile weather, spring flowers are marking the end of winter and I hope your spirits are uplifted

Winter evenings are a good time to listen to a good speaker on an interesting subject in the warmth of the Village Hall, and I am so pleased with the large and responsive audiences we have had, as described by Sandra Lea in her report. As you appreciate the organisation of these talks by the Meetings and Social Committee is not easy, and your enthusiastic attendance is their reward.

You will see from Ken Richard's Planning Report that permission for an obtrusive offensively sited mobile telecommunications mast along Station Road has been refused, to our great relief. One mast that has been allowed, and has been constructed, is at the far side of Knowle Village Cricket Club. We did not oppose it because the site is relatively unobtrusive. The cricket club have told us the good news that they will be planting, in association with the Council, about 20 trees and 500 shrubs about the area, and we have written to say how pleased we are.

On the other hand, there will be mixed feelings, mostly of disappointment I suspect, with the widely reported news that John Prescott is 'minded to allow' the construction of a motorway service station on the M42 adjacent to Friday Lane (Catherine de Barnes/Hampton-in-Arden). Solihull Council opposed it, and Knowle Society will regret the loss of green belt in the 'Meriden Gap' which is our policy to defend.

Talking of traffic, Knowle Society is concerned about the congestion of our car parks in the village centre, as Garry Masters describes in his Amenities Report. This problem was the main subject on the agenda of our last Committee Meeting, attended by Councillors Les Kyles and Don Blake. Our belief is that we should make a renewed effort to improve

*(Continued on page 2)*



## Dates for your Calendar



Monday 23rd April	General Meeting: Talk 'The Work of a Conservation Architect' a talk by Mr Robin Hurley. 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall
Sunday 13th May	Guided Walk to Temple Balsall Nature Reserve: Meet at 2.30 p.m. at the Guild House. (See Article on Page 6)
Sunday 20th May	Wild Flower Walk : Meet at 2.30 p.m. at the Guild House
Tuesday 5th June	Local Walk: Meet at 7.30 p.m. at the Guild House
Monday 18th June	General Meeting: Talk 'Belsen to Buckingham Palace' a talk by Mr Paul Oppenheimer. M.B.E. a survivor of the holocaust. 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall
Wednesday July 4th	Local Walk: Meet at 7.30 p.m. at the Guild House
Sunday 15th July	Butterfly Walk: Meet at 2.30 p.m. at the Guild House
Monday 16th July	General Meeting: Talk 'From Ambridge to Hong Kong' a talk by Mrs E Wilson 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall

(Continued from page 1)

car-parking facilities in central Knowle. We believe also that any measures taken should consider the interests of all sections of the community i.e. residents, those that work in Knowle centre, as well as shoppers and visitors etc. The problem is not peculiar to Knowle and is obviously complex and dif-

ficult otherwise it would have been solved already, but our joint aim to make some improvement, working with our Councillors, Council Officers, and all parties concerned such as Knowle Traders.

Peter Ellis.  
Knowle 775261.

## Amenities Sub-committee Report

It is hoped that the observations that have been made to the Council concerning the Knowle and Dorridge Area Traffic Plan will be brought to fruition; probably when work is done on Phases 3A & 3B later this year. There certainly is some room for improvement, although the basic ideas for traffic calming are sound. After at least 10 years of sufferance action is now considered necessary to try and resolve the car-parking dilemma around the centres of the village. In order that all points of view can be considered it is hoped to jointly meet with the Knowle Traders Association representatives and interested business persons, in order that united recommendations can be made in an attempt to deal with the present lack of spaces available. Residents in streets near the village are being affected as a sprawl of all day parking spreads out. Please rest assured that your sub-committee will endeavour to ensure that any future action will be of benefit not only to business people and/or the traders, but also to the local community who live in and around the village and use its amenities, whether for trade or social enjoyment.

Paul Blackman, the Society's representative on the local Police Consultative Committee would like you to be aware of some relevant facts in and around your own home.

**Always be on your guard. Burglars** won't go to the trouble of breaking in if they can just knock and be invited in. So always be on your guard when ANYONE you're not expecting - a man, a woman or even a child turns up at your door. Crooks come in many disguises:

**Bogus officials** may be smartly dressed and claim to be from the council, gas, health authority or other organisations. Their real purpose is to talk their way into your home to see what they can steal.

**Bogus "dealers"** may offer to buy your antiques, furniture or jewellery, at what seems to be a good price. Chances are they're trying to trick you into selling for a lot less than it's worth. If you want to sell something, choose one or two genuine dealers to value it or ask friend or relative for their advice.

**Bogus "workmen"** may say that they need to come in to check something or make urgent repairs. Again, they really want to steal from your house. You also need to be careful of callers who offer to make building repairs or tarmac your drive. Often they'll ask for a money advance; they may even offer to drive you to the bank to withdraw money to pay them. They could then simply disappear, or do a poor job very expensively. If you need any building work done, get several written quotes from a reputable firm then decide which one is best. If in doubt, talk it through with neighbours or someone in the family'

**Genuine callers will normally make an appointment first and will carry identification with their photograph on.**

**IF SOMEONE CALLS AT YOUR DOOR:**

**Check** to see who it is through a spy-hole or through the front window.

**Always put the chain on** before you open the door. If you don't have one, get one, they're quite cheap! (If you have PVC doors, chains can be expensive and difficult to fit, check with the manufacturers.) **Fire Safety** - only put your door chain on when you answer the door ~ Keeping it on all the time could delay you getting out in the event of fire

**Look at their clothing.** Some official callers will have a uniform with the badge of their organisation.

**If you don't know the caller, ask for their identity card.** Check carefully with the chain still on. Genuine callers won't mind this. Some public utilities (e.g. gas, water, electricity) operate password systems. Contact your local branch to find out about this facility.

**If you're still not sure,** ask the caller to come back later. You can then check their story by phoning the organisation or company they claim to represent. Look up the number in your own directory. Don't rely on any number they may give you it could be the crook's partner!

**Bogus callers often work in pairs.** Beware that one could be distracting you whilst the other steals from your property.

**Watch out for anyone who says they're in a hurry.** Don't let them pressure you. If in doubt, call a neighbour or friend.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY SUSPICIONS AT ALL, DON'T LET THEM IN! IF YOU ARE STILL NOT HAPPY, DIAL THE POLICE - DIAL 999 - AND TELL THEM WHAT'S HAPPENED. AND TELL YOUR NEIGHBOURS.**

**When you go out:** Even if it's just for a short time, ensure that all doors and windows are locked. It only takes a few minutes for a burglar to break in.

**If you go out at night,** draw the curtains and leave the lights on upstairs and downstairs, possibly the bathroom, not just the hall. Burglars prefer unoccupied houses.

**Never leave much money** in the house - it's safer in a bank, building society or post office.

**Try to keep to well-lit, busy streets** and walk facing the oncoming traffic. Avoid short cuts through dimly lit alleys, parks, waste ground etc.

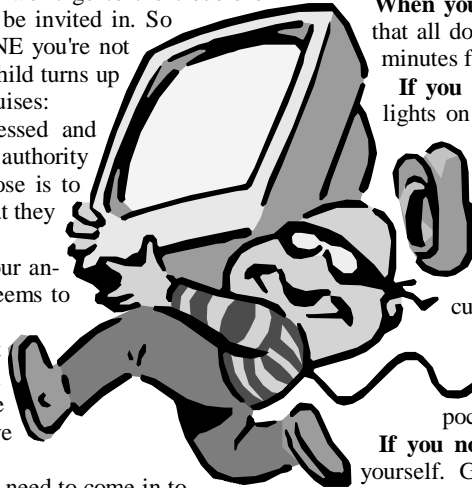
**When shopping,** just take as much money as you need - and keep it in your pocket rather than your bag.

**If you notice any sign of break-in** do not investigate it yourself. Go to a neighbour's house and call the police straight away.

**Be Neighbourly,** if you see anything suspicious, phone the police straight away. The police need your help. Why not join (or set up) a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme? Details from your local Crime Prevention Officer. There is a comprehensive guide to Crime Prevention available from the local police station or write to: The Home Office, Crime Prevention Publicity, Room 151, Queen Anne's gate London SW1H 9AT.

**Solihull Police Telephone: 0121 712 6000**

**Garry Masters**  
**Knowle 779955**



## Local History Sub-committee Report

As I reported last time, we have a considerable 2001' rule to prepare a small exhibition to mark the closure of Soden's butcher's on December 30th, 2000 after trading for just over 100 years. Our sources have included a number of estate brochures, personal memories and the deeds of the property, to which we were kindly allowed access by Mr. David Lewis. Soden's was an interesting shop: it was one of the first purpose built shops in the village and changed very little throughout its century of trading. The exhibition will be in the library re-organising everything; oral histories are gradually being typed, bound and put in the library. I myself, I am afraid, have done very little, as we have just had a small extension built and everything is still packed away.



Elaine S. Warner

We have made an exception to our 'No Projects in Knowle 775887

## Planning Sub-committee Report

There has been yet another prior notification for a 12 metre telecommunication mast this time from One 2 One, but strangely at the BT Exchange at the junction of Purnells Way with Station Road. Knowle Society objected and not surprisingly so did many residents and I am pleased to report that the Council refused prior approval.

Knowle School applied to extend the paved playing area (in response to a government guideline) and also to increase car parking spaces, but this was rejected because it involved removing six mature trees and would also reduce the playing field area.

Bass Retail applied for an extension to be built in the car park of the Felon and Firkin together with some internal alterations. The Conservation Architect checked over these plans in detail and the Council then approved them. We do not yet know what the new name is to be, but we hope that they might revert to the Red Lion!

After some extended correspondence with the Society, Bass has now promised to restore the coat of arms at the Wilson Arms, based on photographs and historical research provided by the local history

section, so we are looking forward to seeing the results - eventually!

Arden School's application for a new Science block with 9 laboratories to be built at the rear of the School was approved after some modifications to take account of the concerns of local residents.

There has been a revised plan to build 27 apartments to replace 6 semi-detached houses along the Warwick Road Whilst the application is clearly in line with government guidelines on housing (providing smaller dwellings with greater density) we are concerned about the possible ribbon effect along this stretch of road down to the Wychwood roundabout.

Solihull Council has now finalised its revision of the Conservation Areas, including the new plans agreed for Knowle and these can now be seen at the Planning Office.

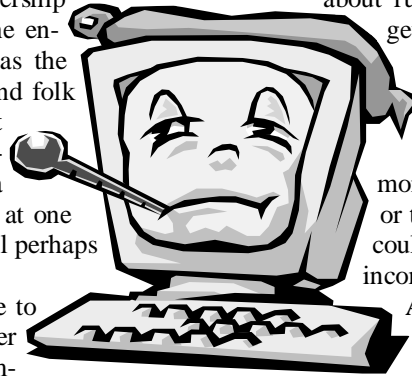
Ken Richards  
Knowle 777436



# Membership Secretary's Report

We continue to witness the 'swings and roundabouts' effort to return the forms — the Treasurer can be seen going about rubbing his hands in glee at the thought of getting something back from the 'taxman'. effect this quarter with membership dropping back slightly to 1689 despite the enrolment of 23 new members. Hopefully as the weather improves in the coming weeks and folk start to get out and about rather more (foot & mouth permitting) there may be an upturn in recruitment. Why not invite a friend to join you on one of the walks or at one of the General Meetings in the Village Hall perhaps they might then enjoy joining the Society.

There has been an encouraging response to the Gift Aid initiative in the last Newsletter with 149 of our members returning completed forms. This represents approximately 14% of the eligible households. Our thanks to all those who have made the



about rubbing his hands in glee at the thought of getting something back from the 'taxman'.

For those members who may have lost the form sent out with the last Newsletter you will find another copy attached as the last page of this edition. Please just take a few moments to fill in the form, returning it to me or to your Distributor. It really is so simple and could make such a difference to the Society's income.

As always we extend a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined us since the last newsletter was published, and hope that we shall have the pleasure of their company at some of our forthcoming functions.

Mr & Mrs Bond

Mr & Mrs H Brunt

Mr & Mrs P J Dekker

Mr & Mrs S T Edgeworth

Mr D Fleetwood-Walker

Mr & Mrs Gavigan

Ms J M Hill

Miss Mary Kirwan

Mr & Mrs K Moore

Mr & Mrs Pennell

Miss P Phillips

Mr & Mrs B A Potter

Mrs C Smith

Dr & Mrs A R Williams

**John F Chaloner**  
**Knowle 778705**

# Meetings and Social Sub-committee Report

The year has got off to a very good start thanks to two very good speakers and a large and interested audience. It was so good to see so many of you at the recent meetings.

Due to the tremendous interest in the Touchwood Development, my committee has arranged two visits there during May. You will be able to reserve a place on the date most suitable to you at either the March or April meetings. Each visit is restricted to 15 people. I am informed by Lend Lease that as the site is not yet complete it would not be suitable for anyone who has difficulty walking or is in a wheelchair. Visitors are given suitable clothing, shoes and hard hats. Members are expected to make their own way to the Touchwood Business Centre in Solihull from where the tour begins.

The two dates and times are as follows:-

Wednesday	9th May	10.30 am
Tuesday	15th May	2.30 pm

Each tour takes approximately 1 hour. There is no charge. If it is oversubscribed it may be possible to organise a further tour.

**MONDAY 23RD APRIL 2001:** 'The work of a Conservation Architect' Mr. Robin Hurley has recently retired as the Conservation Architect for Solihull M.B.C. Included in his talk will be an explanation of a conservation area, how listed buildings are dealt with and his experiences during his time at

Solihull M.B.C. We are hoping that he will also give us some insight into the building of Touchwood.

**MONDAY JUNE 18TH 2001:** 'Belsen to Buckingham Palace' Please note that due to a printing error this is not listed in your programme. Our speaker Mr. Paul Oppenheimer M.B.E. is a survivor of the holocaust. He spends a great deal of his time giving talks in support of the charity Beth Shalom (House of Peace).

**MONDAY JULY 16TH 2001:** 'From Ambridge to Hong Kong' Mrs. E Wilson was in the cast of the Archers, and then spent 14 years in Hong Kong with her husband. A light-hearted and funny talk.

Please come along and support us. Why not bring a friend who is not a member. He or she may be tempted to join.

The forthcoming walks are as follows, subject of course to the Foot and Mouth Disease restrictions being lifted.

May 13 <sup>th</sup>	Local Walk	Meet at Guild House, 2.30 pm
May 20 <sup>th</sup>	Wild Flower walk	Meet at Guild House, 2.30 pm
June 5 <sup>th</sup>	Local Walk	Meet at Guild House, 7.30 pm
July 4 <sup>th</sup>	Local Walk	Meet at Guild House, 7.30 pm
July 15 <sup>th</sup>	Butterfly Walk	Meet at Guild House, 2.30 pm
August 4 <sup>th</sup>	Local Walk	Meet at Guild House, 2.30 pm

**Sandra Lea**  
**Knowle 776850**

# Nature Conservation Sub-committee Report

*Editors Note; Stella has submitted a shorter report than usual to allow space for the fascinating article on the 'Lost Gardens of Temple Balsall' on Page 6 and the publication of the photographs below, missed from the last Newsletter for technical reasons.*

AD 2000 went out with 36 flood warnings in Devon and Cornwall, and on January 1st there were flood alerts here on the Leam and Avon. Sheets of water still spill across the lanes with every fresh downpour, not helping the verges which are being torn up once again by an even bigger cable laying operation!

**Solihull Council Patch Managers** - are good news! Our Michelle Taylor (0121-704-6783) will liaise with the public on environmental matters. Give her your ideas! How about greening the front of Tesco with trailing vines and flower tubs, Virginia creeper on the Sorting Office wall or any other suggestions.

**Commemorative Tree planting** - Ann Peasegood is our watchdog reporter - thank you Ann! We re-planted the pulled-up Red Alder, and pruned the broken-off Crabapple. The latest casualty is the tiny green Holly, fortunately a spare.

Sadly two families are now bereaved and we grieve with Joyce Sammons in the loss of her husband Chris, and Ted Fairbairn in the loss of his wife Rita. Miss Mary Tibbetts also died in December. She was a keen birdwatcher and generous supporter of both WWT and RSPB and of all our Knowle Society activities too. We do miss her cheerful en-

thusiasm.

**Warwick Road bank** - Will this saga never end? The five Field Maple standards still survive but the continually uprooted Holly and Hazel whips are now in safe keeping until final restoration of the site - not helped by an over-run of the bank and path entrance by a brewery lorry exiting from the British Legion!

**Bio-Diversity Action Plan** - Reg, Sheila and Stella began the stage 2 survey of fields and hedges, starting in Henwood Lane and up to the OS map Boundary, likewise a section of the canal on both sides. Three cold, wet and windy visits later we were covering the Friday Lane/Eastcote boundary when Foot and Mouth Disease closed down all such activities.

It would not be right to close without paying tribute to all of our hard-pressed farming community. They have been hit by one disaster after another and this latest Foot and Mouth outbreak could so easily become a tragedy of epic proportions, now spreading inexorably into every section of the community whether business or trade or the leisure industry. We can only pray that it will have passed its peak by the time this newsletter reaches you.

**Nature Reserve** - We are desperate for new boundary fencing but need to find new sources of funding. Can any members help us?

**Stella Jarman  
Knowle 774528**



Members of Knowle Junior School's Garden Club planting their own dedicated trees in Jobs Close Park on November 24th 2000.



Planting the 'Cloned' Elm in Jobs Close Park.  
November 24th, 2000

# The Lost Gardens of Temple Balsall

The Reserve at Temple Balsall consists of 11 acres of low-lying, wet woodland, part of the Springfield Estate. Originally privately owned, this part of the estate was made into exotic water gardens in the early 1800's with two large lakes. During the Second World War the owners fled the bombings of Coventry, moving to a safer part of the country.

Birmingham City Council (BCC) purchased the estate in the late 40s for educational purposes. In the late 1960s part of the estate became a Nature Reserve, leased to the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. Then, in the early 80s, part of the Reserve was allocated to build the Springfield Environmental Education Centre with money donated by the Variety Club, to be maintained and run by BCC. By this time the historic gardens had been forgotten and neglected, one lake had silted up completely and ecological succession had turned the surrounding areas into marsh, willow carr etc, the other lake still retained some water.

In recent years Barbara Davies brought a picture postcard to our attention, showing a water feature somewhere within the grounds; its whereabouts puzzled us greatly. None of the features in the picture represented anything we could locate at present. Where was this corner of the garden?

In 1999 the remaining lake was dredged and restored courtesy of Seven Trent Water Authority. During the

lake restoration various features were uncovered including drainage channels, water systems and a silt/fish trap. In February 2001 whilst clearing vegetation from the walls of this trap, I discovered one of the ornamental stone mushrooms seen in the picture. Upon further exploration the crazy paving was also exposed, we realised the background in the picture, after more than 50 years, had changed dramatically, what once was a meadow is now woodland and the original course of the Cuttle Brook had been altered. The picture now started to come together; it became obvious it had been under our feet all along.

The centre now hopes to restore this feature as part of the overall restoration of the lake and its associated systems, and for its historical importance.

We would love to hear from anyone, particularly with any pictures or plans held, who remembers these historic gardens of Springfield. We are also looking for volunteers to help with other restoration projects to include - reinstatement of the South Wall plantings, Rose Walk and flowerbeds.

The annual guided walk of the Temple Balsall Nature Reserve takes place on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2001 at 2.30pm.

Nick Wale, Conservation Officer at Springfield can be contacted on 01564 779741 or email - [springfd@lea.birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:springfd@lea.birmingham.gov.uk)

A picture of the original postcard, which is coloured, found by Barbara Davies and thought to be late 19th century



Stone Mushroom

The silt/fish trap found by Nick Wale in February 2001. A stone mushroom can just be seen through the vegetation on the right



Stone Mushroom

Dear Member

### Gift Aid

You may have read in the newspapers about the changes affecting 'Gift Aid' – the way that charities can benefit from Income Tax that you have already paid. Basically in the last budget the system was changed so that the old 'Deed of Covenant' has now been replaced by a new version of Gift Aid. This is good news for The Knowle Society as the new system is easier to operate and allows us to claim back money on all subscriptions and donations.

If you want your subscription or donations to be made through the Gift Aid process simply complete the declaration form below and return it to our Membership Secretary, - John Chaloner, 31 Kenilworth Road, Knowle, Solihull. B93 0JB or to your Newsletter Distributor.

You will have read in the quarterly newsletters some of the positive things which the Society is doing with the aid of your subscriptions. All this activity means that we need your support more than ever, and by returning the Gift Aid form you will help to make an even greater difference – at no cost to yourself.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely  
Peter Ellis (Chairman)



Cut Here.....

### The Knowle Society Gift Aid Declaration

Surname..... Forenames.....

Address.....

..... Post Code.....

**I want The Knowle Society (Registered Charity No 238524) to treat as Gift Aid all donations and subscriptions I have made since 1st October 2000 and all donations and subscriptions I make in the future, until I notify you otherwise. I must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the Charity reclaims on my donations in the tax year.**

Signed..... Date.....

**Please return this form, when completed to the Membership Secretary, Mr J F Chaloner, 31 Kenilworth Road, Knowle, Solihull. B93 0JB or to your Newsletter Distributor**