

# The Knowle Society



Volume 43 Number 2

April 2005

[www.knowledgesociety.org.uk](http://www.knowledgesociety.org.uk)

## From our Chairman

**I** am devoting the whole of my contribution to this Newsletter to the forthcoming Extraordinary General Meeting.

In this Newsletter, you will see the notice calling an EGM on Monday 6th June 2005. Please put this date in your diary and make every effort to be in attendance. It will be one of the most important business meetings of the Society for many years. The purpose is to approve the incorporation of the Knowle Society as a company limited by guarantee.

Everything will be fully explained at the Meeting but I will set out a summary of the situation so that you may have an idea of the position. The present constitution, basically the one agreed in 1984, confirmed the Society as a voluntary charity with certain objects and powers agreed by the Charity Commission. Knowle has changed over the past twenty years and even more over the past forty years since the Society was founded and the functions of the Society have changed

accordingly. It is therefore important that we review our activities from time to time to make sure they fall within the parameters set by the Charity Commission. Currently, most of our work is within those parameters but some might not be. So we need to "bring books in order with practice."

Crucially the legal climate has changed and any party who perceives they have a grievance against another party is more likely, now, to go to law to redress their grievance. Following the advice of the Civic Trust, to which we belong, we have carried out a risk assessment of all our activities. We find we act prudently in all respects but, regularly we have close on eighty people acting on behalf of the Society and anyone, unwittingly, might do something which could lead to a legal action.

After much discussion and taking advice, your Committee considers that the legal protection of the Society needs strengthening and the preferred way, as followed by Job's Close, for

example, is to become a company limited by guarantee.

We are being assisted in this by a solicitor, knowledgeable in company and charity law. The advice is that if the Society is incorporated, the business of the Society and its governance arrangements will proceed as normal, underpinned by stronger legal support.

Your Committee feels strongly that this is the right thing to do now and will give the Society a firm base for years to come.

At the EGM there will, of course, be opportunity for explanation and discussion after which your approval to incorporate will be sought.

This merits a goodly representation of members and I hope you will be in attendance.

**Colin Smith - Knowle 772981**

## EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

Monday 6th June 2005 at 8pm in Knowle Village Hall

To consider the proposed incorporation of The Knowle Society as a company limited by guarantee.  
See the back page for the formal notice of this important meeting.

## WEBSITE AND NEWSLETTER NEWS

### *OOPS—SORRY!*

The Editor apologises that several factors conspired together to cause some members (the Editor included) to receive their copies of the newsletter nearly two months after the email subscribers had received theirs; the dates of three activities and news items had passed by in the meantime. The Executive Committee has reviewed this and we will continue to try and coordinate publication and distribution as promptly as possible with the help of all our volunteers. To help distributors and members know what to expect, the Editor's target dates for having the newsletters ready for distribution are 1st January, 1st April, 1st July and 1st October.

### *RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL*

Members are invited to consider whether they would like to receive their copy of the newsletter by email; the email is sent at the same time that the pre-publication copy is sent to the printer. The email would be sent instead of your printed copy and of course the pictures come in colour! To take advantage of this option, you must be paying your subscription by standing order. Please check the website for the form to request this facility.

### *EVENT NOTIFICATION BY EMAIL—NEW*

To bypass the lag in newsletter publication and distribution and also to help people remember meetings and events in the intervals between the quarterly newsletters, we are now offering a new email **Event Notification** service to members. This is free and open to any member whether they take the paper or email version of the newsletter. The service will provide a very brief email (2-3 lines) reminding you of a forthcoming general meeting or event and be sent out a few days prior to each event. If you would like to be included in this service, please email the address in the left margin of this page with two or three words such as *Email Notification* and include your name and address so we can check against our membership list. Naturally this service is only available to Internet users.

### *USE YOUR WEBSITE*

A pre-prepared form for the outing to Ryton Gardens (see article page 7) may also be downloaded from the website, see <http://forms.knowlesociety.org.uk/> The website will also enable you to view or download copies of the proposed Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Knowle Society (15 pages) shortly after the Executive Committee has completed the drafts. No date is available for this yet but it is expected to be in early May. Meanwhile the current constitution (7 pages) is available to anyone on the website now (*About Us* page). If you do not have access to the Internet and would like a copy of any of these papers, please ask the Secretary (details on your programme card). Please remember to bring your own copies with you to the EGM on 6th June.

David Bower - Knowle 775790

## Events Diary

### **Monday 18th April 2005**

8.00pm in the Village Hall

### **The Work of a Prison Visitor**

A talk by Denzil Smith

Prison Visitors play an important part in the life of our prisons in supporting prisoners and helping them to make constructive use of their time in prison

### **Wednesday 27th April**

7.30pm outside the Guild House

### **Bluebell Walk**

Led by Leighton Jones

### **Sunday 15th May**

2.30pm outside the Guild House

### **Wild Flower Walk**

Led by Stella Jarman

### **Monday 23rd May 2005**

8.00pm in the Village Hall

### **Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council**

Meet Katherine Kerswell, Chief Executive of Solihull MBC

### **Wednesday 15th June 2005**

7.30pm outside the Guild House

### **Canal Walk**

Led by Leighton Jones

### **Monday 6th June**

8.00pm in the Village Hall

### **EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING [Members only]**

To consider the Incorporation of the Society as a company limited by guarantee

### **Monday 20th June 2005**

8.00pm in the Village Hall

### **The Royal National Lifeboat Institution**

An illustrated talk by Mr Robert Wooldridge

### **Sunday 10th July 2005**

2.30pm outside the Guild House

### **Butterfly Walk**

Led by Stella Jarman

### **Monday 18th July 2005**

8.00pm in the Village Hall

### **Speed Awareness**

An illustrated talk by Becky King

## CHARITY BEGINS IN THE HIGH STREET



*Going Places  
Gone and soon to be Oxfam?*

Concern has been expressed in some quarters at the appearance in the High Street of the *Marie Curie* shop to be followed we are informed by an Oxfam establishment where *Going Places* was before it went to Solihull. It joins of course the *Acons* shop in the Precinct. It is said that these are the first signs of a shopping area in decline. Some people also object to the colouring of the shop face for the *Marie Curie* emporium; this aspect has been mentioned to the Enforcement Officer at Solihull who has promised to look into it.

I am told that some other retailers feel that these shops represent unfair competition as they are modern professionally run outfits with the stock being provided free. I think we must bear several aspects of this situation in mind.



*Camerons  
Gone and now Marie Curie*

Firstly nothing can be done about the position from a planning point of view. The permitted use of the ground floor of each building is obviously retail and the law does not discriminate between *normal* and *charitable* retail. Secondly, do we really want to appear to be totally opposed to shops whose object is to raise funds for those who are afflicted by misfortune which we might not want to wish on our worst enemies? Lastly perhaps we should consider why this situation may have come about. It seems possible to me that the owners of the shops are setting their rental requirements at a level which is unattractive to normal retailers and are therefore persuaded to offer a short lease to a charity at a lower rent. I can see that a High Street with a lot of charity shops would not bode well for its future but there is not a lot that this Society or indeed anyone else can do about it.



*Milverton House  
Children's Day Nursery?*

At the far end of the High Street there is an application to turn Milverton House into a children's day nursery. Again presumably there is a problem in letting for office use. My committee was split on the principle of this application but were united in opposing it on the grounds of insufficient parking and potential traffic problems. I understand that the Planning staff at the Council are opposed to this as being injurious to a listed building.

Lastly those of you who attended the Public Meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February will have formed your own views as to whether it was worthwhile. I think many of those 140 or so who did attend felt that Paul Watson, Head of Planning, was well worth listening to even if they may not have liked all that he had to say. The most positive part of what he did say was perhaps his promise to keep in touch, to address my committee in the near future on the working of the 2004 Planning Act, and particularly on the close consultation with groups such as your Society which is required under that Act. Meanwhile there are some 150 flats being or about to be built in Knowle. Is there really a demand for so many flats? The next few months will tell but I am inclined to think not, in which case some or all of the builders will *catch a cold*. That, I think, would work better than any legislation in checking the rush to demolish some of our better houses.



*Milverton House—rear car park*

Peter Ewin  
Knowle 776381

[Photos—Roger Grainger]

**EXHIBITION PROGRAMME**

We do hope those of you who saw it enjoyed *Images of Lodge Road*, which ended on January 31st. It created a gratifying amount of interest, so we may do something more on individual areas in the future. You may have noticed from the posters that our programme for this year has been amended: it is now as follows

Until April 30th *The Red Lion*

May 1st - August 31st *Peace & Remembrance*

Sep 1st - Nov 30th *Knowle in Trafalgar Year*

Dec 1st - Mar 31st *Johnson's Garage*

The *Chester House* exhibition has been put back until 2006. All exhibitions are on view during normal library hours in the Local History Centre (Chester House, 1st Floor) unless otherwise stated.

**EXHIBITION: THE RED LION**

For personal reasons *Johnson's Garage* had to be postponed at the last minute, so we scratched our heads to find something interesting to show which would not take too much time. The result - as you may have seen from the posters - is *The Red Lion*. It includes *The Building & Sign; early references; licensees; colourful customers; scenes from the yard; red letter days; the bowling club and the wartime Lion and after*. Documentary evidence is enlivened by personal recollections of the inn and all that took place there.

**EXHIBITION: PEACE & REMEMBRANCE**

We are now well into the preparation of this small display, which is part of our contribution to the V.E. Day/V.J. Day celebrations. It includes a section on the men and women of Knowle who served during the war, the village celebrations on V. E. Day and V. J. Day in 1945, and of course a tribute to those who did not come back. Some of you may be unaware that there are thirteen graves in Knowle churchyard which are maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission - we are indebted to Mr. Tony Holl for a list of them. Watch for the posters for more detail. The photographs show Jubilee Field in Station Road (now occupied by houses), where village celebrations took place until 1953.

**FESTIVAL EXHIBITION: JULY 9TH.**

As usual, the Local History Centre will present an exhibition in the Guild House as part of the village celebrations. After much thought we have decided to do something on a smaller scale than hitherto, as the exhibition will only be open for a few hours - probably 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., although this has not yet been fixed. The idea of moving *Peace & Remembrance* to the Guild House for the day was tempting, but in the end was thought too much work. We shall therefore have the festival exhibition in the Guild House *and Peace & Remembrance* in the library on that day. The centrepiece of the festival exhibition will be *Images of Knowle*, a carefully selected group of photographs giving an overall picture of the village. The ever popular scrap books, parish magazines, etc. will also be there for perusal at your leisure, together with a display about the work of the Local History Centre. Once more, watch for the posters.

**ORAL HISTORY**

John Johnson has been unable to do any more recently, but no doubt he will pick up the threads soon.

**ITV FILM**

We hope that those of you who saw *The Way We Were ~ Love & Marriage* enjoyed it. We do congratulate Anita Homer, Doreen Ward and Ann Cox for their excellent performance - we gather they are now something approaching celebrities. Several people have expressed their disappointment at missing the programme; but ITV has promised us a few copies - not yet received, but with luck they'll appear soon, when they will be available for loan.

**DIGITAL IMAGING**

Geoffrey Dean continues to add to our store of digital images. We are now in process of acquiring the use of a second external drive for back up purposes.

**CARE & CONSERVATION PROGRAMME**

We have set ourselves a target for the year, which may be optimistic as we also have a very heavy exhibition programme. The transfer of the parish magazines to new folders is now complete - although they still await the labels on the folders. The early magazines (up to 1914), which were disintegrating on sight, have been put into acid free sleeves, from which they will only rarely need to be removed. As this is very expensive, we shall not do likewise for later ones at present. The next job - the maps - is no further forward than reported in the last newsletter, but we hope to start soon. There are also improvements needed to our documentation: changes in the computer system to work more efficiently under windows XP and a revised new accessions system to name but two.

**ARCHIVES WORKING GROUP**

We have recently set up a small informal group to work on the collection. At present we intend to meet once a month on a Tuesday afternoon for a couple of hours. This infant organisation has so far met once - with Julia Brain, Shirley Harris, Sylvia Moody and myself. When we moved into Chester House in 1988 we took the plunge and transferred the collection to new brown envelopes, many of which are now getting tatty with age and need replacing. After much

**I**t seems a long time since at the AGM we agreed to rearrange the work of the Amenities and Nature Conservation sub-committees and the Pathfinder project work into two new committees – Community Services led by Gary Masters and Environment led by me.

Since then Gary and I have been working our way through the long list of activities covered in an attempt to separate them into the two new groupings and make sure we don't lose the good work done in the past. We think we have succeeded in achieving a sensible balance for each group and I thought I would take the opportunity in my first article for the Newsletter of outlining the areas that will be covered by the Environment group. Gary will be doing a similar piece for Community Services elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The Environment group will be concerned with the facilities and amenities that are available in the village to make our life more enjoyable. It may be a convenient seat in a pleasant spot where we can watch the world go by or the play/sports areas where we can burn off that excess energy - and for some of us an extra few pounds too.

The next step is to establish the group; if you are interested in joining us then I look forward to hearing from you.

The group's activities will be broken down into a number of areas: -

**Open Green Spaces and Rural Footpaths** – Knowle Park is a major asset and it's important that the character of the park is maintained and that it provides a safe haven for all to enjoy. Solihull MBC has established a liaison group to allow local groups input into the future management of the park. We will continue to be actively involved in this group. The recent work on replacing the rose beds with more suitable *year round* interest and the cleaning of the pond were discussed at a recent meeting of the group.

The park is not the only green space in the village and the Environment group will also be taking an interest in other areas such as St John's Close, the area around Purnells Brook, the Nature Reserve together with the footpaths and canal towpaths. Those of you who attended the excellent presentation by Leela O'Dea of British Waterways will know the wealth of plants and animals along the canal.

**Urban Spaces and Verges** – These are principally the green and paved areas such as the areas around the Village Hall and the Scout Hut. The group will also maintain an interest in our grass verges, trees and shrubs.

**Leisure Facilities** – The group will also take a keen interest in the provision of leisure facilities for the village. Many of these facilities are located in the Park but the Society has long been active in promoting the provision of sports/playground facilities, cycle routes and a network of footpaths for the benefit of residents.

**Nature Conservation** – Many will know that in the past Stella Jarman and her group have taken a very active *hands on* approach. Our approach will probably be less *hands on* and with a more strategic view of things but we will liaise closely with those who wish to continue to get their hands dirty.

**Agenda 21 Matters** – Many of you will be aware that this is a comprehensive plan of action at global, national and local levels that came out of the Rio Conference in 1992. At a local level, this translates to Solihull MBC engaging with other groups and communities to lead the development of a Local Agenda 21 action plan that addresses the many factors contributing to the quality of our lives. The plan is wide-ranging and includes areas such as: transport, natural and rural environment, pollution, recycling, energy conservation and litter.

**St John's Close** – With the end of the St John's Close (Pathfinder) project, the group will progress the conclusions with Solihull MBC and other interested parties. You will recall that these were about improvements to the Green, the area around the Scout Hut, the car parks, the on-street parking and the traffic flows through the area. We have started discussions with Solihull MBC on the first two areas and when the group is in place, we intend to address the others.

Over the next few weeks I will be on the look out for people who have knowledge or an enthusiasm for these areas and encouraging them to join us. If you are interested you can contact me by telephone or e-mail and I will be happy to explain more of our plans.

Malcolm Brain - Knowle 730080

#### **MORE COMMUNITY SPIRIT?**

Have you been to the History Section's Red Lion exhibition in Chester House library yet (see page 4)? There is a splendid saying there from the days when the local fire engine was kept in one of the Red Lion's out-buildings, that "the location enabled the firemen to get a few pints down before going out to tackle the fire"!

## HELLO AND WELCOME

This is the initial column of the newly named Community Services Sub-Committee. It is in many ways the son of the Amenities committee, but there have been some changes to the main activity areas, and later in the article you will be able to read the content of our activities.

### ***SUSPENSION IMPROVEMENT!***

The work on the three car parks in the centre of the village; namely the *Shoppers'* (by Tesco), the rear of the village hall, and the rear of the NatWest Bank, should now benefit all users with their newly laid surfaces following the work at the end of February and early March. It is also to be hoped that the wider parking bays will assist motorists in judging their distances between vehicles more accurately, and maybe will accommodate 4 x 4 vehicles as well.

The next step is to find where more parking spaces can be found, bearing in mind that the more spaces supplied will mean the more vehicles that will be attracted to fill them. You never know, a fairy god-mother may decide to wave her wand and conjure up space that no one has been able to identify before.

### ***THE FUTURE***

A vacancy has appeared on the committee, following the resignation of James Randle, whom I thank for his hard-working contributions. If you have an interest in any areas of the sub-committee's work and feel that you can give some assistance then please do not hesitate to contact me; initially to discuss the situation. The sub-committee is responsible for the following:

- |                               |                |                   |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Airport liaison and expansion | Police liaison | Public transport  |
| Traffic matters               | Cycling        | Urban footpaths   |
| Street furniture              | Licensing      | Trading standards |
| Street cleaning               | Public toilets |                   |

The next immediate area of our work will be to have the council officers look at the situation for the pathway between the One Stop shop and the NatWest Bank. Perhaps the Bank concerned will also be interested in improving the unsightly nature of this area.

### ***FINALLY***

I strongly recommend that you attend the open meeting to be held on Monday 23rd May in the village hall when we will be addressed by Katherine Kerswell, the Chief Executive Officer of Solihull M B C.



*Shoppers' car park closed for work*



*Rear of Village Hall car park*



*NatWest car park before*



*NatWest car park after*



*The gimmel (alley) alongside One-Stop and the NatWest bank  
All photos: Roger Grainger*



*[Please note that there was some editorial confusion in the last issue and in the programme card concerning the new name of the Amenities Sub-committee and its associated email address. The name and the address on this page are now the correct ones. Ed.]*

Gary Masters  
Knowle 779955

Well, my first year as Chairman of the *we organise everything else* sub-committee, is well under way, with two of our open meetings already held, and the programme looking good. In fact, by the time most of you get the chance to read this, the third meeting and the first walk will both be over.

We began the year with **An Illustrated Introduction to Organics Gardens**. The speaker was a former head gardener at the Ryton Gardens of the HDRA Organic Gardening Organisation and he had many useful tips on how it's possible to run our own gardens in a more *organic* way and improve the environment at the same time. The talk was well received and, as a result, we are planning a visit to the Ryton Gardens on **Thursday 30 June**. Unfortunately the cost of a coach to take us is well beyond what I would see as sensible, so we are going to have to go by car. If people are willing to offer lifts I will sort a suitable arrangement. The cost of the entrance charge and the guided tour of the gardens is £5 per head. The itinerary will be:-

10:00	Meet at Knowle Village Hall (maps and directions to Ryton provided)
11:00	Arrive at the Ryton Gardens
11:00	Guided tour
12:30	Lunch available in the restaurant (or bring your own)
13:30	Free time to explore the gardens further
15:00	Leave Ryton at your convenience

A booking form may be downloaded from the website under *Forms*. Please fill it in and return it to L Jones, 23 Newton Rd, Knowle B93 9HL, with money (cheques to the *Knowle Society*), as soon as possible. Alternatively drop me a line with the following details. I would appreciate it if those people who have already given me their names would send the details as confirmation.

Number of places required	Names of each person to attend	Any special needs
Your address	An evening telephone number	
Total amount being paid	Whether by cash or cheque	

Our second talk of the year was **Wildlife on the Canals**, enthusiastically described by Leela O'Dea of British Waterways. She was able to open our eyes to many of the things that we would normally miss while walking the canal towpaths, including such special sights as otters and kingfishers. The meeting was well attended, especially considering the weather, which was threatening snow. Everyone enjoyed the evening, especially the excellent slides of the plants and animals (except perhaps those of some of the *bugs* – which seemed to be her favourites!)

The March meeting was **Memories of an Evacuee**, which I'm sure will have brought back personal memories to some of our members.

We will also have undertaken our first walk of the season from Packwood House, hoping to see a good show of daffodils. The next walk is an evening one, leaving from The Guild House at 7:30pm, and we should come across a good show of bluebells in the three miles that will take us out towards Elvers Green Lane and back via Waterfield Farm and the canal. **The date of this walk is Wednesday April 27.**

I am grateful to continue to be able to call on Stella Jarman to lead two walks again this year. These will be aimed, not at covering any particular distance or route, but exploring our local wildlife. The first is at **2:30pm on Sunday, May 15** and will concentrate on our wild flowers, while the aim of the one at **2:30 pm on Sunday, July 10**, will be to see how many different butterflies can be found and identified.

In between, I'll lead a canal-side walk at **7:30 pm on Wednesday 15 June**, when we'll try and spot some of Leela's wildlife (and perhaps take refreshment at one of the canal-side hostelrys.)

For those of you not attracted to tramping the countryside, we continue our open meetings on Monday April 18 with Mr Denzil Smith talking about **The Work of a Prison Visitor**. I am sure we'll get a fascinating insight into the life of prison inmates and the efforts made to ensure they don't return. We return to the water theme on Monday, June 20 with **The Royal National Lifeboat Institution**, and follow this with one that I'm sure will attract a good crowd – **Speed Awareness** (cameras, speed guns and other devices) on **July 18**.

Hoping to see many of you at one or more of these events,

Leighton Jones – Knowle 773894

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT**  
**AN EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING**  
**OF THE KNOWLE SOCIETY**

will be held

**On Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2005 in the Village Hall, commencing at 8pm.**

The Purpose of the Meeting is to consider, and if thought appropriate, pass the following Resolutions:-

1. That the Knowle Society be incorporated as a company, limited by guarantee.
2. That the appropriate steps be put in hand for the winding up of the existing Knowle Society and for its Assets to be transferred to the new company.

- N.B.
1. Resolution 2 will only be put to the meeting if Resolution 1 is passed.
  2. The reasons for the Resolutions are set out in the Chairman's Report on the front page of this Newsletter. Further explanations will be given at the meeting.
  3. Under the present Constitution, two specific Resolutions are required for the Winding up of the Society. The Resolutions must be put to separate E.G.Ms, one held at least two weeks after the other. For this reason Resolution 2 above, if passed, will be regarded as the first of these two Resolutions. The second will be put to a further E.G.M. to be held at 8pm on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2005 before the General Meeting already arranged for that evening.
  4. Only members of the Society are eligible to vote on these Resolutions.

*Peter Johnson*  
*Honorary Secretary*  
*28<sup>th</sup> February 2005*

(Continued from page 4)

thought we have opted for green folders, which have come down in price since 1988 and are much stronger. This is the archive working party's first job: we managed to do a surprising amount, although it cannot be completed without re-printing some of the catalogue sheets (too complicated to explain fully here). This sort of soul-destroying job is, of course, much more enjoyable in congenial company (usually followed by a trip to a nearby tea shop).

**PEOPLE**

We are all pleased to see John Johnson out of hospital after surgery and look forward to his complete recovery. Sylvia Moody (née Curtis) has joined our team of stewards. She will be a great asset and comes with an added bonus - a daughter who works in a museum. We are delighted to welcome her and hope she will enjoy working with us.

**Elaine Warner - Knowle 775887**

Welcome to our new members...

Mrs E R Bleby  
Mr & Mrs M N S Bridge  
Mr S M Bunch  
Mr & Mrs D J Coates  
Mr & Mrs Donaghue  
Mr & Mrs Hill  
Mr J Hill  
Councillor D E Holl-Allen  
Mr C Pontifex  
Mr & Mrs A T Turner  
Mr M S Warr  
Mr & Mrs A Wilde

*Can you encourage your friends and neighbours to join the Knowle Society? This may be done either by contacting the membership Secretary or through an application form on the website:*

*[www.knowledociety.org.uk](http://www.knowledociety.org.uk)*

**Derek Mellor**  
**Knowle 205129**

**Membership Secretary**  
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Crucially the legal climate has changed and any party who perceives they have a grievance against another party is more likely, now, to go to law to redress their grievance. Following the advice of the Civic Trust, to which we belong, we have carried out a risk assessment of all our activities. We find we act prudently in all respects but, regularly we have close on eighty people acting on behalf of the Society and anyone, unwittingly, might do something which could lead to a legal action.

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**Colin Smith - Knowle 772981**

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Members are invited to consider whether they would like to receive their copy of the newsletter by email; the email is sent at the same time that the pre-publication copy is sent to the printer. The email would be sent instead of your printed copy and of course the pictures come in colour! To take advantage of this option, you must be paying your subscription by standing order. Please check the website for the form to request this facility.

### *EVENT NOTIFICATION BY EMAIL—NEW*

To bypass the lag in newsletter publication and distribution and also to help people remember meetings and events in the intervals between the quarterly newsletters, we are now offering a new email **Event Notification** service to members. This is free and open to any member whether they take the paper or email version of the newsletter. The service will provide a very brief email (2-3 lines) reminding you of a forthcoming general meeting or event and be sent out a few days prior to each event. If you would like to be included in this service, please email the address in the left margin of this page with two or three words such as *Email Notification* and include your name and address so we can check against our membership list. Naturally this service is only available to Internet users.

### *USE YOUR WEBSITE*

A pre-prepared form for the outing to Ryton Gardens (see article page 7) may also be downloaded from the website, see <http://forms.knowlesociety.org.uk/> The website will also enable you to view or download copies of the proposed Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Knowle Society (15 pages) shortly after the Executive Committee has completed the drafts. No date is available for this yet but it is expected to be in early May. Meanwhile the current constitution (7 pages) is available to anyone on the website now (*About Us* page). If you do not have access to the Internet and would like a copy of any of these papers, please ask the Secretary (details on your programme card). Please remember to bring your own copies with you to the EGM on 6th June.

David Bower - Knowle 775790

## Events Diary

### **Monday 18th April 2005**

8.00pm in the Village Hall

### **The Work of a Prison Visitor**

A talk by Denzil Smith

Prison Visitors play an important part in the life of our prisons in supporting prisoners and helping them to make constructive use of their time in prison

### **Wednesday 27th April**

7.30pm outside the Guild House

### **Bluebell Walk**

Led by Leighton Jones

### **Sunday 15th May**

2.30pm outside the Guild House

### **Wild Flower Walk**

Led by Stella Jarman

### **Monday 23rd May 2005**

8.00pm in the Village Hall

### **Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council**

Meet Katherine Kerswell, Chief Executive of Solihull MBC

### **Wednesday 15th June 2005**

7.30pm outside the Guild House

### **Canal Walk**

Led by Leighton Jones

### **Monday 6th June**

8.00pm in the Village Hall

### **EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING [Members only]**

To consider the Incorporation of the Society as a company limited by guarantee

### **Monday 20th June 2005**

8.00pm in the Village Hall

### **The Royal National Lifeboat Institution**

An illustrated talk by Mr Robert Wooldridge

### **Sunday 10th July 2005**

2.30pm outside the Guild House

### **Butterfly Walk**

Led by Stella Jarman

### **Monday 18th July 2005**

8.00pm in the Village Hall

### **Speed Awareness**

An illustrated talk by Becky King

## CHARITY BEGINS IN THE HIGH STREET



*Going Places  
Gone and soon to be Oxfam?*

Concern has been expressed in some quarters at the appearance in the High Street of the *Marie Curie* shop to be followed we are informed by an Oxfam establishment where *Going Places* was before it went to Solihull. It joins of course the *Acons* shop in the Precinct. It is said that these are the first signs of a shopping area in decline. Some people also object to the colouring of the shop face for the *Marie Curie* emporium; this aspect has been mentioned to the Enforcement Officer at Solihull who has promised to look into it.

I am told that some other retailers feel that these shops represent unfair competition as they are modern professionally run outfits with the stock being provided free. I think we must bear several aspects of this situation in mind.



*Camerons  
Gone and now Marie Curie*

Firstly nothing can be done about the position from a planning point of view. The permitted use of the ground floor of each building is obviously retail and the law does not discriminate between *normal* and *charitable* retail. Secondly, do we really want to appear to be totally opposed to shops whose object is to raise funds for those who are afflicted by misfortune which we might not want to wish on our worst enemies? Lastly perhaps we should consider why this situation may have come about. It seems possible to me that the owners of the shops are setting their rental requirements at a level which is unattractive to normal retailers and are therefore persuaded to offer a short lease to a charity at a lower rent. I can see that a High Street with a lot of charity shops would not bode well for its future but there is not a lot that this Society or indeed anyone else can do about it.



*Milverton House  
Children's Day Nursery?*

At the far end of the High Street there is an application to turn Milverton House into a children's day nursery. Again presumably there is a problem in letting for office use. My committee was split on the principle of this application but were united in opposing it on the grounds of insufficient parking and potential traffic problems. I understand that the Planning staff at the Council are opposed to this as being injurious to a listed building.

Lastly those of you who attended the Public Meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February will have formed your own views as to whether it was worthwhile. I think many of those 140 or so who did attend felt that Paul Watson, Head of Planning, was well worth listening to even if they may not have liked all that he had to say. The most positive part of what he did say was perhaps his promise to keep in touch, to address my committee in the near future on the working of the 2004 Planning Act, and particularly on the close consultation with groups such as your Society which is required under that Act. Meanwhile there are some 150 flats being or about to be built in Knowle. Is there really a demand for so many flats? The next few months will tell but I am inclined to think not, in which case some or all of the builders will *catch a cold*. That, I think, would work better than any legislation in checking the rush to demolish some of our better houses.



*Milverton House—rear car park*

Peter Ewin  
Knowle 776381

[Photos—Roger Grainger]

**EXHIBITION PROGRAMME**

We do hope those of you who saw it enjoyed *Images of Lodge Road*, which ended on January 31st. It created a gratifying amount of interest, so we may do something more on individual areas in the future. You may have noticed from the posters that our programme for this year has been amended: it is now as follows

Until April 30th *The Red Lion*

May 1st - August 31st *Peace & Remembrance*

Sep 1st - Nov 30th *Knowle in Trafalgar Year*

Dec 1st - Mar 31st *Johnson's Garage*

The *Chester House* exhibition has been put back until 2006. All exhibitions are on view during normal library hours in the Local History Centre (Chester House, 1st Floor) unless otherwise stated.

**EXHIBITION: THE RED LION**

For personal reasons *Johnson's Garage* had to be postponed at the last minute, so we scratched our heads to find something interesting to show which would not take too much time. The result - as you may have seen from the posters - is *The Red Lion*. It includes *The Building & Sign; early references; licensees; colourful customers; scenes from the yard; red letter days; the bowling club and the wartime Lion and after*. Documentary evidence is enlivened by personal recollections of the inn and all that took place there.

**EXHIBITION: PEACE & REMEMBRANCE**

We are now well into the preparation of this small display, which is part of our contribution to the V.E. Day/V.J. Day celebrations. It includes a section on the men and women of Knowle who served during the war, the village celebrations on V. E. Day and V. J. Day in 1945, and of course a tribute to those who did not come back. Some of you may be unaware that there are thirteen graves in Knowle churchyard which are maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission - we are indebted to Mr. Tony Holl for a list of them. Watch for the posters for more detail. The photographs show Jubilee Field in Station Road (now occupied by houses), where village celebrations took place until 1953.

**FESTIVAL EXHIBITION: JULY 9TH.**

As usual, the Local History Centre will present an exhibition in the Guild House as part of the village celebrations. After much thought we have decided to do something on a smaller scale than hitherto, as the exhibition will only be open for a few hours - probably 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., although this has not yet been fixed. The idea of moving *Peace & Remembrance* to the Guild House for the day was tempting, but in the end was thought too much work. We shall therefore have the festival exhibition in the Guild House *and Peace & Remembrance* in the library on that day. The centrepiece of the festival exhibition will be *Images of Knowle*, a carefully selected group of photographs giving an overall picture of the village. The ever popular scrap books, parish magazines, etc. will also be there for perusal at your leisure, together with a display about the work of the Local History Centre. Once more, watch for the posters.

**ORAL HISTORY**

John Johnson has been unable to do any more recently, but no doubt he will pick up the threads soon.

**ITV FILM**

We hope that those of you who saw *The Way We Were ~ Love & Marriage* enjoyed it. We do congratulate Anita Homer, Doreen Ward and Ann Cox for their excellent performance - we gather they are now something approaching celebrities. Several people have expressed their disappointment at missing the programme; but ITV has promised us a few copies - not yet received, but with luck they'll appear soon, when they will be available for loan.

**DIGITAL IMAGING**

Geoffrey Dean continues to add to our store of digital images. We are now in process of acquiring the use of a second external drive for back up purposes.

**CARE & CONSERVATION PROGRAMME**

We have set ourselves a target for the year, which may be optimistic as we also have a very heavy exhibition programme. The transfer of the parish magazines to new folders is now complete - although they still await the labels on the folders. The early magazines (up to 1914), which were disintegrating on sight, have been put into acid free sleeves, from which they will only rarely need to be removed. As this is very expensive, we shall not do likewise for later ones at present. The next job - the maps - is no further forward than reported in the last newsletter, but we hope to start soon. There are also improvements needed to our documentation: changes in the computer system to work more efficiently under windows XP and a revised new accessions system to name but two.

**ARCHIVES WORKING GROUP**

We have recently set up a small informal group to work on the collection. At present we intend to meet once a month on a Tuesday afternoon for a couple of hours. This infant organisation has so far met once - with Julia Brain, Shirley Harris, Sylvia Moody and myself. When we moved into Chester House in 1988 we took the plunge and transferred the collection to new brown envelopes, many of which are now getting tatty with age and need replacing. After much

**I**t seems a long time since at the AGM we agreed to rearrange the work of the Amenities and Nature Conservation sub-committees and the Pathfinder project work into two new committees – Community Services led by Gary Masters and Environment led by me.

Since then Gary and I have been working our way through the long list of activities covered in an attempt to separate them into the two new groupings and make sure we don't lose the good work done in the past. We think we have succeeded in achieving a sensible balance for each group and I thought I would take the opportunity in my first article for the Newsletter of outlining the areas that will be covered by the Environment group. Gary will be doing a similar piece for Community Services elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The Environment group will be concerned with the facilities and amenities that are available in the village to make our life more enjoyable. It may be a convenient seat in a pleasant spot where we can watch the world go by or the play/sports areas where we can burn off that excess energy - and for some of us an extra few pounds too.

The next step is to establish the group; if you are interested in joining us then I look forward to hearing from you.

The group's activities will be broken down into a number of areas: -

**Open Green Spaces and Rural Footpaths** – Knowle Park is a major asset and it's important that the character of the park is maintained and that it provides a safe haven for all to enjoy. Solihull MBC has established a liaison group to allow local groups input into the future management of the park. We will continue to be actively involved in this group. The recent work on replacing the rose beds with more suitable *year round* interest and the cleaning of the pond were discussed at a recent meeting of the group.

The park is not the only green space in the village and the Environment group will also be taking an interest in other areas such as St John's Close, the area around Purnells Brook, the Nature Reserve together with the footpaths and canal towpaths. Those of you who attended the excellent presentation by Leela O'Dea of British Waterways will know the wealth of plants and animals along the canal.

**Urban Spaces and Verges** – These are principally the green and paved areas such as the areas around the Village Hall and the Scout Hut. The group will also maintain an interest in our grass verges, trees and shrubs.

**Leisure Facilities** – The group will also take a keen interest in the provision of leisure facilities for the village. Many of these facilities are located in the Park but the Society has long been active in promoting the provision of sports/playground facilities, cycle routes and a network of footpaths for the benefit of residents.

**Nature Conservation** – Many will know that in the past Stella Jarman and her group have taken a very active *hands on* approach. Our approach will probably be less *hands on* and with a more strategic view of things but we will liaise closely with those who wish to continue to get their hands dirty.

**Agenda 21 Matters** – Many of you will be aware that this is a comprehensive plan of action at global, national and local levels that came out of the Rio Conference in 1992. At a local level, this translates to Solihull MBC engaging with other groups and communities to lead the development of a Local Agenda 21 action plan that addresses the many factors contributing to the quality of our lives. The plan is wide-ranging and includes areas such as: transport, natural and rural environment, pollution, recycling, energy conservation and litter.

**St John's Close** – With the end of the St John's Close (Pathfinder) project, the group will progress the conclusions with Solihull MBC and other interested parties. You will recall that these were about improvements to the Green, the area around the Scout Hut, the car parks, the on-street parking and the traffic flows through the area. We have started discussions with Solihull MBC on the first two areas and when the group is in place, we intend to address the others.

Over the next few weeks I will be on the look out for people who have knowledge or an enthusiasm for these areas and encouraging them to join us. If you are interested you can contact me by telephone or e-mail and I will be happy to explain more of our plans.

Malcolm Brain - Knowle 730080

#### **MORE COMMUNITY SPIRIT?**

Have you been to the History Section's Red Lion exhibition in Chester House library yet (see page 4)? There is a splendid saying there from the days when the local fire engine was kept in one of the Red Lion's out-buildings, that "the location enabled the firemen to get a few pints down before going out to tackle the fire"!

## HELLO AND WELCOME

This is the initial column of the newly named Community Services Sub-Committee. It is in many ways the son of the Amenities committee, but there have been some changes to the main activity areas, and later in the article you will be able to read the content of our activities.

### **SUSPENSION IMPROVEMENT!**

The work on the three car parks in the centre of the village; namely the *Shoppers'* (by Tesco), the rear of the village hall, and the rear of the NatWest Bank, should now benefit all users with their newly laid surfaces following the work at the end of February and early March. It is also to be hoped that the wider parking bays will assist motorists in judging their distances between vehicles more accurately, and maybe will accommodate 4 x 4 vehicles as well.

The next step is to find where more parking spaces can be found, bearing in mind that the more spaces supplied will mean the more vehicles that will be attracted to fill them. You never know, a fairy god-mother may decide to wave her wand and conjure up space that no one has been able to identify before.

### **THE FUTURE**

A vacancy has appeared on the committee, following the resignation of James Randle, whom I thank for his hard-working contributions. If you have an interest in any areas of the sub-committee's work and feel that you can give some assistance then please do not hesitate to contact me; initially to discuss the situation. The sub-committee is responsible for the following:

- |                               |                |                   |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Airport liaison and expansion | Police liaison | Public transport  |
| Traffic matters               | Cycling        | Urban footpaths   |
| Street furniture              | Licensing      | Trading standards |
| Street cleaning               | Public toilets |                   |

The next immediate area of our work will be to have the council officers look at the situation for the pathway between the One Stop shop and the NatWest Bank. Perhaps the Bank concerned will also be interested in improving the unsightly nature of this area.

### **FINALLY**

I strongly recommend that you attend the open meeting to be held on Monday 23rd May in the village hall when we will be addressed by Katherine Kerswell, the Chief Executive Officer of Solihull M B C.



*Shoppers' car park closed for work*



*Rear of Village Hall car park*



*NatWest car park before*



*NatWest car park after*



*The gimmel (alley) alongside One-Stop and the NatWest bank  
All photos: Roger Grainger*



*[Please note that there was some editorial confusion in the last issue and in the programme card concerning the new name of the Amenities Sub-committee and its associated email address. The name and the address on this page are now the correct ones. Ed.]*

Gary Masters  
Knowle 779955

Well, my first year as Chairman of the *we organise everything else* sub-committee, is well under way, with two of our open meetings already held, and the programme looking good. In fact, by the time most of you get the chance to read this, the third meeting and the first walk will both be over.

We began the year with **An Illustrated Introduction to Organics Gardens**. The speaker was a former head gardener at the Ryton Gardens of the HDRA Organic Gardening Organisation and he had many useful tips on how it's possible to run our own gardens in a more *organic* way and improve the environment at the same time. The talk was well received and, as a result, we are planning a visit to the Ryton Gardens on **Thursday 30 June**. Unfortunately the cost of a coach to take us is well beyond what I would see as sensible, so we are going to have to go by car. If people are willing to offer lifts I will sort a suitable arrangement. The cost of the entrance charge and the guided tour of the gardens is £5 per head. The itinerary will be:-

10:00	Meet at Knowle Village Hall (maps and directions to Ryton provided)
11:00	Arrive at the Ryton Gardens
11:00	Guided tour
12:30	Lunch available in the restaurant (or bring your own)
13:30	Free time to explore the gardens further
15:00	Leave Ryton at your convenience

A booking form may be downloaded from the website under *Forms*. Please fill it in and return it to L Jones, 23 Newton Rd, Knowle B93 9HL, with money (cheques to the *Knowle Society*), as soon as possible. Alternatively drop me a line with the following details. I would appreciate it if those people who have already given me their names would send the details as confirmation.

Number of places required	Names of each person to attend	Any special needs
Your address	An evening telephone number	
Total amount being paid	Whether by cash or cheque	

Our second talk of the year was **Wildlife on the Canals**, enthusiastically described by Leela O'Dea of British Waterways. She was able to open our eyes to many of the things that we would normally miss while walking the canal towpaths, including such special sights as otters and kingfishers. The meeting was well attended, especially considering the weather, which was threatening snow. Everyone enjoyed the evening, especially the excellent slides of the plants and animals (except perhaps those of some of the *bugs* – which seemed to be her favourites!)

The March meeting was **Memories of an Evacuee**, which I'm sure will have brought back personal memories to some of our members.

We will also have undertaken our first walk of the season from Packwood House, hoping to see a good show of daffodils. The next walk is an evening one, leaving from The Guild House at 7:30pm, and we should come across a good show of bluebells in the three miles that will take us out towards Elvers Green Lane and back via Waterfield Farm and the canal. **The date of this walk is Wednesday April 27.**

I am grateful to continue to be able to call on Stella Jarman to lead two walks again this year. These will be aimed, not at covering any particular distance or route, but exploring our local wildlife. The first is at **2:30pm on Sunday, May 15** and will concentrate on our wild flowers, while the aim of the one at **2:30 pm on Sunday, July 10**, will be to see how many different butterflies can be found and identified.

In between, I'll lead a canal-side walk at **7:30 pm on Wednesday 15 June**, when we'll try and spot some of Leela's wildlife (and perhaps take refreshment at one of the canal-side hostelrys.)

For those of you not attracted to tramping the countryside, we continue our open meetings on Monday April 18 with Mr Denzil Smith talking about **The Work of a Prison Visitor**. I am sure we'll get a fascinating insight into the life of prison inmates and the efforts made to ensure they don't return. We return to the water theme on Monday, June 20 with **The Royal National Lifeboat Institution**, and follow this with one that I'm sure will attract a good crowd – **Speed Awareness** (cameras, speed guns and other devices) on **July 18**.

Hoping to see many of you at one or more of these events,

Leighton Jones – Knowle 773894

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT**  
**AN EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING**  
**OF THE KNOWLE SOCIETY**

will be held

**On Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2005 in the Village Hall, commencing at 8pm.**

The Purpose of the Meeting is to consider, and if thought appropriate, pass the following Resolutions:-

1. That the Knowle Society be incorporated as a company, limited by guarantee.
2. That the appropriate steps be put in hand for the winding up of the existing Knowle Society and for its Assets to be transferred to the new company.

- N.B.
1. Resolution 2 will only be put to the meeting if Resolution 1 is passed.
  2. The reasons for the Resolutions are set out in the Chairman's Report on the front page of this Newsletter. Further explanations will be given at the meeting.
  3. Under the present Constitution, two specific Resolutions are required for the Winding up of the Society. The Resolutions must be put to separate E.G.Ms, one held at least two weeks after the other. For this reason Resolution 2 above, if passed, will be regarded as the first of these two Resolutions. The second will be put to a further E.G.M. to be held at 8pm on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2005 before the General Meeting already arranged for that evening.
  4. Only members of the Society are eligible to vote on these Resolutions.

*Peter Johnson*  
*Honorary Secretary*  
*28<sup>th</sup> February 2005*

(Continued from page 4)

thought we have opted for green folders, which have come down in price since 1988 and are much stronger. This is the archive working party's first job: we managed to do a surprising amount, although it cannot be completed without re-printing some of the catalogue sheets (too complicated to explain fully here). This sort of soul-destroying job is, of course, much more enjoyable in congenial company (usually followed by a trip to a nearby tea shop).

**PEOPLE**

We are all pleased to see John Johnson out of hospital after surgery and look forward to his complete recovery. Sylvia Moody (née Curtis) has joined our team of stewards. She will be a great asset and comes with an added bonus - a daughter who works in a museum. We are delighted to welcome her and hope she will enjoy working with us.

**Elaine Warner - Knowle 775887**

Welcome to our new members...

Mrs E R Bleby  
Mr & Mrs M N S Bridge  
Mr S M Bunch  
Mr & Mrs D J Coates  
Mr & Mrs Donaghue  
Mr & Mrs Hill  
Mr J Hill  
Councillor D E Holl-Allen  
Mr C Pontifex  
Mr & Mrs A T Turner  
Mr M S Warr  
Mr & Mrs A Wilde

*Can you encourage your friends and neighbours to join the Knowle Society? This may be done either by contacting the membership Secretary or through an application form on the website:*

*[www.knowledociety.org.uk](http://www.knowledociety.org.uk)*

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