

# The Knowle Society



Volume 49 Number 2

April 2011

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

## Looking to the future

1961 and 1962 were big years in the history of Knowle. The village was much smaller then but the building boom of the 60s and early 70s was very much in the minds of developers and planners. 1961 saw the establishment of the Village Hall and a year later plans to redevelop the Chester House site gave rise to the setting up of our Society. Consequently, we celebrate two Golden Anniversaries over the next 20 months or so.

The Village Hall association is advertising its plans at present and we have been actively considering ways to celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> since last year. Gary Masters is leading the Society's ad hoc committee which has been liaising with other village groups to co-ordinate the commemoration also of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. A meeting was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March and among other events, it is at present planned to apply for closure of the High Street for a street party on Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

So far as the Society is concerned, we are hoping to hold a celebratory Dinner locally and I have personally applied to have Knowle accepted as the host for one of the BBC's landmark programmes. I would rather not give out more detail at present for fear of disappointment should it not materialise but I will keep you informed.

Plans are also afoot for a Society photography competition for 11 to 18 year olds. Details will be published very shortly but the basic idea is to reflect in two photos what is liked and not liked about Knowle. Pictures taken by

*(Continued on page 2)*

### Thursday 14th April

### Visit to Bournville Carillon and Selly Manor

Pre-booking required—Sue Trucchi, Knowle 775662

### Monday 18th April

8pm in Knowle Village Hall

### Birmingham Conservation Trust

Elizabeth Perkins

### Monday 23rd May

10.30am in Knowle Village Hall

### Down the Garden Path

Tristan Thacker *(Tea and coffee served from 10am)*

### Monday 20th June

8pm in Knowle Village Hall

### The Library of Birmingham

Brian Gambles

### Wednesday 29th June

7pm at car park behind church

### Knowle By-ways Walk

3-4 miles, mainly road and pavements

### Monday 18th July

8pm in Knowle Village Hall

### The Leather Trade in Walsall

Ray Sturdy

### Tuesday 19th July

### Visit to Winterbourne House and gardens

Pre-booking required—details and booking form on page 5

(Continued from page 1)

mobile phone will be accepted and the basic idea is to involve younger people in some of the ethos of the Civic Society movement. The original idea came from Civic Voice which has taken up the national cudgels from the defunct Civic Trust and is showing signs of being imaginative and pro-active in its thinking. The Society will be offering good prizes to the winners of the competition.

I am very sorry to have to inform you that our membership secretary, Bryan Smart, has decided that he cannot continue in the position due to ill health. Bryan took over at short notice on the untimely death of Derek Mellor and has done a superb job in producing an excellent database of our 3000 members. We shall miss his skills and companionship and wish him all the very best for the future. You will see a 'Situation Vacant' advert near this article. For the time being Bryan feels able to continue in his other positions in the Society.

**Peter Ewin—Chairman - Knowle 776381  
chairman@knowlesociety.org.uk**

Due to Bryan Smart's resignation ( see Chairman's report above) the position of Membership Secretary will become vacant shortly. Any member who has some knowledge of databases is asked to contact any Trustee Director if they would like to take on this task. The present Membership Secretary and David Bower, website manager, will provide initial support and training.

### **KIMBERLEY DEVELOPMENTS AND PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR A NEW STORE**

Members are advised to check the Society's website for updates on any new Kimberley Developments planning application(s) that might arise between newsletter issues, as The Knowle Society will not be doing another door-to-door leaflet distribution in the event of a new application for this project. Any such application will be announced on the home page of the website: [www.knowlesociety.org.uk](http://www.knowlesociety.org.uk)

It may have been a long cold Christmas holiday period but a near record number of people (80+) turned out in January for a cracking talk by Michael Miles on the canal boat women who plied the waterways with their families well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Michael is a master of his subject and brought the people alive again for the audience showing what a harsh life they endured whilst being the supporting backbone of the industrial revolution. The evening was rounded off by many questions from the audience, a sure sign that it had been a successful talk. Michael donated his speaker's fee to Macmillan Cancer who have written to thank the Society for this welcome contribution to their funds.

February brought another large audience for our talk on the science, methodology and history behind fingerprints used in the detection of crime. Our speaker, Sue Clegg, was a serving police officer for over 25 years specialising in this area and had been involved in many high profile cases solved using finger prints and forensic techniques during this time. Sue served with local police forces as well as spending time with the New York police force; all this means that she has a wealth of knowledge and real cases to draw on to give a fascinating talk. Again, as I mentioned before, it is always a sign of how good the speaker and their subject is, by the number of audience questions at the end of the talk. In this case there were many questions at the end of the talk on the techniques and cases which had been covered.

We still have many and varied topics to come in our talks for the rest of the year and hopefully there will be a subject to interest you all, everything from "Remember the Swinging 60s" to "The Leather Trade in Walsall" and not forgetting our social evening in September – a night of music courtesy of the Strolling Players coupled with a fish and chip supper with a raffle thrown in as well.

Details of all the year's meetings are on the Society's web site and as the committee is busy booking speakers we hope to have the schedule for 2012 available in the next few weeks.



*Sue Clegg and Leighton Jones (Knowle Society and also an expert on finger-printing) - clearly not wanting HIS prints taken!*

## PLANNING MARCH 2011

Activity on the planning front continues apace! In February the appeal against refusal of the Grove Farm/Jacobean Moorings planning application was heard before a Planning Inspector. Inspectors are qualified planners who work for the Planning Inspectorate, a Government Agency which is accountable to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. Inspectors run the appeal hearings along semi-legal lines and are responsible for deciding whether or not to allow the appeal. In major or controversial cases they will recommend a decision to the Secretary of State (SoS), who will in most cases agree. Occasionally the SoS will come to a different conclusion, influenced perhaps by political considerations?

In the appeal the Council presented its arguments through the evidence of three witnesses; on planning matters, heritage considerations (the impact on Grove Farm) and landscape. The appellants called experts in the same fields who of course gave different opinions to the Council's witnesses. They also called a witness to explain the British Waterways claim that there was a desperate need for canal boat moorings in Solihull, i.e. around Knowle. Several residents gave evidence, as well as myself on behalf of the Society. My evidence is on the Society's website at [www.knowledgesociety.org.uk/news/MarinaHearingSubmission](http://www.knowledgesociety.org.uk/news/MarinaHearingSubmission). We expect to have heard the results of this appeal by the time this Newsletter is published. Even though I sat through the 5½ days of the hearing I've no idea which way it will go!

The next appeal hearing, into the Stripes Hill Marina, is due to start soon and we will again be giving evidence supporting the refusal of the planning application. Both of these marinas are far too big for their locations and we do not believe that the case for so many berths has been made.

As you will have heard, Sainsbury has designed a somewhat different scheme for its proposed store in Dorridge, which is an improvement on the previous one, but is still much bigger than it need be to serve Dorridge. It is clear that they intend to attract trade from some distance round, which will of course attract traffic, both shoppers and deliveries. It is the traffic issue that concerns us most as much of it (and all the lorries) will pass through the High Street and along Station Road. We have declared our grave concern to Sainsbury over the potential impact of the traffic on Knowle and on the length of Station Road and have asked them to revise their plans. I'm not very hopeful, though. We will have to see what the details of the actual application are before we can make a formal comment.

We have been keeping an eye on the gradually deteriorating condition of Longdon Hall. You may not know this building, as it's rather isolated in the middle of Copt Heath Golf Club. There is a public footpath that runs next to it, but unless you're in the habit of using this you won't see the Hall. It is an important building, not just because it's a Grade 2 listed building and therefore nationally protected, but it has close associations with Lady Byron, the wife of the poet. Lady Byron Lane is obviously named after her. I'm pleased to see that the owners, the golf club, have put the Hall and its associated buildings up for sale as a private house. If this goes through it will ensure the future of the building.

Other more routine planning applications come and go. One rather unusual application you'll have heard of is the plan to replace the disused toilet block and bus shelter on 'Knowle Green' with a purpose built shelter which will also contain a memorial to our founder, Dr Bower. I'm sure there'll be more on this elsewhere in this issue, I only mention it here as your planning committee looked at this application with the same keen eye as we do at all significant applications. We approved of the plan and design, but raised a concern that there might not be enough protection from the wind. Future provision for more shelter has been agreed if it proves to be necessary.

There is no news on the other major issues. The application by Kimberley for a development in St John's Close is still to be revised by the developers. They have said that there will be no application to demolish the Village Hall and we assume the store is planned to be on or around the old bowling green, but just where or how it fits we don't know. We haven't heard anything from the developers for months.

The other major issue, that of the future long-term plan for Solihull as a whole, is back with the Council for it to digest the responses. We hope it will take note of our comments, especially about the housing plans for Knowle which we think are excessive and should be better targeted at housing for locals. We will be looking hard at the next version.

**PROGRESS AROUND WARWICK ROAD ROUNDABOUT**

I have decided to concentrate on the Warwick Road roundabout for this Newsletter. I am pleased to report that there has been considerable progress since the January Newsletter when I reported that we were disappointed with our progress. We have held meetings with the Senior Open Spaces Manager, Tree Officer, Local Nature Reserve Officer, Area Coordinator and last but not least the Environmental Champion Coordinator. The discussions have all been constructive and the officers have taken account of the committee's views and proposed a provisional plan which the Committee has warmly endorsed. The plan is summarized below.

In my report in the April 2010 Newsletter I gave four definitions to make it easier to discuss and agree what we are aiming for in any area of open space. These four definitions were subsequently found to be too simplistic leaving confusion. After some detailed discussions the committee endorsed revised Classifications (page 5) and the Senior Open Spaces Officer agreed that they provided the basis for sensible decision making.

Following the last meeting on 12 January the Council has drawn up a plan for the land between Wychwood Avenue and Arden Vale Road and is looking into the other areas. Their draft proposals are as follows:-

**SMBC PROPOSALS**

"Depending on funding it could make a nice sheltered grassland area. Things to try could include clearing up the area at the back and planting with a mixture of trees and shrubs which would look attractive and also offer wildlife habitat:- Birch species for stem colour and winter seeds, sorbus species (e.g. Rowan and Whitebeam) for flowers and autumn berries, various shrubs including coloured leaf cultivars such as hazels, elders, guilder rose etc. (avoid spiky species as they trap litter).



*From the bottom of Arden Vale Road towards the Wychwood roundabout and Solihull*

In front of this leave a narrow strip of unmanaged tussock grassland.



In front of that, create an area of wildflower meadow; stump-grind the trees (see photo left) that have been felled; remove turf from a strip along the length of the site; rake surface; sow mixture of perennial meadow seeds along with annual cornfield weeds and barley seeds mixed with sand. While the perennial seeds establish, the cornfield annuals will provide first year colour and the barley will add to the feature and also reduce soil fertility.

At the front of the site continue regular mowing; remove bramble and ivy from existing trees; save appropriate trees; plant a few other small trees/standard shrubs including hawthorn cultivars for spring colour and autumn berries." (see photo right)



On Thursday 17 February we worked with Trish Willetts, Environmental Champion Coordinator and Kerry Mountjoy, Area Coordinator in planting a number of trees in the area where dead trees were recently removed. Kerry was able to obtain the funds from the Council for these trees. We are very grateful for this prompt initiative. So at last some progress is being made.

We hope that between the Council and our Committee we are reflecting the views of our members and the residents of Knowle. I am aware that some people have different ideas and we respect their views but unfortunately we cannot satisfy everyone and we hope that we are doing what is best for the Village (residents and wildlife). We are also aiming to provide a more attractive approach to the village for anyone visiting or passing by.

**CLASSIFICATIONS**

- 1 Wilderness** Entirely wild, no maintenance at all.
- 2 Natural Countryside** Meadowland, wildflower meadows, heathland, woods and farmland, with trimmed hedges, occasional grass mowing, grazing & haymaking. Paths kept clear.
- 3 Nature reserve** Actively managed wildlife habitat with pathway access only.
- 4 Rural Parkland** Trees and shrubs within grassed areas. Grass grazed or cut. Overgrowth contained. General access for enjoyment of the surroundings.
- 5 Urban Parkland** Open spaces containing trees and shrubs with regularly mown grass, including children's play areas, fields for sporting activities and special events. General access for all recreational activities.
- 6 Formal Gardens** Planted with flowers, shrubs and trees with any surrounding grass frequently mown. Pathway access except where permitted on grassed areas.

**OUR PROPOSALS**

- Area A – the Island Classification 2 and 4
- a Sight lines to be maintained around the periphery by keeping a mown grass border which could be improved with the planting of bulbs.
  - b The definition of trees and shrubs could be improved by removing undergrowth and creating lines of sight across the roundabout. A central wildflower meadow could be created and bird/bat boxes placed in the trees.
  - c Bulbs, notably bluebells, could be planted in the shaded centre.

*(Continued on page 8)*

**VISIT TO WINTERBOURNE HOUSE AND GARDENS**

**EDGBASTON PARK ROAD, BIRMINGHAM**

**TUESDAY 19 JULY 2011**

Winterbourne House was built in 1903 for industrialist John Nettlefold of the GKN screw making dynasty and his wife Margaret Chamberlain. It has recently been restored to its Edwardian Arts and Craft splendour. The seven acre Garden is one of the best surviving examples of an Edwardian Arts and Crafts suburban villa garden and is Grade II listed. It was designed by Margaret Chamberlain, taking inspiration from Gertrude Jekyll.

Meet at Winterbourne House at 10.45 a.m. As usual, own transport is required. Car parking is available.

Our visit will commence with a guided tour of the house and gardens giving a unique insight into the history of Winterbourne. This will be followed by lunch, after which feel free to wander around the gardens at your leisure.

The price of this visit including lunch (assorted sandwiches, hand-cut crisps, vegetable sticks, mixed salad, choice of tea/coffee/water/juice) is £13 (cheques made payable to *The Knowle Society*). If you wish to book a place please complete the Booking Form below, or write directly including all the same information, your remittance and SAE to: Mrs K. Jephcott, 70 Woodrow Crescent, Knowle B93 9EQ.

**Closing Date: 21 June 2011**

*Winterbourne House and Gardens Booking Form*

Number of places: ..... x £13 = £ ..... Tel. no. ....

Name(s): .....

Address: .....

**TALKS AND VISITS**

Our next talk *Down the Garden Path* will be on 23 May and the speaker will be well known local 'Gardening Guru' Tristan Thacker. As usual the talk will be in the Village Hall with tea and coffee served from 10am and the talk commencing at 10.30am and lasting approximately one hour.

By the time this issue goes to print our next visit to the Bournville Carillon will have taken place and we will report on this in the next issue.

In July we have planned a visit to Winterbourne House and Gardens [*details below*].

We are considering the possibility of a further visit this year, possibly November/December to see *Aston Hall by Candlelight*. For this visit we are looking into the possibility of hiring a coach which would of course put the cost up considerably. However, compared with driving through Birmingham at night, cost of petrol, parking etc we think our members might welcome this suggestion, particularly those who don't drive anymore. We are currently looking into costs but in the meantime if you would like to let us know your feelings on this suggestion, or indeed if you have any connections with a coach company and could maybe get a discount? please email; [history@knowlesociety.org.uk](mailto:history@knowlesociety.org.uk) or telephone Janet Erzen 01564 779040.

**ARCHIVES**

We have recently received from Alison and Andy the new proprietors of what used to be Victoria Wine, the shop's ledger from the mid 1940s. It is interesting to note what sort of prices they were paying for their stock in those days; Scotch 28/- per bottle, rum 27/-, gin 25/3d, Brandy 35/- and Sherry 15/6d. For those who don't remember "old money"; £1.40, £1.35, £1.26½, £1.75 and 77½p.

We continue to receive and welcome your donations of artefacts, photographs, letters, documents etc. and don't forget, if you have anything that you think might be of interest but you don't really want to part with it, we are quite happy to copy said item carefully and return the original to you. Or indeed, if you are not sure whether we would be interested in whatever you have, bring it up to show us in the History Centre, 1st floor, Knowle Library, any Saturday morning 10am - 12.30pm.

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**SHOPS**

No new shops since the last issue but what was *Beau's Cav de Vin*, formerly *Victoria Wine*, has received a face lift and slight change of use. It is now going to be known as *Nanni O's Tea Room and Village Deli*. They are still going to sell a selection of wines and locally sourced ales and beers but in addition there will be a small deli section, mainly pre-packed foods and a small tea room selling cream teas etc. A nice touch is that Alison will serve the teas in fine old bone china which she has been collecting for years. The long wall on the left will be dedicated to local artists' work for sale. We wish them all the best in their new venture.

An interesting point of history regarding the above shop is that in 1871 Robert and Sarah Hicken ran the same premises as a Grocer/Wine Merchant, so 140 years later the shop is again being run as the same sort of business. Robert's son George took it over when his father died, and as far as we can ascertain it has continued to be run as a wine shop of some sort or other ever since.

For those older members of the village who remember Hicken's Corner (Lodge Road/Station Road) the shop there was also a Grocer/Wine Merchant/Baker and was run by Henry Hicken, Robert and Sarah's grandson. I'm sure there are still people in the village today who will remember Henry's daughter Gladys who worked at Wimbush on the corner of High Street/Station Road.

**Janet Erzen - Knowle 779040**

**BOOKING FORM (overleaf)**

THE KNOWLE SOCIETY – WINTERBOURNE HOUSE AND GARDENS 19 JULY 2011

Please return this form, your remittance and SAE to: Mrs K. Jephcott, 70 Woodrow Crescent, Knowle B93 9EQ

## **AIRPORT**

Those of you who use the airport, will over the coming months see a change to its logo and name. The word 'International' will be dropped, as many other airports have done, as it now appears out of date and unnecessary. You also need to be aware that the airport has changed to a single Passenger Terminal facility, with the new combined Passenger Search Areas and Arrivals Area formally coming into operation.

Noise Contours for the airport in 2010 have been produced by the Civil Aviation Authority and they are the smallest ever produced for the Airport. Long may the trend continue.

Call 0121 767 7433 to register noise complaints

## **POLICE MATTERS**

Lorna Gale has resigned as our committee representative with the Police, due to pressure of work in her other commitments. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her excellent liaison work and for the comprehensive reports prepared for this newsletter in the past. Lilla Baker has agreed to take on this role in the future, in addition to already being the secretary for the Community Services Committee.

Sgt. Jerome Moran has kept us up to date on crime and gives the following advice.

Do not leave your car unattended whilst the engine is running, as several incidents of theft have occurred during the cold weather.

For advice, go to the interactive web site:  
[www.west-midlands.police.uk/saferhomes/index.htm](http://www.west-midlands.police.uk/saferhomes/index.htm)

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Ensure your garden sheds and garages are secured (get locks and use them), also secure your house. There has been an increase in theft from garden sheds in Knowle since the New Year.

## **SMBC**

We have received a number of complaints with regard to advertising boards (A Boards) in the village. SMBC has written to all shopkeepers reminding them that a licence is required and that it should be displayed in the window.

Suggestions have been made to SMBC, with regard to congestion in parts of St Johns Close and they will be replying within the next month.

**We have vacancies on our committee and if you would like to come along to one of our meetings to see how we operate, please let me know.**

Knowle Society and Dorridge Residents Association have been asked by Chiltern Railways to form a Friends of Dorridge Station group. Is anyone interested in volunteering to help with tasks such as gardening, looking after the station décor and photographs? It is the intention of Chiltern Railways to restore the buildings to become a 'heritage station' including a replacement copy of the original canopy. There will be no financial cost involved.

If anyone is interested or would like to know more, please email: [fods.93@gmail.com](mailto:fods.93@gmail.com)

Dr D Gregory & Mrs J Gregory  
Knowle Football Club  
Mr & Mrs B G Nock  
Mr A Watson & Ms C Vernon  
Whispers of Knowle  
Yvonne White  
Mr & Mrs R Winn

Claire Pain  
Mr & Mrs Tunley  
Mr Stuart Graham  
Dorothy Harwood  
Mrs E Wilkinson  
Mrs J Truran

**A warm welcome to the 18 new members listed opposite.**

*The Knowle Society has around 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.knowledesociety.org.uk](http://www.knowledesociety.org.uk)*

**NOTE FROM GARY MASTERS :**

**THE JUBILEE CELEBRATION IN 2012**

A Community meeting was held in the Royal British Legion on 23rd March, to discuss arrangements for the celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. This event is coincidental with the year of The Knowle Society's Golden Jubilee (and several other anniversaries for local organisations). The Knowle Society, an early mover for this event, is fully involved in this planning. Monday 4th June 2012 would be the occasion of a Jubilee Fair and potential High Street closure.

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**Next issue**

Copy deadline:

**1st June 2011**

Distribution commences:

**1st July 2011**

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Area B – Langfield Road to Warwick Road North Classification 4  
Wildflower meadow could be created and bulbs planted.

Area C – Wychwood Av. to Warwick Road North Classification 4  
Tidy undergrowth perhaps planting Cyclamen and bulbs.

Area D – Wychwood Av. to Ardenvale Rd (near the road) Classification 4  
Tidy reducing brambles. Consider drainage issues and whether a pond could be created. Plant bulbs.

Area Dd – Rear of D Classification 2  
Tidy undergrowth. Create wildlife habitat.

Area E – Langfield Road to Warwick Road south Classification 4  
Plant bulbs on the frontage. Open up area under trees on the left (facing the bypass). Consider pathways when cleared. Plant the new earth mounds.

Area Ee – Rear of E Large area reserved for possible bypass Classification 2  
Create wild flower meadow, plant trees and shrubs.

Area F – Behind the bus stop Classification 4  
Tidy up and cut back hedges, improve safety.

**ONLINE VIEWING OF THIS ISSUE**

As always, a colour view of this newsletter may be seen on the website; follow the Membership and then Newsletters links. The password on the right will gain access for members, however no password is needed after three months.

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