

Volume 41 Number 2



Spring 2003



www.knowledesociety.org.uk

Chairman's Report

The Church 600 years anniversary celebrations have started. Knowle Society is delighted to have joined in and contributed.

The Society Meeting on January 20th saw the Village Hall absolutely packed with a capacity audience, including the Vicar, The Revd. Michael Parker, which listened in rapt attention to a riveting talk '600 Years of Knowle Parish Church' by The Revd. Anthony Upton.

This was followed on February 28th by the Society's Exhibition, 'Knowle Parish Church – Heart of the Village 1403-2003', prepared and staffed by our Local History Sub-Committee which opened at the Guild House at the start of a weekend of celebrations by the Church. The Exhibition's survey in words and pictures fitted perfectly with the programme of events, and it was graced by a rare exhibition of the 'Register', a unique record of Guild members dating from the 15th century which gave distinction to a fine and memorable exhibition. Credit goes to the work put in over many weeks by the sub-committee members.

The Society was particularly pleased when these con-

tributions were acknowledged at the Festival Church Service on Sunday, attended by the Bishop of Birmingham, and a generous letter of thanks from the Vicar. We congratulate him and all involved at the Church on their festival programme.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will read about an initiative being undertaken by the Society under the name 'Pathfinder'. Ken Richards, Chairman Planning Sub-Committee, was instrumental in its inception, and the three 'Pathfinders' David Bower, Malcolm Brain, and Leighton Jones have worked so hard to get the exercise off the ground. This a forward looking study and will incorporate the views of members, and the Knowle community. We will keep you informed via newsletters, website, and our General Meetings.

Peter Ellis.
Knowle 775261.
chairman@knowlesociety.org.uk



Dates for your Calendar



Monday April 14th	General Meeting: Talk 'The Benedictine Priory and St Mary's Hall Coventry' an illustrated talk by Mr P Thompson. 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall.
Wednesday April 30th	Local Walk: Meet at 7.30 p.m. at the Guild House.
Sunday May 25th	Wild Flower Walk: Meet at 2.30 p.m. at the Guild House.
Monday June 16th	General Meeting: Talk 'Birmingham Airport' by Andy Harding and Angie Bryan-Cemm. 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall.
Wednesday June 25th	Local Walk: Meet at 7.30 p.m. at the Guild House.
Monday July 21st	General Meeting: Talk 'Comic Capers' by Mr Patrick Baird. 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall.
Sunday July 27th	Butterfly Flower Walk: Meet at 2.30 p.m. at the Guild House.

Financial Report (Year ending 30th September 2002)

(This Financial Report should have appeared in the January 2003 Newsletter . The report that was published was for the 2001 financial year. The Editor expresses his apologies to the Treasurer and Members for this error and any confusion or inconvenience it may have caused.)

The Knowle Society Balance Sheet and Accounts for the year to 30th September 2002 were presented at the Annual General Meeting on 25th November 2002.

Total Income for the year amounted to £4,472 the main source being subscriptions and donations of £3,234.

There were some one off items in the Expenditure. The total cost of the Millennium sign was £2,417. A donation of £300 was given to the Jubilee Celebrations

Organising Committee, and the Society contributed £250 towards a Pathfinder Scheme being run by the Civic Trust. This enabled three of our members to attend a weekend Course which hopefully will benefit the Society. The actual cost of the courses was considerably greater. The Society also purchased a gazebo, which has been used for membership recruitment this year.

The deficit of £2,433 was transferred to the Accumulated Fund, which now stands at £3,979, with a further £5,000 in the Reserve Fund.

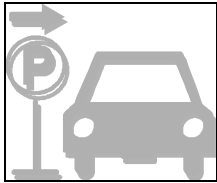
The Eva Wootton Fund now stands at £3,875.

Mr Andrew Chadwick A.C.A. audited the accounts and was re-elected as Auditor.

Sandra Lea
Hon Treasurer
Knowle 776850

Amenities Sub-committee Report

Thankfully my appeal for more members did not fall on deaf ears last quarter. As a result Allan Coleman attended his first meeting, and drew attention to the fact that no car park patrols had been seen for some little time. He volunteered to contact the council officer responsible and immediate action ensued in February, with a result that 17 car owners had exceeded the required time limit on the first check, and accordingly received a fine.



Another new recruit to the committee, John Rowley, has taken on the responsibility of attending the Birmingham Airport Consultative Committee, and has now attended his first meeting. He reports that the Airport Company sees the need to expand in the not too distant future in order to meet an ever increasing demand for serving the locality. It has submitted its own proposals to the Department of Transport for expansion, under the consultation exercise, by using a shortened second wide runway. John assures you that he will keep all members informed as to any action that may be seen likely on this front.



There is no police report on this occasion due to the meeting dates conflicting with the deadline date for this article. However it should be stated that co-operation with the local beat officer, and constab-

les, continues in a harmonious way.

Several hiccups applied to the provision of benches and litter bins under the Area Enhancement Scheme, but hopefully these have all been resolved by the time you read this article. It is hoped that a good attendance was present for the discussion of the "concept plan" for Jobs Close Park on 4th March, and that now we are all a lot wiser as to how matters will proceed.

Currently investigations are in hand to assist the Council in deciding how best to plan for the provision of Public Conveniences in the village. More information will follow when available.

Please remember that the resources of YOUR committee could be extended further, and an additional active person would be welcomed. This committee has referred to it any item that is **not** History, Planning, Nature Conservation, or Meetings and Social. It does not deal with Membership or distribution of the Newsletter. That may sound limiting, but believe me it is not! I look forward to seeing many of you about the village as the warmth starts to percolate into our bones.

Gary Masters
Knowle 779955.
amenities@knowlesociety.org.uk

Local History Sub-committee Report

As I write (March 6th) a wonderful weekend of festivities to mark the 600th anniversary of Knowle Parish Church has just passed. Many congratulations and good luck for the next 600 years. We were delighted to take part in the celebrations with our exhibition 'Knowle Parish Church ~ Heart of the Village 1403 - 2003', which was open in the Guild House throughout the weekend. There was also a display prepared by the Church about its own activities. It was heartening to see it so well supported. The highlight was the presence of the second Guild Register on the Saturday, which was organised by the Church. There was also a good crowd before the 11.15 a.m. service on the Sunday. The exhibition, with the Church display, has now been moved to Chester House, where it will be on show until April 28th. It covers the



origins of the church, its founder, the village at the time, the Guild and College, our incumbents over the years, Church life and the Church in the village. There should just be time to see it after members receive this newsletter.

We now have a big job putting everything away again, which is not the most exciting of jobs and which experience suggests will take some time. There will follow a period of consolidation. Having done three big exhibitions in the Guild

House in four years, as well as answering an increasing number of queries we now have a backlog of bread and butter work.

Elaine S. Warner
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history@knowlesociety.org.uk

Membership Secretary's Report

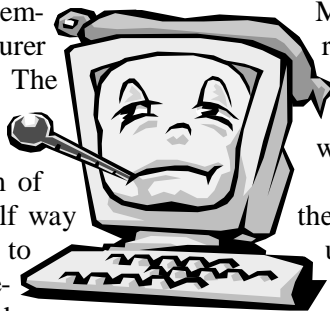
Once again I am publishing the Gift Aid consent form on page 7 of this Newsletter. Since publication of the form for the first time, 366 Members have signed thus enabling our Treasurer to claim back money from the Taxman. The number of signatories covers some 619 households (assuming one signature per household) out of an estimated maximum of 1076. We are therefore now well over half way there and I would say a very big thank you to those who have helped. If you can't remember whether you have already signed the form - don't worry! - just fill out the form anyway and I will sort it out from my records. Please do fill it

in and let me have it back - I would rather have duplications than no form at all!

Membership since this time last year has risen to a total of 1753, a gain of 77. That is pretty good, and I feel certain that we shall have further increases quickly as the weather and longer days come along.

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 forthcom-

ing functions.



Mrs D McAuley

Mr & Mrs R Hodges

Mr & Mrs P Bonehill

Mr & Mrs M Rathbone

Mrs B A Silcox

Mr & Mrs A D Fell

Mr & Mrs Wilson

Mrs M Drew

Mr & Mrs A Hawkins

John F Chaloner
Knowle 778705
membership@knowlesociety.org.uk

Planning Sub-committee Report

I am pleased to report that Redrow's proposals for erection of 24 apartments to replace six houses at 1290 to 1300 Warwick Road were rejected by SMBC on 26th February. The development was considered to be over intensive (at 63 units per hectare) and dominant and it was thought that it did not pay due regard to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

In the meantime, there are few signs of activity at the adjacent Parkridge site (which does have planning permission for 42 apartments). Parkridge have denied that there are any intractable drainage problems but have said that they intend to submit a new planning application shortly to "make the development more marketable" – so watch this space!

There is a new application for the conversion of



existing buildings adjoining Grimshaw Hall to make eight dwellings. Two earlier proposals were withdrawn last year but the present ones take account of advice from the Planning Department and also from English Heritage.

It is pleasing to note that all the retail units in Knowle are presently occupied. We even have an application to convert an office to retail use (rather than the other way around) and we have been approached by

someone who is desperate to find retail space in Knowle. Long may it last!

Ken Richards
Knowle 777436
planning@knowlesociety.org.uk

Meetings and Social Sub-committee Report

We got off to a resounding start for the year when the Reverend Anthony Upton came along to give us a talk on the 600 year history of Knowle Parish Church. I cannot recall us ever having such a large audience; 200 we believe. It was quite chaotic for a while. Members kindly made a donation to the Church's chosen charity for the year, World Vision, which totalled £145. I know the Church was very appreciative.

Our February meeting, though less well attended, was nevertheless very enjoyable. The speaker we originally expected to visit had to cancel but we were very fortunate to have the Group Editor of the Solihull Times and Solihull News Mr Ross Crawford, in his place. It became almost a discussion with members giving a wide variety of views, which were expertly handled by Mr Crawford with very good humour and grace.

Our forthcoming Meetings are as follows:

Monday 17th March: 'Drugs in the Community'. A talk by Len Mackin of Cascade, a voluntary organisation, which is funded by trusts, foundations and businesses. I am sure members are aware of how serious the drug situation is in the United Kingdom. In any town or village there is a problem. Knowle is no differ-

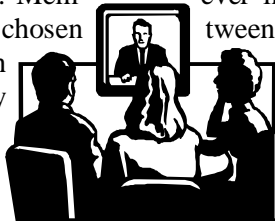
ent.

Monday 14th April: 'The Benedictine Priory and St. Mary's Hall Coventry'. Archaeologist Paul Thompson will give us a talk on the biggest medieval excavation ever in Britain, which took place in Coventry between September 1999 and March 2000. It revealed the Benedictine Cathedral and Priory founded by Leofric, Earl of Mercia and Lady Godiva in 1043. This and lots more will be revealed to you during this illustrated talk.

Monday 16th June: 'Birmingham Airport - An Insight'. Mr Andy Holding and Ms Angie Bryan-Cemm will be our speakers for the evening. This talk was booked before we all became fully aware of the plans for the airport. I am sure it will be an interesting evening.

Monday 21st July: 'Comic Capers'. A light-hearted talk about well known comedians, to include Tony Hancock and Jasper Carrot. I look forward to seeing you.

Sandra Lea
Knowle 776850
events@knowlesociety.org.uk



Pathfinder: A Partnership for change

The Chairman and Executive have agreed that the Society should take part in the Pathfinder initiative run by The Civic Trust. This initiative is aimed at helping Societies like ours establish partnerships with other like-minded groups and organisations to make a significant contribution to the improvement of our environment.

Not afraid of a challenge, the Executive has chosen a consultation exercise that will involve all parts of our community and is at the heart of our village life. The exercise is due to be completed during 2003.

'St John's Close and Green' *A vision for the future*

The area bounded by Lodge Road, Station Road and the High Street (See map below right) has developed into a real mixture over the years with shops and offices, a plethora of car parks, the village hall, a large green space as well as quiet residential areas. Although many of us pass through it on the way to our homes, work or the shops, I suspect we give little thought to the opportunities we might be missing to make better use of a significant green space in the middle of our village.

What is the objective of the consultation exercise? To capture the ideas and needs of those who live, work or simply visit the area and distil this into a '10 year' vision to be adopted by the Planning Authority that could inform any refurbishment plans and guide any future planning applications. The consultation will involve all parts of our community: residents of St John's Close, workers, visitors, local businesses, schools and other village groups as well as other organisations like the local planning authority, emergency services, the traders association and other clubs and groups. We intend to involve all ages.

How will we do this? Well, during the year we will be conducting interviews and using questionnaires to gather opinions as well as staging exhibitions and events where you can voice your ideas and comment on plans. We will also be putting regular articles and progress reports into the Newsletter and other publications, including on the Society's website.

Is the idea challenging? – *definitely*. Is it achievable? – *certainly*.

Does it fire your imagination? Do you have any of the many specialist skills that will be needed? Or do you simply want to be actively involved in something to help shape the future of our village?

You do – then call or e-mail us on one of the following for more information:

David Bower on 01564 775790

Malcolm Brain on 01564 730080

Leighton Jones on 01564 773894

e mail: pathfinder@knowlesociety.org.uk

We are looking particularly for people with an interest in helping with the questionnaires and public meetings and those with skills in fund-raising and publicity. However, if you merely have an enthusiasm for our village, this is your opportunity to help make a mark. We'll be glad to have you on-board.

And don't forget our website on
www.knowlesociety.org.uk



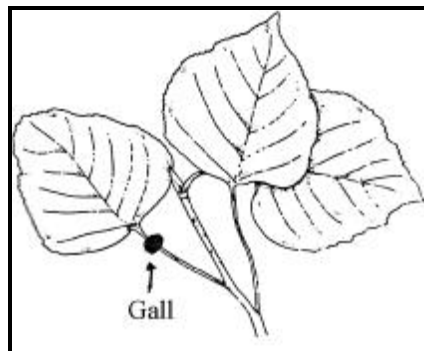
Nature Conservation Sub-committee Report

Last Spring we were full of ideas for celebrating the Queen's Jubilee and the Society's 40th Anniversary. For instance, the KNOWLE Flower Mound was built and eventually planted up by Wyndley Garden Centre just in time for the June celebrations. And on March 17th 2002 our willing band of volunteers met at Jobs Close and sallied forth to plant the Jubilee mini-woodland of 50 native tree whips in the grassland over Purnells Brook - this week they are looking incredibly healthy despite the Cypress prunings tipped over the high wall boundary!

But this spring is full of fear and foreboding and March 17th itself may have become the decisive date in sealing the fate of millions, together with their heritage and their environment. but, until we ourselves are affected by these far-off events we must continue to hope and to plan for the future just as we did when 'foot and mouth' devastated our own countryside.

Firstly, we will report an exciting new Project to regenerate the British native Black Poplar which has been in decline over the past 200 years due to a lack of female trees! Females produce clouds of white fluffy catkins with their seeds, and this nuisance value has led to a policy of replacement with Hybrid or Balsam Poplars, from which the native Poplar can only father more Hybrids.

The true Black Poplar has a generally leaning trunk with large bosses, downward arching branches and densely clumped upturned twigs. Stella organised a visit of Tree Wardens to Coombe Abbey to see the 'Capability Brown' Poplars there, famously painted by Constable, and where the Head Ranger showed us a new clue to instant recognition of the true Poplar! It is just a small gall, found on the leaf stem near the base of the leaf (see illustration, right) and it has never yet been found on a Hybrid. To our delight we have since found these galls in the leaf litter of four Black Poplars Stella had investigated near to Brueton Park - so, Poplar lovers, go out looking; and please report the exact location of any you find. For our Project, in conjunction with the Bio-diversity Action Plan for the Black Poplars, we are taking cuttings very easily from the one uprooted Poplar of our four, (a)



to create a nursery within the Council's old Tree Nursery which the Tree Wardens are now managing and, (b) for planting to create specimen trees around the rivers and streams of Solihull, including Purnells Brook.

Local Nature Reserve - 'Plan for Knowle'. This is now being written for submission to English Nature in May.

Knowle Nature Reserve In the meantime, we have organised a work party at the reserve to clear-away all the remaining vandalised boundary fencing, the accumulated rubbish and encroaching bramble. The bramble within the Alder Coppice has been deliberately left to prevent total loss of all the ground flora to bare soil, as has happened along the entire length of the Purnells Brook bank where so many of the small trees have been pushed over, sawn or uprooted, and the shrubbery cleared away. Bramble itself is also an extremely necessary habitat for butterflies and insects as well as a food source and cover for birds and small creatures. This over-used playground has seen the demise of great swathes of celandine, dog's mercury, bluebell and yellow archangel, all so abundant in past years. Hopefully the long-awaited skateboard area in the Park will take some of the pressure off the Reserve itself.

Notes:

No weather records! - only insidious climate change, noticeable for instance in stronger growth and faster expansion of nettles and ivy.

A beautiful and very large male badger found dead in Station Rd. (We should like to have any such reports for our records.)

Snowdrops are being rescued by kind permission of Arden School for transplanting in the woodland reserve at Brueton Centre, and Sue Owen is offering Wood Anemone.

Any spare British native wild flowers (not Garden Centre ones) are most welcome either at 229 Station Rd or direct to Brueton Park Centre where I am sure a 'Thank You' coffee will be awaiting you!

Stella Jarman
Knowle 774528

Dear Member

Gift Aid

You have been made very aware over the past two years by way of the Newsletter of the changes affecting 'Gift Aid' – the way that charities can benefit from Income Tax that you have already paid. Basically three years ago the system was changed so that the old 'Deed of Covenant' has 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. This form was circulated to all members on a number of occasions and to date the Society has received 366 completed forms. (over half of the estimated maximum)

We are putting the form into the Newsletter, once again, to give you a further opportunity for your subscription or donations to be made through the Gift Aid process. If you pay income tax 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.

Please do take a moment to fill in the form, and 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 2002 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

