

The Knowle Society



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www.knowledesociety.org.uk

RECYCLING – WHAT PRICE MUST WE PAY?

The current vogue is for people to become more conscientious with regard to the waste materials generated in their homes. In order to “Save the planet for our children” we are all being strongly encouraged to use recycling facilities placed at certain points in and around our own borough, including Knowle. The concept of recycling is laudable, but at what cost?

I have raised some questions, on behalf of The Knowle Society, of our Council for them to consider (we will publish their reply in the next newsletter). These include:

1. How much longer must the villagers of Knowle have to put up

with the debris and untidiness in the village caused by the plethora of recycling units which are despoiling the car parks and adjoining pavements in the village centre?

2. How many more valuable car park spaces are to be lost to the huge units having to be used for collecting the recycling waste?

3. It is understood that Solihull MBC intends to arrange for kerbside collections of waste for recycling. When is this likely to be implemented and in action?

It is known that Lichfield Council has an efficient recycling operation which could well repay study.

Those of you who use the local shops (all I trust) will have noticed that shoppers around the village seem to be on the decline, and certain shops are noticing a reduction in their takings. Are the difficulties in finding parking spaces a contributory factor to this situation? What will the many visitors to our lovely village think in the late spring and summer months when they cannot park, or are offended by the debris strewn about the recycling units?

I have raised many questions and to my mind the simple answer is kerbside collections. Other Councils

(Continued on page 2)

Events Diary

Monday 21st April

8.00pm in the Village Hall

Wednesday 7th May

7.00pm at the Guild House

Monday 16th June

8.00pm in the Village Hall

Wednesday 18th June

7.00pm at the
Black Boy Public House

Monday 21st July

8.00pm in the Village Hall

Women in WWII—the FANYs

Hugh Davies, a Bletchley Park guide, tells of the contribution to the war effort made in many different ways by women, including those of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry, now in its centenary year.

Bluebell Walk

Having missed it last year and a poor display the year before, let's hope for better this year. Earlier time than previous years. 3 miles mainly fields.

Railways through Knowle - Past, Present & Future

The story of how the coming of the railway transformed the future of Knowle and its surroundings. An illustrated talk by Ian Baxter.

Canal and footpaths Walk

Starting from the Black Boy and ending up there! Short walk 2-3 miles or a longer one 3-4 miles - both walks, half fields, half towpath.

Recycling our Waste

Jim Harte of Community Services, Solihull Council explains the strategies for waste management and recycling in Solihull.

(Continued from page 1)

around the country introduced such collections many years ago, and they have been extremely successful. Their recycling rates are well ahead of Solihull. The 'carbon footprint' we are advised of would be substantially reduced if the collections were made direct from the kerbside instead of every motorist driving along to the disposal units of their choice. By placing the recycling units in the centre of our village the Council is of the opinion that some people will carry their recycling goods on foot to the appropriate receptacles. This may be true for a few people, so why place them in car parks? Surely the benefit of utilising car parks for the sites of the recycling units is that you encourage motorists to use them. I recall a holiday of a lifetime more than 14 years ago in California. At that time kerbside collections were in operation for plastic, paper and card, glass and garden waste. All homes were involved successfully.

Litter used to be a major problem around the village and now the operators of the recycling units can expect to receive many complaints from our members if they do not comply with the need to ensure that the existing areas given over to their units are not maintained in a satisfactory order.

The recent introduction of the plastic recycling unit in the church/school/library/Greswolde car park has been a considerable problem to potential users for the technical detail that appears on the side of it regarding what can and what cannot be recycled. I refer you to the centre pages of this newsletter for the instructions that you need and photographs of Knowle's recycling facilities.

Our car parks are beginning to look like disused industrial sites cluttered with different coloured rusting hulks of metal. Certainly not what you would expect in a charming village like Knowle.

Only very recently machinery was installed in West Bromwich to cope with moulding all different types

of plastic into recycled posts. Councils cannot afford the construction of their own recycling plants any more, because of the limit on the capital expenditure budgets. It is appreciated that the Council is endeavouring to improve their performance in recycling and let us now look forward to further education of all residents.

We shall all shortly be receiving a green wheelie-bin in order that we can dispose of our garden waste in it and then wheel the bin down to the kerbside for it to be emptied and returned there. So kerbside collections are possible in Solihull. I do hope that this positive step will be followed quickly by the provision of receptacles for all the other recycling items soon, so that we can have our car parking spaces back and the untidy eyesores are removed.

Whilst compiling this article the news has broken that Marks and Spencer is intending to introduce a 5p charge for using its plastic bags in the food departments of its stores. I do not feel that this cost is a very substantial deterrent to the people that purchase large quantities of bags for groceries in such supermarkets. 30 pence or so additional cost will not mean too much to the working wealthy, whereas the needs of the retired or unemployed person wanting to buy a sandwich and a piece of fruit for their lunch will suffer the additional charge more frequently. I am a great advocate of the *Bag for Life* scheme. There are some excellent initiatives taking place around the country and I would certainly welcome and support such a scheme if it was introduced in this area.

The whole subject of recycling and where our waste goes is an important matter. The Society is delighted that Jim Harte of Solihull Council will address the membership in the Village Hall on the evening of 21 July at 8.00 pm. I look forward to seeing you there then, and to hearing your questions afterwards. Put the date in your diaries and on the calendars.

**Gary Masters - Chairman - Knowle 779955
chairman@knowlesociety.org.uk**



**HAVE YOU BOUGHT YOUR NEW
GUIDE TO KNOWLE YET?**

PRICE £3.00

Available at any meeting of The Knowle Society,
or at Carly's, Oxfam Books & Music and
Knowle Library (when reopened)

NARROW BOATS – OUR HERITAGE ?

Many of you may have visited the public exhibition¹ at the Greswolde at the end of January detailing proposals for the construction of a marina for the mooring of narrow boats on the canal at the back of Grove Farm in Jacobean Lane. I had been made aware earlier as the applicants, Jack Allen Holdings, approached me through their professional consultants and asked for a meeting with me before proceeding further.

The approach to me was not a surprise as under the 2004 Planning Act planning applicants, at least for schemes of medium to large scale, are obliged to show that they have consulted locally and widely before submitting the plans for formal approval or otherwise. Knowle Society is seen as the obvious port of first call for local matters.

By the time you read this, the application will probably have been before the Council for some time. My committee have of course been considering the suggestion for a marina for about 140 boats from the time we first heard of the proposals. We have also been attempting to ascertain the views of as many people as possible. Although the residents of Jacobean Lane and Wychwood Avenue will be the most affected both during construction and after completion, I believe this is a matter affecting the whole village. It is a large area in the Green Belt, it may set unfortunate precedents for the future and it will probably cause increased traffic, particularly at weekends and holidays. On the other hand, local traders may well welcome the possibility of increased sales and use for leisure purposes is viewed as an exception to the general rule where it comes to development in the Green Belt. So, there is a lot to think about before we decide on a course of action. I think at the very least we will take exception to the size of the proposals and there may well be objections to the proposed arrangements for car parking.

Since the last newsletter, my colleague Phil Vince and I have attended a conference in Birmingham arranged by the Victorian Society. There were several speakers on a variety of subjects but the most interesting talk from my point of view was given by the local team leader of English Heritage, Nick Molyneux. He spoke of the new Government White Paper, 'Power of Place' which deals with the future of Heritage protection. There will be a new statutory test – that a building or other site must be of 'special architectural historic or archaeological interest' and instead of the present Class 1, 2*, and 2, we will have Classes A, B and C. Class A will include all the present listings for buildings. Local Planning Authorities will have much greater roles and planning applications for listed buildings will go through one process only which will take into account the listed status of the building, rather than the present two, including Listed Building application.

There is no doubt that the proposals are of enormous importance, particularly for a place like Knowle, and we shall be studying them very carefully and submitting comments if thought appropriate before the planned starting date of 2010. At the moment, I view the White Paper with cautious approval but there is a lot of water to pass under that bridge.

There were several other speakers and some of them were interesting! Gary Cardin spoke about what I like to call the 'Milverton House syndrome' i.e. making sure as far as possible that historic buildings have some economic use so that the cost of upkeep can be met from the rent or other returns from the building itself. Stephen Hartland spoke about brownfield development, particularly 'garden grabbing' but mostly as it affects gardens in Edgbaston and Moseley. There, it appears at present, they do not have the pressure that we have for hundreds of flats – perhaps builders accept that the market for flats in those suburbs is totally fulfilled.

Lastly, we have been looking at an application by Arden School which includes new temporary classrooms and car parking needed in connection with the new 6th form status of the school. We have our doubts over the positioning of the classrooms in front of the building line and over the site of the by-pass if it ever happens and believe some re-thinking should be done over positioning.

¹ Pictures of the area affected by this proposal may be seen on the website—follow the link on the home page or if viewing some months after publication of the newsletter, look in the 2008 News Log.

Peter Ewin - Knowle 776381

Please note that the date in the 2008 Programme Card for Heritage Open Day in Knowle was incorrectly stated as Saturday 11th September, this should of course be Saturday 13th September. Nationally the Heritage Open Days (HODS) scheme operates over the period 11th-14th September. The Knowle Society is currently negotiating access to interesting buildings in Knowle for this event.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, further changes in the composition of the Community Services sub-Committee have taken place. Paul Blackman a long standing member of the sub-Committee has regrettably tendered his resignation due to pressure of work. I would like to place on record my thanks to Paul who has been a stalwart of the committee offering good counsel on many items. In particular his excellent relationship with the Police has resulted in long term strategies that have benefited Knowle.

I would like to welcome Lynne Steyn and Lorna Gale who have joined the Community Services Committee.

AIRPORT MATTERS

The extension to the existing airport runway has been well publicised and The Society has now formally written to SMBC regarding the Airport Planning Application. We have set out our concerns, in particular the Surface Access Strategy and congestion risks to the local road infrastructure.

We understand that objections to the proposed flight path in the Planning Application have been raised by other communities; we have therefore informed SMBC that if changes are made we would have to reconsider our position.

SMBC MATTERS

Solihull Partnership Forum - Within The Solihull Partnership a new strategy is being developed which allows the 'Voluntary and Community Sector' to be involved in the setting of objectives and priorities that SMBC will be agreeing with the Government. Representatives from The Knowle Society have attended preliminary meetings to discuss how best we could take part and we will report progress in future newsletters.

High Street Flower Tubs - Once again The Society is making a contribution to the cost of the High Street flower tubs, which helps to enhance the look of the village. SMBC has offered to attend the next Community Services meeting to inform us of the plans for 2008 Solihull in Bloom.

Car Park Hampton Road - It has been reported that the free car park next to the canal in Hampton Road is in poor condition. We have contacted SMBC who will establish land ownership before replying.

M42 Motorway Service Area - The public inquiry into the proposed new motorway service area on the M42 is now taking place and is scheduled to be completed by the end of March. The proposal is for the service area to be sited at either junction 4 or between junction 5 and 6. The Knowle Society has registered its objections to both proposals and will be attending the hearing on relevant days.

POLICE MATTERS

Speed Watch - As reported in the last newsletter, Tidbury Green Residents Association is looking to trial a community speed watch initiative and Paul Blackman reports that Councillor Potts is monitoring this.

Neighbourhood Police Meeting - Lilla Baker and Lorna Gale attended this Neighbourhood Police meeting which gives an opportunity for local people to voice their concerns and set priorities. The attendance at the meeting was disappointing and the organisers wish to find a way to bring it to everyone's attention; your views would be welcome. The meeting reported that an awareness week at Arden School is to take place for pupils and parents commencing 7th April 2008; topics include behaviour, gun/knife crime and drugs.

Police Surgery - These surgeries take place on the first Monday of each month, the next one is on: Monday 7th April, 11.00am - 1.00pm at Knowle Village Hall.

I would like to bring to your notice that The Knowle Society web site www.knowlesociety.org.uk now has a link to the Police web site. This gives up to date information on Knowle priorities, contact numbers and Police surgery times/venues. When you access The Knowle Society web site just click on *Community*, where the link to the Police web site is highlighted.

John Rowley - Knowle 778289

TESCO TROLLEYS

At the time of this report Tesco has agreed in principle to investigate the possible use of coin return trolleys in an attempt to alleviate, hopefully, the abandonment of these trolleys around the village from as far apart as Holland Avenue, Wychwood Avenue, Kenilworth Road, Hampton Road and most recently three in Purnells Brook.

The final word on trolleys this time is that space has to be identified for return pens without loss of parking spaces and it would seem that areas selected are in the second shoppers' car park, possibly one close by the village hall, one in the library car park and two at the store, one of which is already housing them today but this would have to be modified to comply.

TREES IN WARWICK ROAD

Warwick Road trees have come in for some criticism whereby the council has not as yet replaced those trees which were removed some time ago for health and safety reasons but this committee understands that two common oak trees will be planted in March, which we are assured is just the beginning of a plan to restore the ancient tree avenue to its former glory. It will take time but the hedges and verges have already been examined with a view to adding to existing stock.

For those with a need for more accuracy the trees selected are PEDUNCULATE OAK (*quercus robur*) which can grow to a massive 45 metres. The planting season is November to March therefore we are not likely to see any other changes until late 2008.

RECYCLING

The plastics recycling container in the library car park is being well used and monitored by the council to ascertain an emptying cycle. In the same car park poorly sited paper containers are encroaching over three car park spaces instead of two, a situation which will be corrected very soon.

PARK

The park and nature reserve are continuing to mature and with the pond now cleared we are hopeful of the return of some wildlife visitors as the spring approaches.

SHOPPERS' CAR PARK

The main shoppers' car park has been examined and it has been decided that the surface is quite reasonable but remarking is a priority with more emphasis on the exit and entrance instructions in an attempt to stop the abuse we all see from time to time. Health and safety considerations do not allow for alligator feet as we had hoped for in our original wish list, in the main due to public liability insurance which would be very costly indeed and with our car parks not generating any revenue it cannot be justified.

Whilst on the car park subject, the parking attendants currently are not able to enforce the regulations as the signage is not accurate but rather than have this changed now we have agreed to wait for another regulation coming into force on April 1st before the enforcement can begin, after which time we are advised that the attendants will be in Knowle much more often, possibly daily.

Allan Coleman - Knowle 772237

MORE INFORMATION ON SOLIHULL COUNCIL'S RECYCLING FACILITIES:

SMBC's website provides details of the materials that may be recycled within the Borough's facilities:

http://www.solihull.gov.uk/environment/recycling_7254.htm

Alternatively from the home page of the Council website select the Council Services tab and then click on Recycling in the Quicklinks panel.

Solihull will take Type 1 and Type 2 plastics (see page 7) but will not take plastic bags, toys, video cassettes, cling film and bubble wrap, according to the poster on the Plastic Bottle Bank.

Stella Jarman who is a former chairman of what was then The Knowle Society's Nature sub-Committee has kindly provided some notes on the pond at Jobs Close Park—the object of a recent dredging exercise—see photos on the Society's website.

THE POND

The large duck pond near the Longdon Road entrance was originally the largest of three marl pits (some say clay) rising uphill next to the Longdon Road boundary. When Solihull Council landscaped that area in 1974(?) the two higher pits were filled in and their banks secured down to the new footpath with vertical wooden poles. Steps were inserted up to the top of Longdon Road and also up to Jobs Close House. The large lower pond was concreted around two sides; including a crazy paved stepped ramp. There had been a boat in the pond and it was still there when the house was occupied by the Junior Cedarhurst School during the Second World War.



Mr Furness-Huson, Parks Superintendent, had this pond cleared of leaves in the 1980s. He told me (c. 2002) that a boat had been used to do this. He himself had planted the reeds against the lower concrete bank, hoping they would increase to form a nursery for use elsewhere. But they did not thrive and remained until the pond was one-third re-dredged in 2005. Vandals were pulling them out of the water and throwing them about so the remainder were cleared away together with the splendid clump of Marsh marigolds that flourished by the bottom culvert (overflow water drained by pipe into Purnells Brook). The Park Rangers replanted the Marsh marigolds in the marshy area at the back of the pond but they were lost in the recent overall dredging (January 2008). Two tractors went into the pond via the Longdon Road hedge and scoured NOT the remaining two-thirds but the whole of the pond. Solihull Council's Tree Wardens have told me that the silt was dumped in the meadow parkland just beyond Lea Wood – Solihull Council's old tree nursery off Widney Manor Road.

6

The trunk of the fallen tree into the pond was removed by the dredgers and placed on the bank. There is some doubt as to whether it can be returned to the water where it would help the pond recover some of its lost bio-diversity. Twelve Mallard ducks have returned but the Moorhen family has lost its nesting site that was on a lateral branch over-hanging the rear of the pond; this got chopped in a tidying-up operation! The contractors have re-seeded the banks, and replanting of hedge and shrubs will take place later. The Council's new Nature Reserve officer, Gary Farmer, is planning a nature trail around the whole of the Local Nature Reserve, including Purnells Brook, The Knowle Society's former Nature Reserve the rough grassland behind the Brook and around the pond area.

THE ORCHARD ABOVE THE POND

This old orchard stood on the high ground beside the present Jobs Close Home above two old clay pits and the remaining lower pond. The clay pits were filled in when Solihull Council landscaped the whole area c.1974. The Council retained the arboretum which the Revd T. Blyth had planted up the rising ground, continuing the arboretum within his estate on the other side of Longdon Road but the orchard was felled and replaced with a conifer plantation.

Exactly when the orchard was first planted is unknown, but Mary Binley, sister of Arthur Burton the last tenant of Burton's dairy farm (which made way for the flats in St. Lawrence Close) told me that Worcester Pearmain apples from the orchard had always been stored in an old cottage that had stood where the Old People's bungalows now are to the right of the park entrance in Lodge Road.


The management plan for a nature trail mentions thinning out the conifers and the new Nature Conservation Group¹ that assists the Rangers feels that this presents a splendid opportunity for the restoration of the old orchard and replanting it with the old varieties which are fast disappearing. Such a project would add greatly to the nature conservation of the Park and would assist the Friends of the Park in the bid to achieve a further Green Flag Award. If Solihull Council agrees, the Nature Conservation Group would approach the Ryton Organic Centre² about the feasibility of such a project and the purchase of suitable stock.

¹ The Nature Conservation Group has no formal connection with The Knowle Society, it is led by Stella Jarman who is a former chairman of The Knowle Society's Nature Conservation sub-committee and who regularly contributed notes to the newsletter on nature matters in and around Knowle.

² The Knowle Society organised a visit to this centre in November 2005.

RECYCLING—ALL YOU EVER NEEDED TO KNOW!

Type	Name	Chemical name of the plastic resin	Main types of packaging	Typical uses
1	PET	Polyethylene terephthalate	Bottles	Transparent drink bottles e.g. mineral water, cooking oil, cordials and fizzy drinks
2	HDPE	High-density polyethylene	Bottles, film	Opaque bottles e.g. those containing washing up liquid, detergents, fabric conditioners, milk and fruit juices
3	PVC	Polyvinyl chloride	Containers, film	Bottles containing cordials, still mineral water, toiletries and cooking oils. They are clear and have a seam running around the bottle.
4	LDPE	Low-density polyethylene	Film, coatings	Carrier bags, bin bags
5	PP	Polypropylene		
6	PS	Polystyrene		
7	-	Other		



At present only types 1, 2, 3 and 4, PET, HDPE and PVC bottles, tubs and pots and in some cases LDPE are recycled from consumers in the UK. **Solihull MBC takes only Types 1 and 2 at present.**



'Tesco' car park recycling centre



The not-so-brilliant sign on the new Plastic Bottle Bank



This transparent Type 1 bottle is marked PETE rather than PET!



The garish new Plastic Bottle Bank in the 'school' car park—what price recycling?



This Type 2 milk carton says PEHD rather than HDPE!



'School' car park recycling centre



Paper recycling facility at the 'school' car park



Type 2 milk carton top—off the same bottle as above but marked HDPE! Beware—some milk bottle tops are Type 5, PP



Recycling facility at Wyndley Garden Centre

View the website for full colour images—password for access for this issue is—9JXL71

WARNING—CUT OUT THIS PAGE FOR REFERENCE—DO NOT RECYCLE!

Those who came along to the January meeting would have been excited, I hope, at seeing our new screen for the first time. There it was, standing proudly on the stage and in clear view of everyone. We were all looking forward to it being used for the first time to show the slides and pictures recording the history and current position of the John Lewis Partnership. What a disappointment we had! For some reason we do not understand, the Customer Service Manager from John Lewis was unavailable at the last minute and asked an inexperienced Sales Assistant to stand in for him. This might not have been too bad, but it was compounded by sending him along without the slides or the projector. The poor lad was left with no option but to make the best of things. Unfortunately the challenge was too much and we were 'treated' to a very poor presentation of the intended show. I must say, though, that once off the presentation he had been left with and onto questions about subjects that he had personal knowledge of, things improved greatly. We all felt really sorry that he had been left to 'carry the can'. I was very disappointed, as I'm sure were all those who had turned out. This was the first real flop of all the talks that I and my committee had been involved in and we have to apologise to all those who made the effort to turn out. Needless to say John Lewis have been left in no doubt of our feelings. [I have no evidence, but I have been told that the intended speaker has since left the John Lewis company.]



Leighton proudly presents...

What a contrast at the February meeting! We were treated to a *tour de force* from George Hook of George Hook & Co. who are the sole remaining Birmingham company manufacturing buttons and bespoke items out of mother-of-pearl. His account of the history of the family owned company (all the owners being named George!) was fascinating. The only sad note was that he is the last of the family in the business and it is likely to be wound up when he finishes. We were treated to a master class on the types of shells that produce mother-of-pearl and on the other shells used to produce similar items. He explained how such items as knife handles, cutlery (especially specialist spoons) and jewellery were made. As well, of course, as the buttons for which Birmingham was once world famous. Most of his output these days is a variety of jewellery items, many of which are made to order.



George Hook with a giant shell

He was very keen to offer a visit to his works so people could see how the items are made and understand the history of the industry. If anyone would like to visit he's very happy to have a phone call and will arrange a date. There's no minimum number, he's quite happy to have one or two. Be warned, though, you'll find it difficult to resist the attractive items he makes! His telephone number is - 0121 558 2186.

Looking ahead now. At the April meeting we have Hugh Davies who will be talking about the role played by women in the armed forces in WWII. Although the talk is entitled *The FANYS*, the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry which was formed in 1907, the women in this arm did far more than nurse. Many of them were involved in secret operations with the SOE. Others were signallers and drivers, as well as a host of other duties. The Corps still exists today as a volunteer unit and provides assistance to the civil authorities in times of disaster.



Amazing shell structure

As usual there is no meeting in May, but in June we look at the history and future of the *Railways through Knowle*. That's news to me; I thought it went through Dorridge, although the station was originally called Knowle. In the meantime, we're busy organising the programme for 2009. We are always on the lookout for good speakers. If anyone has any suggestions I'd be delighted to hear about them.

On another matter, we have had several comments about the poor performance of the 'Hearing Loop' system in the Village Hall. Although it looked as if it was working it became clear that it wasn't doing what it should. The good news is that we have had the engineer in to look at it and he has 'tweaked' it, so it is now working as it should. Those who use this to boost the way in which their hearing aids work should hear a real difference and I'd be very pleased to be told what you think.

Those of you who subscribe to the Church Parish Magazine will know that Phil Vince has been writing a short piece about our up-coming meeting each month. He has been doing this for far longer than I remember, with no fuss and just getting it done, which has taken one job off my committee for which we are very grateful. He has agreed, though reluctantly, that the time has come to pass this on to someone else and it naturally falls on Dave Pinwell as our Publicity Officer and he has agreed to take it on. Phil will continue to be fully involved in the Society as a member of the planning sub-committee. Very importantly he is also our Village Hall Steward, so is responsible for making sure that we get into the hall! You will also know that he ensures the chairs are put away properly. What you might not know is that he has been putting them all out on his own! Thanks again for this, Phil.

Leighton Jones – Knowle 773894

WHAT'S NEW ON THE WEBSITE?



Our website has undergone a significant transformation since the last newsletter; it has a new look and feel to the page layout and has been built up around databases that hold stories, news, events and details of the local history archives in a way that enables us to do more clever things with the information. The pages now 'design themselves' and are easier to maintain. Old items are not lost and new items can be embargoed until the required date and expired when obsolete without manual intervention. You can now arrange very simply for an automatic feed to your browser of any news stories that are published; you can search for items

in the local history archive (though this facility has further development to come) and you can look up past events and news stories. All stories now have a brief synopsis on the homepage and you can 'drill deeper' if you want more detail or bigger images. All planning applications that receive special attention by The Knowle Society are automatically linked to the applications themselves on SMBC's website, however in many cases we also add photos and mapping links to help you to relate to the actual locations.

Our appeal last month for members to help us complete the gaps in our archive of newsletters received a tremendous response from Cornwall to Dorridge and we have now filled all the gaps except the most difficult one in 1967. Thank you for your help. Members will surely find something to interest and to amuse in browsing the newsletters from the last 45 years.

All this development has resulted in a big rate of increase in hits on the website, with February receiving as many hits in one month as the site received in six months previously. We hope that members in particular will enjoy using the new website.

SOME RECENT ITEMS OF INTEREST ON THE WEBSITE

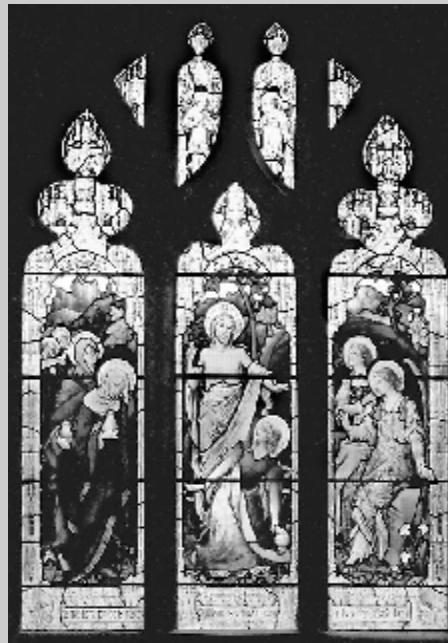
- The Jacobean Lane marina proposal
- Visit of Local History Centre team to Knowle Primary School
- The new News Feed and News Log
- Full version of the 2007 Annual Report and Accounts
- Pictures of the pond at Jobs Close being drained
- The village hall showing the new screen in place and its clear visibility throughout the hall

Following the last issue when we took an extract from the Knowle Society's new 'A Short Guide to Central Knowle, we continue with a look at aspects of our local parish church.

KNOWLE CHURCH

The church was consecrated in 1403 and is Perpendicular in style. The north side is the oldest part of the church, the north transept being added shortly afterwards as a chantry chapel. The tower replacing an original bell-cote, may have been built at the same time. The chancel was extended eastwards and the south aisle added in red sandstone probably by 1440.

In medieval times processions round the church were a feature of religious life in England. Although it is not known for sure which route the procession took around Knowle Church, processions would leave the church from one door and normally re-enter by the south porch. The south porch represented the doorway to Christian life. Below the first window on the south side of the church are the joins which show where the south porch used to be. The east end of the church was built against another building which existed at the time and explains the rough finish. This blocked the way for medieval processions which were not allowed to leave consecrated ground. The chancel floor was raised to accommodate a subway underneath.



The 'Bower' window—St John's Chapel

For 300 years the weight of the whole east end had rested on three frail walls and in 1745 the strain was seen to be becoming too great. A buttress was erected and the subway presumably filled in at the same time. You can see where the subway was because it is marked by two bricked up archways one on either side of the chancel at ground level. At the same time the chancel floor was lowered which explains why there is a piscina and sedilia stranded at a great height above the chancel floor. Eva Wootton was probably the first child for 170 years to walk

through the tunnel. She stopped to watch the workmen opening it when she was 12 years old and Canon Downing took her through.

The interior was extensively restored in 1860, but retains many early features. The font at the west end of the north aisle is almost certainly original. There are two dug-out chests which are thought to be over 800 years old and have probably been in the church since it was built. Under the carpet in front of the chancel steps is a circular stone which is believed to mark the tomb of Walter Cook. His chantry chapel in the north transept was dedicated as a war memorial in 1921 and is now known as the Soldiers Chapel. The rood screen dates from about 1480 and is a fine example of medieval craftsmanship. Just east of the screen are the piscina and sedilia of 1396 which fell into disuse when the chancel was extended. In the rear choir stalls are some medieval carved misericords, which are probably not in their original position. Modern features of the interior include the pews (1860), the stained glass (19th/20th cent.) and the pulpit (1929). In the tower are eight bells which were last recast in 1979.

St John's Chapel is at the east end of the south aisle. The east window in this chapel was a gift from the Bower family. The artist is unknown but it was manufactured by John Hardman Co. The subject is "Women at the tomb. Two angels." The inscription "He is not here for He is risen; come see the place where the Lord lay". "To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Edward Bower, of Knowle Lodge, died June 26th, 1863, and of Eliza, his wife, died June 13th, 1882. This window is erected by their children, A.D. 1896."

For more information on Knowle's historic buildings see *A Short Guide to Central Knowle*. The third edition is on sale now at Knowle Society meetings and in Carly's and Oxfam Books & Music in High Street, Knowle. The price is £3.00.

The Local History Centre remains closed temporarily following refurbishment of the library. The work of the sub-committee and our helpers continues; we are still repairing old scrapbooks. We are also helping the pupils of Knowle Junior School with their projects by displaying information about Knowle for their perusal.

We are pleased to announce an exciting new venture for the Local History Centre. Providing we get sufficient support we plan to offer visits to nearby venues which have a Local History interest.

John Hardman Company is a stained glass manufacturer and has been since 1838. The company is located on Hagley Road and has made numerous windows for cathedrals and churches including the one mentioned opposite in Knowle Church. We have arranged a group visit for Knowle Society Members and if you are interested could you please let me know so that I can put your name on the list. The charge is £4 per person and for that you get an introductory talk illustrated with slides followed by tea and biscuits and then a tour of the works. The whole event takes between two and two and a half hours. The visit will start at 10.30 am on Wednesday 7th May. The morning is the best time to take advantage of the better light for seeing the stained glass. We will meet at the venue where they have good car parking facilities.



The splendid location of John Hardman's stained glass works

To book your place please write to Derek Mellor, 92 Chantry Heath Crescent, Knowle, Solihull B93 9NJ, and enclose £4 per person to pay for the tour and a stamped addressed envelope so that we can send full details of the arrangements. If you cancel at least ten days before the event the £4 is fully refundable, after that we can make no refunds. Please make cheques payable to *The Knowle Society*.

Derek Mellor - Knowle 205129

Dave Pinwell, The Knowle Society's Publicity Officer, writes about an exciting new project...

There is light at the end of the tunnel for the Society's quest to create a suitable memorial to the life and contribution of Dr Ronald Bower, who did so much to sustain the heritage of Knowle and was a founder of the Society. Our quest is to erect a lasting memorial which is also a contribution to village life. After several false starts, we now believe we have the answer. We hope to transform the area around the bus terminus on Station Road. The bus shelter itself is tired and the former toilets which share the building are defunct. The surrounding landscaping is overgrown and unappealing. Together they obscure some attractive buildings behind. A team comprising Solihull Council, Knowle and Dorridge Rotary, the Knowle Traders, FBDA (Architects) and ourselves are now looking at a range of ideas to regenerate the space in a positive and attractive way, in the name of Dr Bower and in a manner of which he would have approved. After determining the feasibility of the project, we need to plan for financing it, which is likely to involve an application for external grant funding. So, the project will take some time yet, but we will keep you updated with progress.

FESTIVAL IN THE PARK—Following last year's very successful event run by The Friends of Knowle Park, we will be taking a stand (actually a gazebo!) this year too on Saturday 21st June. See you there?

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

This year, for the first time, I sent the Charity Commission return 'online'. In simple terms other than advising of our gross income and gross expenditure for the year, the other information the Commission requires is a list of all the Trustees. To make life a little easier for charities the Commission lists the names of trustees as at the previous year and then only amendments have to be made. The Charity Commission web site for anyone interested is:

www.charitycommission.gov.uk

In addition to using online facilities for the Charity Commission, I also send an 'online' Annual Return to Companies House, something we have to do as the Society is now a company limited by guarantee. This basically entails updating details of the 'Directors', as opposed to 'Trustees', hence our decision to refer to the Main Committee members as Trustee Directors. There is no fee incurred when sending information to the Charity Commission, but Companies House requires a fee of £15.00.

As I write this report, I have just prepared accounts to 29th February 2008, in readiness for a Trustee Directors meeting being held on 5th March 2008. Members will, I am sure, be pleased to know that the Society maintains a sound financial base. Subscriptions totalling £6259 have been received and banked. The sale of the new Guide is also going well, and to date has realised a profit of £397 for the Society. Well done to the Local History Committee for all their hard work in producing the Guide and then marketing it. Expenditure at this moment is in line with last year except of course for the cost of a new screen and additional Christmas expenses, which I mentioned in the previous newsletter. Whilst showing a healthy surplus at this time, during the period up to our year-end of 30th September we shall have to fund not only two newsletters and meeting expenses but in addition the Society will have a presence at both the Festival in the Park and Heritage Day that will naturally incur costs. It is also our intention to continue to support Solihull in Bloom with our usual donation to Solihull MBC. As also mentioned in my previous report the Society will be purchasing new software in order that we can continue to ensure that the Society is well managed.

Sandra Lea - Hon. Treasurer - Knowle 776850

Mr & Mrs J Allen	Mr & Mrs M Fenner	Mr & Mrs R Pursley
Mr & Mrs M Aallsopp	Mrs K Fogarm	Mr & Mrs L Rodi
Patricia Askew	Miss E Gaynor	Mr A Serle
Mrs I Baker	Mr J Green	Mrs H Steele
Mrs H Black	Mr & Mrs N Green	Mr & Mrs D Tompkins
Mr & Mrs D Blunston	Miss D Harding	Mr & Mrs G Topson
Ms Jill Byrne	Mrs I Holland	Colin Webb
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Mr & Mrs P Evans	Mrs Yvonne Palin	
Mr & Mrs G Fathers	Mr & Mrs R Pardoe	

IN THIS ISSUE...

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Chairman & Diary | 5. Environment | 9. Meetings & Walks |
| 2. Chairman | 6. Jobs Close Pond | 10. History |
| 3. Planning | 7. Recycling & Photos | 11. New Project |
| 4. Community Services | 8. Meetings & Walks | 12. Finance & Members |

A warm welcome to 61 new members this quarter including those listed opposite.

The Knowle Society has over 3000 members, can you encourage your friends and neighbours to join too? This may be done either by contacting the Membership Secretary or through an application form on:
www.knowlesociety.org.uk

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Next issue

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