



Volume 40 Number 4



## Pre - A.G.M. Issue Autumn 2002



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

**A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING & THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY 25TH NOVEMBER 2002 IN THE KNOWLE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30pm**

### Chairman's Annual Report

The year past has been eventful, marked by memorable occasions and achievements of which the Society can be well pleased.

The Queen's Jubilee celebrations in Knowle High Street on Saturday June 1st will not be forgotten as a joyful expression of Knowle village's enthusiasm, marked by perfect weather and crowds enjoying the stalls and activities that packed the High Street. Knowle Society's gazebo and Exhibition in the Guild House played their part.

The Society's 40th Anniversary was held at the Royal British Legion Knowle Branch on October 11th and although I am writing without the benefit of hindsight I am confident that it will have celebrated the occasion and reflected all the hard work put into its organisation by the Social Sub-Committee. I also want to acknowledge the excellence of the social programme provided for members.

I am confident that many of you will have seen the Millennium Post commissioned and erected by the Society on the small green near the Church which we believe has become well liked.

One of the Society's objectives is to promote high standards of planning and architecture in Knowle, hence the work of our Planning and Amenities Sub-Committees reported elsewhere. The Society's opinions about planning applications continue to be given weighty consideration by Solihull Council, and we continue to be well supported by our Councillors. For example, we have to accept the growth of apartment blocks, but we can and do add our voice to the required quality in architectural design and materials. We have played our part in successful opposition to a number of badly sited telecommunication masts. We joined in the

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### Dates For Your Calendar



Monday 21st October	<b>General Meeting:</b> Talk 'Lapworth to 19th Century' - by Mrs J Woodall, - 8.00pm in the Village Hall.
Monday 25th November	<b>Special General Meeting &amp; Annual General Meeting</b> (See Top of
Week Commencing 25th November	<b>Switching on Knowle Society Christmas Tree Lights</b> - See posters for details in due course.
Thursday 26th December	<b>Boxing Day short local walk:</b> Start at 11.00am from the Guild House, back before 1.00pm (Wine & Mince pies will be served en route)
Monday 20th January, 2003	<b>General Meeting:</b> Talk '600 years of Knowle Parish Church' - by The Reverend Anthony Upton. - 8.00pm in the Village Hall

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successful protest against a take-away restaurant at Mad-docks that was. We struggle to prevent ugly signs disfiguring Knowle High Street. We contribute to the planning stages of Solihull's Unitary Development Plan. We influenced the provision of extra free car parking spaces for shoppers near the Village Hall without damage to the environment and with an obvious reduction in peak period congestion. We are involved in the management of our traffic, and the amenities of our green and open spaces.

Another objective is to promote public awareness of Knowle's history, including natural history. Many visited the Society's History Jubilee Exhibition, and the Sub-Committee works hard at running the Local History Centre at Chester House and sustaining and maintaining records of Knowle. Our Nature Reserves help to sustain our environment. A mini woodland has been planted off the park and our walks encourage appreciation of nature.

We decided this year that we should design a Society website, and this has been accomplished and launched on the web ([www.knowlesociety.org.uk](http://www.knowlesociety.org.uk)) after hours of freely given hard work. I hope that those members with access to the web have looked at the site, and any comments would be appreci-

ated.

These and many more are our achievements. I say this to assure all our members and particularly those who support the Society with their subscriptions but who do not attend our General Meetings and who rely on this newsletter, that we are doing our best for them and Knowle.

Our membership figure is reassuringly stable at about 1750 and prompts me to stress that we continually have only just enough volunteer distributors for this newsletter. If you could give a little of your spare time four times a year to walk round to the addresses of your nearby members to post the newsletter it would be a great help if you contacted Walter Birch (01564 770340). He might well say that in your area he is coping, but even so he would be glad to put you on a reserve list, and he never knows when shortages occur.

It remains for me to thank the Executive Committee and Sub-Committee members for all their hard work this last year. Without them the Society would grind to a halt.

**Peter Ellis**  
Knowle. 775261  
[chairman@knowlesociety.org.uk](mailto:chairman@knowlesociety.org.uk)



## Notice of Special General Meeting and the Annual General Meeting

I give notice that a **Special General Meeting of The Knowle Society** will be held at **Knowle Village Hall at 7.30pm on Monday 25th November 2002** to consider the proposed amendments to the Constitution of the Society **as laid out below and on Page 3**.

The Annual General meeting for 2002 and update reports from Sub-Committee Chairmen will follow the Special General Meeting.

There will be elections for Officers and Members of the Executive Committee. The Officers and at least five Committee Members retire each year and are eligible for re-election.

**Nominations, in writing, can be accepted up to 11th November.** They should be signed by the nominee, proposer and seconder, all of whom must be members of the Society, in good standing.

Nominations should be addressed to the Society Secretary at 102, Tilehouse Green Lane, Knowle Solihull, West Midlands. B93 9ER.

We hope for a good attendance and for some interesting discussion. Please come and raise any matters that concern you..

**Colin Smith**  
Knowle 772981

### ***MOTION TO BE PUT TO THE SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE KNOWLE SOCIETY ON MONDAY 25TH NOVEMBER 2002 at 7.30pm IN THE VILLAGE HALL.***

The Meeting is asked to approve the following amendments to the Constitution (1984) of The Knowle Society. These amendments are proposed and recommended to the Meeting by the Executive Committee of the Society.

To assist members the current clause is given before each amendment, and an explanatory note gives the reason for the amendment.

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**Clause 6. Officers.**

**Current.**

The Officers of the Society shall consist of:-  
Chairman  
Vice Chairman  
Honorary Secretary  
Honorary Treasurer

**Proposed Amendment.**

The Officers of the Society shall consist of:-  
Chairman  
Deputy Chairman  
Honorary Secretary  
Honorary Treasurer

*Explanatory Note.* It is proposed that the current office of 'Vice-Chairman' shall be deleted and replaced by the office of 'Deputy Chairman'. The position of Vice Chairman has been vacant and disused for some years, but there is a need for a deputy to stand in for the Chairman when the latter is absent, and who would function only on such occasions. It is envisaged that the person appointed would usually be a past Chairman and would not be assumed to be the Chairman's successor.

**Clause 7. The Executive Committee.**

**Sub-clause 7.2**

**Current.**

The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers and not less than 10 and not more than 15 other members of the Society.

**Proposed Amendment.**

The Executive Committee shall consist of 4 officers, and not less than 8 and not more than 12 other members of the Society."

*Explanatory Note.*

It is the view of the Executive Committee that the lower and upper limits of membership currently at 10 and 15 (in addition to the four officers) make for an over large and cumbersome size. It is considered that figures of 8 and 12 (in addition to the four officers) make the Committee leaner and more efficient, allowing a sufficient number of places for both Sub-Committee Chairmen and members without portfolio.

**Sub-clause 7.3**

**Current.**

The Committee shall have power to co-opt up to three further members of the Society.

**Proposed Amendment.**

The Committee shall have power to co-opt up to two further members of the Society.

*Explanatory Note.*

The Executive Committee believes that power to co-opt two further members to the Committee (in addition to the members allowed in clause 7.2, giving a total upper limit of 14 members plus 4 officers) is quite sufficient.

**Sub-clause 7.11**

**Current.**

At least five members of the Executive Committee shall retire from office at each Annual General Meeting. The number of members to go out of office shall be made up first from those members co-opted under the provisions of sub-clause 7.4, secondly from those elected members who shall have ceased to be members of the Executive Committee during the previous year but whose vacancies shall not have been filled by co-option under the provisions of sub-clause 7.4, and thirdly from those elected members who shall have been longest in office since the date of their last elections respectively, and in this last case, where the seniorities are equal, the Executive Committee shall decide on the elected members to retire.

**Proposed Amendment.**

There must be at least 5 vacancies, excluding the Officers, on the Executive Committee at each AGM. If insufficient vacancies have arisen through retirement of elected, co-opted, or casual members, one or more of the longest serving elected members of the Executive Committee shall be required to retire. Those who have been elected members of the Executive Committee the longest since the date of their last election shall be required to retire first and, where two or more members are of equal seniority, the Executive Committee shall decide which elected member is to retire.

*Explanatory Note.*

The Executive Committee has found the current clause to be awkwardly expressed and therefore obscure, at least at first reading. The amended clause improves clarity without changing the content.

**Clause 8. Sub-Committees.**

**Current.**

The Executive Committee may constitute such sub-committees from time to time as shall be considered necessary for such purposes as shall be thought fit. The Chairman and Secretary, if any, of each sub-committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and all actions and proceedings of each sub-committee shall be reported to and be confirmed by the Executive Committee as soon as possible. Members of the Executive Committee may be members of any sub-committee and membership of a sub-committee shall be no bar to appointment to membership of the Executive Committee. Sub-Committees shall be subordinate to and may be regulated or dissolved by the Executive Committee. All voting members of sub-committees shall be members of the Society.

**Proposed Amendment.**

The Executive Committee may constitute such sub-committees from time to time as shall be considered necessary for such purposes as shall be thought fit. **The Chairman and members of each sub-committee shall be appointed annually by the Executive Committee at its first meeting after the AGM. The Executive Committee may also appoint additional members to sub-committees during the course of the year.** All actions and proceedings of each sub-committee shall be reported to and be confirmed by the Executive Committee as soon as possible. Members of the Executive Committee may be members of any sub-committee and membership of a sub-committee shall be no bar to appointment to membership of the Executive Committee. Sub-Committees shall be subordinate to and may be regulated or dissolved by the Executive Committee. All voting members of sub-committees shall be members of the Society. **The Chairman of the Society shall be an ex-officio member of all sub-committees.**

*Explanatory Note.*

The proposed amendment adds two sentences to the current clause, and these are identified in bold type. There are no other proposed changes.

The first additional sentence reflects the view that the Executive Committee should authorise the appointment of all members to the sub-committees not just their Chairman and Secretary.

The second final sentence reflects the Executive Committee's view that the Society's Chairman should have the right to attend all sub-committee meetings, which replaces the current custom and practice that the Chairman attends by invitation.

## Membership Secretary's Annual Report

After a somewhat pessimistic report at this time last year, it is pleasing to be able to report a net increase of 74 members over the year bringing the total membership to 1745 at the present time

The Jubilee celebration yielded some 81 new members but as always the ebb and flow in Knowle's population has inevitably eroded the figure. However the same team that masterminded the Jubilee efforts - Sandra Lea and Garry Masters are going to be at it again on Dorridge Day (September 14th) and will I hope be equally successful.

My sincere thanks as always to Walter Birch and his team of Distributors. Walter has continued to modify

Mr & Mrs N D Clarke

Mr & Mrs J Beach

Mrs I Hammond

Mr & Mrs A Harris

Mrs H Jervis

Sheila Kersel

Mr & Mrs F Heyes

Mr & Mrs S C Bishop

Mrs J Parnley

**John F Chaloner**

**Knowle 778705**

**membership@knowlesociety.org.uk**



distribution rounds over the year to make the distributors' tasks more logical and hopefully easier, and also recruiting new distributors as necessary. He would

I know, as the Chairman has already said, be delighted to hear from anyone who feels that they could help out. Thank you Walter and all your team of distributors for another year of effort.

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

## Local History Sub-committee Annual Report

The sub-committee's year started as usual with the Junior School local studies project, when the children from Year 6 look at photographs from the collection and then ask long standing residents about their memories of village life. This well established event is now efficiently organised on both sides, to the benefit of everyone. Until now the school end has been under the supervision of Mr. Chris Lees, the Deputy Head Teacher, who retired at the end of the summer term. We have enjoyed working in co-operation with Chris and wish him a long and happy retirement.

More cataloguing and indexing was done in the autumn, but the top of my computer screen still reads 3335 master records and 5371 index records on file. Not much progress there. I am also reminded every time I look at it that the date on our printed index is still August 29<sup>th</sup> last year.

After Christmas everything had to be put on hold because, of course, most of our time during the last year has been devoted to the Queen's Golden Jubilee Exhibition, which took us six months to prepare. As I write (September 1<sup>st</sup>) we have still not finished putting it away. 'Forty Years of Knowle Society' traced the history of the Society, whilst 'Knowle Celebrations' was devoted to the celebration of national and local events in Knowle. As usual there were various other attractions. We were heartened by the complimentary remarks, particularly on Jubilee Day in High Street. Afterwards a large part of the exhibition was moved to Chester House for about six weeks.

However, there was no room for the two small displays on Maddocks and Sodens. Once the main exhibition has been put away and some posters have been produced we shall display them at Chester House. We have also been considering

the possibility of open days, with the scrap books and the oral history tapes on show.

There have been changes at the Local History Centre. Elizabeth Stanley, who has been our administrator for some years, has given up overall control, although she will continue to be in charge of the stewards' rota, enquiries from the public and readers' orders. Elizabeth has done a sterling job, much of it unseen and unsung. She has got out material (and put it away again), put displays in the show cases, done regular stock taking and made sure things are kept tidy - as well

as all the jobs she will carry on with. Her assistant, Julia Brain, has taken over. Julia is very good at organising things, which is exactly what is needed - and is just in time to move the furniture, because the library has had to move one of the heaters. This may be a blessing, as we may now have room for one more filing cabinet. We are also extremely lucky to have the services of three new stewards: Gwen McAuley, Mavis Johnson and John Johnson. They are all Knowle people, very knowledgeable, and we could not have strengthened our team by three better people. A new booklet, 'Guidance for Stewards', takes 32 pages to give them an insight into the collection, the system and how to help readers. We have also produced a small leaflet outlining the services we offer in a one

third A4 format.

The Local History Centre has continued to attract enquiries: in person on Saturday mornings, by post or telephone and from Solihull Library. Recently we have been helping Dorridge Residents' Association. The Local History Centre

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is manned each Saturday morning between 10.30 and 12 (except Bank Holidays) If anyone wants a lot of our time please ring Elizabeth Stanley, on Knowle 773283 beforehand.

We were recently given a number of items, including a large collection of Parish Magazines, from the estate of the late Ted Sutton. They have filled quite a few gaps in our collection. Our stock of duplicates, already large, now takes up too much space to house and we have reluctantly decided we must release them. Gillian Knight has just finished the job of sorting them all out. If anyone would like one of the duplicates, ring Gillian on K. 773409. If we have it, she will fish out the one you want from under her staircase. We still have large gaps prior to 1930. If anyone has any magazines from this period to spare, we should be very pleased to receive them.

We were privileged to have been invited to look round Grove Farm in Jacobean Lane, which has recently been sold. We took a number of photographs of the farm as it is now for our records and we also given copies of some wonderful old photographs by the Dickin family. We have also been given permission to obtain historical information from the deeds. We are most grateful to the Dickin family for their help.

Earlier in the year we offered to mount an exhibition in 2003 for the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Knowle Parish Church, which falls on February 24<sup>th</sup>. Valerie Hamley, who is a lay reader, and the Revd. Anthony Upton, author of 'Knowle

Collegiate Church', have both kindly agreed to help us on a consultancy basis. The exhibition will open during the first weekend in March and we hope to move it to Chester House afterwards. Planning is at a very early stage, but we must make good progress before Christmas. It will cover the origins of the church, its founder, the village at the time, the Guild and College, and much else. We have also been pleased to undertake the initial negotiations with Birmingham Reference Library with a view to bringing the second Guild register back to Knowle for the occasion. It is a beautifully illuminated volume, which covers the years 1451 to 1535 and which has miraculously survived.

It remains for me to thank all those who have helped us during the year: our team of stewards, members of the sub-committee, who have all worked very hard; and everyone who has helped in any way or provided items for the collection. We welcome our three new stewards and are also very pleased indeed to welcome John Johnson as a member of the sub-committee. He will be a very great asset. Michael Harrison resigned from the sub-committee and from the Stewards' Rota at the end of December. Margaret Hinton resigned from the Stewards' Rota in the spring, both for lack of time. Many thanks to them for their service. They made a significant contribution to the sub-committee's work and we shall miss them. But the biggest gap of all has been left by the death of Bob Gaukroger, whom we miss dreadfully.

**Elaine S. Warner**  
Knowle 775887

## Planning Sub-committee Annual Report

**T**here is no doubt that the main issue over the past year in Knowle and other parts of Solihull has been the continuing pressure to build new apartment blocks. We have to accept that some development is inevitable if we are to provide for the increase in small family units and in order to avoid further incursion into the green belt. What we seek to avoid is the large-scale blocks that significantly alter the character of the area.

Our main concern has been about the Warwick Road from the Solihull end, where the Parkridge apartments are already under construction. We are pleased that Solihull Council has refused the Redrow application for a 32-apartment block on the adjoining site, but we may well not have seen the end of this. There is a real threat of ribbon development all the way down to the Wychwood Roundabout.

There have also been extensive developments along Station Road (affecting Dorridge as well as Knowle). One small plan for town houses set well back from the road provides an interesting alternative to the usual apartment block.

Needless to say, all of these new dwellings provide "luxury accommodation" and none of them offer any sort of "affordable housing" (however that might be defined).

Earlier in the year, we opposed an application to convert outbuildings at Grimshaw Hall to provide 10 new dwellings,

along with 12 garages. That application was withdrawn, but we are not surprised that there is now a revised one for 8 dwellings.

We have been concerned about retailers in the Conservation Area who have proceeded with alterations to shop fronts, without getting the necessary planning consents. We have opposed the use of unsuitable signage and canopies in the Conservation Area.

Solihull MBC issued their first review of the Unitary Development Plan at the beginning of the year. We made a number of comments, but were broadly supportive of the proposals. We now await the Council's revised plans, possibly towards the end of the year.

Readers may be aware that the Government issued a Planning

Green Paper in the spring, which proposed extensive changes to the Planning System. We submitted comments through the West Midlands Amenities Societies Association, along with many other local societies. The Government has taken note of some of the comments made, but is now proceeding to implement the main part of its original proposals.

**Ken Richards**  
Knowle 777436  
[planning@knowlesociety.org.uk](mailto:planning@knowlesociety.org.uk)



Grimshaw Hall

# Amenities Sub-committee Annual Report

A fulfilling year was on the horizon initially, but a series of false dawns then occurred. However the advantage of working on the Amenities sub-committee is that just when you consider things are all under control, something falls through the letterbox requiring early attention. Within a short period prior to writing this submission not one item has required attention, but three.

Initially notification was received of an Area Enhancement Plan for Knowle, and the Society's views were being sought in connection with an area of improvement related to the Highways section of the Environment Services Department of the council. This initially required the hard matter of identifying the items most appropriate for consideration by the council. A short list of five items received the vote, and the council was prepared to consider four of these. The Executive committee endorsed the suggestion for the provision of a safer crossing point on Lodge Road, in order to give safer access both to the doctor's surgery, and the village. At the time of writing this item, together with several other outstanding items i.e. updated waste bins and cycle racks, are being costed by the council officers. The work must be completed within the current financial year, and any other identified areas that can not be included will be placed on a waiting list for future funding.



Secondly the detail was received for the Accident Prevention Measures proposed to the road junctions at Lady Byron Lane with Warwick Road, Lady Byron Lane with Browns Lane, and Tilehouse Green Lane with Longdon Road. These details did

not however cover the road junctions of Longdon Road with Newton Road, and Longdon Road with Lodge Road. The interesting element of the questionnaire that was circulated to the affected residents were the questions relating to traffic calming. Although no traffic calming proposals were included within the document, the council officers wanted to seek the views of residents to the possibilities of traffic calming measures, with a view to carrying out some work in the future. Similarly, the proposals for Station Road and for the junction of Station Road with Warwick Road did not include any traffic calming measures, other than a tightening of the junction of Lodge Road with Station Road. The committee has made representations to the council for additional work to be considered, and to incorporate the possibility of making Kenilworth Road and Wilsons Road one way to assist traffic flow.

Finally a further plan has been received in relation to proposals for Jobs Close Park, and this follows an initial "concept plan" which was being discussed in No-



vember 2001. My current understanding is that funding is not yet available, and consultation with nearby affected property will need to be carried out before any further progress is possible.

Comment was made during the year on the need for an additional roundabout along the Warwick Road at the junction of Lightwood Close, in order to service the proposed new development of apartments. This seemed an unusual decision to make, when an alternate provision could easily have been made.



Amendments have been made to consultation procedures with West Midlands Police. The Consultative Committee for the southern part of the borough has been merged with the northern committee, to form one large body for the whole borough, with a resultant reduction in meetings. In addition

the local area Inspector now holds quarterly meetings for interested bodies. These meetings have been most enlightening, and are now seen to be more effective to our own neighborhood needs.

Detail is being released in connection with the Consultation Document for the future of the airports in this country, which will no doubt involve some concern locally.

The Knowle Traders would appreciate the help of any able bodied persons in assisting with erection of the Christmas lights on a Sunday in November. If able please arrange to let either David Lyons or David Aitcheson know of your availability.

The most rewarding action taken during the year was to support the organizing committee in their efforts to hold an event to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of H M The Queen. The support of our local Councillors, the police, the council officers, and the affected residents to the proposal to close the High Street, in order for the event to become a huge street party, was most encouraging.

Your committee welcomes your opinions, and if you feel that you would like to attend one of our meetings please do not hesitate to let the writer know. You never know - you may like us.

**Gary Masters**  
Knowle 779955.

[amenities@knowlesociety.org.uk](mailto:amenities@knowlesociety.org.uk)

# Meetings and Social Sub-committee Annual Report

I should like to thank those members who have supported the Monthly Meetings this year. It has been very rewarding to see such good attendances.

All our speakers came up trumps. At the end of last year we learned about our Woodlands and explored with Leo Singer the country of Malta and its biblical History. Joy Pinder's talk in January gave us a rousing start to the New Year. I believe we were there with her when she had lunch with the Queen. Her talent for setting the scene was memorable. We were transported into space by Andrew Lound, who has such enthusiasm for his subject. The speaker from Severn Trent made us realise that we should not take for granted the water we take from our taps. Our wonderful architectural heritage was highlighted by two speakers during the year.

Without the help of various members of course our meetings would not happen. I should like to thank Phil Vince for opening up the Village Hall and arranging the chairs, to Jenny Evans for looking after the visitors' book, and giving me ideas for speakers. Lastly to my colleagues on the committee, who never fail to support and help me, and for the pleasure of their company at our sub-committee meetings, a big thank you.

The meetings for the next few months are:

**MONDAY 21<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 2002:** Lapworth to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, a talk by Joy Woodall. Mrs Woodall is from Yorkshire but came to the Solihull area in 1956. She is the au-

thor of many books on local history.

**MONDAY 25<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2002:** Special General Meeting and Annual General meeting

**THURSDAY 26<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2002: BOXING DAY WALK.** Meet at Guild House at 11 a.m. Refreshment break, back by 1.00 p.m. Please join us for our traditional stroll to work off the excesses of the previous day!

**MONDAY 20<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2003:** 600 Years of Knowle Parish Church. The Reverend Anthony Upton, who wrote and published *The Collegiate Church of Saint John the Baptist, Saint Laurence and Saint Anne*, in 1966, will be our guest speaker. This will no doubt be a very interesting year for the village with lots of events planned by the Church to mark this special anniversary. We feel this will start the year well. Whether you are a practising Christian or not, there is so much history attached to the Church that I hope there will be something to interest everyone.

**MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2003:** Running a Local Newspaper, a talk by Enda Mullen of the Solihull News.



**Sandra Lea**  
Knowle 776850  
events@knowlesociety.org.uk



## Walks

**SUNDAY 24<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2002** – 'The Daffodil Walk'.

An early spring meant that the best of the daffodils at Packwood House were over, but nevertheless 17 members and guests met there on a pleasant early spring day. It was dry and bright, but with no sun.

The walk took us down the avenue opposite the House onto Chesets Wood Rd, before swinging left past Packwood Farm on the fields and on to Packwood Church. We then took to the road for a short while towards Hockley Heath before circling back past Fetherstone House and Malt House farm. Passing through Pratt's Pit Wood we *at last* came across the promised daffodils in full flower before returning to Packwood House.

The afternoon was enjoyed by all, but we'll have to make a date a little earlier next year if we want to catch the best of the daffodils!

**WEDNESDAY 24<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2002** – Now christened 'The Bluebell Walk'.

This was a real surprise to most people, especially to the Walks Co-ordinator - the best bluebells of the year hidden away Napin's Covert.

Beginning an evening walk at 7.30 this early in the year was a real risk, but we were treated to an excellent spring evening. We (an excellent turn-out of 20 walkers) left from the Guild House, down Kixley Lane and across the fields to Elvers Green Lane toward the ford, but leaving the road to climb up past the copse which was full of bluebells. We then turned back towards Waterfield Farm, with even more bluebells in Napin's Covert.

We made our way back to Knowle before cutting through Crabmill Close, viewing on the way the new flats built on the old swim-

ming pool site.

The combination of a clear evening and walkers who kept up a good pace thankfully meant that we made it back to Knowle before the twilight caught up with us!

**WEDNESDAY 26<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2002**

The group of 19 walkers turning out this evening included some who had been recruited at the Jubilee weekend. We hope they enjoyed their first taste of the Knowle Society welcome.

This time we turned left at the canal at the end of Kixley Lane, continuing until we reached Grove Farm Bridge. We passed the farm, which was then up for sale, through Queen Eleanors Drive and to the Warwick Road. We crossed the road to view another change to the Knowle environment, the demolition of the houses and offices at the McCann Erickson site on preparation for the apartments complex.

Leaving this sad sight behind we continued across the Copt Heath golf course on to Longdon Road and, via the park back to the village, where the Red Lion was ready and waiting to provide much needed refreshment.

**PRIOR NOTICE – 'THE BOXING DAY WALK'**

Make a note in your diaries NOW! Walk off that excess of Christmas fare on Boxing Day morning with the traditional Knowle Society walk. (Only 4 miles). Bring the family and visitors and enjoy the fresh air. Just so you do not suffer from withdrawal symptoms, mince pies and mulled wine will be provided on the way!

**Leighton Jones**  
Knowle 773894



## Nature Conservation Sub-committee Annual Report

**O**ur weather this year has been far too changeable to describe accurately except for the mini heat wave that so blessed our June 1st Jubilee party, a longer one in July and the floods in August - depending on just where you happened to be.

The fruit crop is magnificent but is all this locally sourced fruit available in our supermarket - and do we care? Meanwhile there are Wild Damsons and Blackberries all over the countryside just waiting to be picked. There were few butterflies on our Butterfly Walk but we had a lovely tea at Wyndley Garden Centre in lieu of the closed Sunnyside.

Sadly a dead badger was reported in Tilehouse Green Lane but three at least of the Moorhen chicks on Jobs Close pond have survived to adulthood.

There are fine Bulrush heads at the edge of the pond there and a watchful eye is kept by our local paramedic stationed in the little car park for a quick response to any local emergency.

We congratulate Solihull Council on the lovely flower beds so carefully maintained, but the new Parks concept Plan may well provoke some criticism when it goes out for consultation, over the siting of a 'Peaceful Garden' and the Youth facilities. The Amenities Sub-committee is expressing our joint concerns.

**Flower Mound, Warwick Road** - intended for the Millennium but not constructed until November 2001, unhappily too short and too steep so that when finally planted up in June 2002 by Wyndley Garden Centre, our generous sponsor, the letters KNOWLE were all squashed together so as to be virtually unreadable. Presently the letters, formed in Box Hedging stand alone awaiting new background planting in October...

**Millennium Tree Planting - Jobs Close** - Very few of the original trees remain undamaged; where stakes have been pulled out the contract mowers have mown right over any small sapling. Yew Tree farm has kindly donated a really bushy replacement Yew and we have 2 Oaks waiting replanting.

**Jubilee Tree Planting** - in the waste grassland - initially very successful, the heat waves and unfriendly rubble strewn subsoil have not favoured these small whips, so we left them sheltered in the long grass and wait to see how many have survived.

We have continued to press the Council ecologist for progress on our Local Nature Reserve submission and

he assures us it should be processed by the end of the year. It is a huge task, taking in not only the Nature Reserve and waste grassland but the whole of the park with Purnells Brook as well. We may actually see a Park Ranger in place next year, which is very good news.

**Trees** - An increasing threat comes from the popularity of brick-paved drives laid close to large trees usually by the entrance, where massive tree roots can be damaged when laying the kerbstones or a new wall. In Station Rd an old and unusual Red Horse chestnut is beginning to look stressed in its high canopy. This is also the case with the rare Italian Maple fronting the new 'Pavilion' apartments where trenching for new railings and footpath took place. Proof of such disasters lies in the sad demise of the Chestnut on the corner of Downing Close which now waits felling. Also to be felled is the tall lopped oak that was once in a hedgerow across the top of St Johns Close. It stands with its similarly lopped partner opposite the flats but has been quietly rotting away in its upper trunk for the last ten years.

The felling must also be recorded of a centuries-old oak in Wychwood Avenue. It dropped a massive 45 foot branch and where small children are involved safety is paramount. We are hoping to have the rings counted to determine its exact age.

To continue the 'gloom and doom' of this tree report we will, we understand, lose all the sponsored oaks we planted in Elmdon Park if any of the new Airport extensions are allowed - a very minor loss indeed in the complete devastation of so much lovely countryside, let alone the loss of whole villages. It is all too awful to contemplate.

Instead let us end with a great idea from Council Ecologist David Lowe who wants to plant Oaks to create a 'deer park' effect between the Council's old tree nursery off Widney Manor Road and Brueton Park. Schoolchildren visiting the new Centre can grow heritage acorns in tubes for transplanting and monitoring as part of their curriculum studies. Isn't that a splendid idea?

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