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www.knowlesociety.org.uk

A Very Happy New Year to all our Readers

Chairman's Report

Christmas has come and gone but I remember that the ceremony of switching on the Christmas street lights in Knowle and on the Christmas tree donated by the Society was a great success. We thank Knowle Traders for providing and organising the street lights and our own Gary Masters for organising the provision of our Christmas Tree and being the official lights 'switcher-on'. It is an event that catches the spirit of Christmas.

2003 will be marked by the celebration of Knowle Church's 600th. Anniversary. The Society will play its part by our Local History Subcommittee organising and holding an Exhibition.

When the Society held its 40th Anniversary last

year, our President Dr. Bower gave an address about features over the years. Some members have suggested that we print what he said and we are more than happy to do so in this Newsletter.

For those of you who missed the Special General Meeting and Annual General Meeting, I would mention that the Constitutional amendments were all approved by the SGM. We have come to realise that members do not have easy access to copies of the Society's Constitution when they have reason to want to refer, so we are arranging to have a copy available at Knowle Library for inspection. Members wishing to have and keep a personal

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Dates For Your Calendar



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| Monday 20th January | General Meeting: Talk '600 Years of Knowle Parish Church' by Rev A Upton. 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall |
| Monday 17th February | General Meeting: Talk 'Running a Local Newspaper' by Edna Mullen. 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall |
| Monday 17th March | General Meeting: Talk 'Drugs in the Community' by Mr Len Mackin. 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall |
| Sunday 23rd March | Blythe Walk: Meet at 2.00pm at Widney Manor Station. |
| Monday 14th April | General Meeting: Talk 'The Benedictine Priory and St Mary's Hall, Coventry' a illustrated talk by Mr P Thompson. 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall |

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copy can contact the Society's Secretary, Colin Smith, who will supply.

At the AGM, the following Officers were elected or re-elected : Dr. Bower as President; Elaine Warner as Deputy Chairman; Sandra Lea as Treasurer; Colin Smith as Secretary; yours truly as Chairman. Messrs. Walter Birch (Newsletter Distribution); David Bower (Web Site Administrator); Lewis Edwards; Adrian Emsden and Dr. Peter Morton, all were elected members of the Executive Committee. All other Executive Committee Members agreed to serve unchanged. Annual Members Subscriptions rates remain unchanged.

I draw your attention to Gary Masters plea in his Amenities Sub-Committee Report for volunteers to help fill Amenities Sub-Committee vacancies. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that we desperately need more help to fill these positions. In addition to our Amenities Sub-Committee problem, we have been short of a Publicity Officer for a number of years despite pleas for volunteers. So I ask again

for help to fill this position from any one with experience in the field or who has an interest. Is there anyone you know who might be interested whom we can approach? Has anyone any ideas how we might solve this problem? If so, please contact me.

I am sure that everyone will have been pleased to notice that Maddock's premises have at last been taken up as a shop, and a very attractive one at that. Also that Sodens' re-design and refurbishment is nearly complete, again in an attractive way. It is a relief and pleasure when changes to Knowle High Street sustain and enhance its character, and we are delighted to congratulate all concerned, particularly David Lewis for his tasteful conversion of Sodens.

I wish you all good health and fortune in the New Year.

Peter Ellis.

Knowle 775261.

chairman@knowlesociety.org.uk

The President's Speech given at the Society's 40th Anniversary Celebration on October 11th 2002

We came to Knowle in 1947. The almost perfect village.

- 1 Resident squire - Horace Everitt – 3rd generation.
- 2 Resident parson - Revd Sharp.
- 3 Resident doctor - Dr Whatley.
- 4 Resident schoolmaster - Mr Wilkes.
- 5 Resident police sergeant – Sgt Rush.
- 6 Resident Vet - Mr Foster
- 7 Resident district nurse and midwife - Miss Jones - who went everywhere on her bicycle.

The village shops included -

- 1 Butcher
- 2 Baker (No candlestick maker)
- 3 Greengrocer
- 4 Ironmonger
- 5 Crockery shop
- 6 Ladies and gents outfitters
- 7 Shoe shop and cobbler
- 8 And last but not least newsagent Maddocks.

The village was surrounded by farms, green fields and hedges with oaks and elms abounding. Many villagers still lived in the High Street and surrounding roads e.g. Hampton Road, Kixley Lane and Warwick Road. The majority before the War went to Knowle School and said they had a good education. After the War the men met at the British Legion which at that time was based in the Red Lion. A good local village spirit.

A young man in the village, Sidney Bryson, wanted to build a village hall. He organised carnivals in Jobs Close Park to raise money. On one occasion Rosemary Curtis was the carnival queen. The start was always a procession of floats led by Joe Higgs dressed as a highwayman galloping down the village on Landers' milk float horse. Very frightening.

But changes were coming. Before the War the Lodge had been demolished and its trees in the spinney along the Warwick Road had been cut down. The 500 year old White Swan with wide oak floor boards had been de-

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molished in 1938 and replaced by the Nat West Bank. Members of the Guild of Knowle would have stayed there on their feast days. The timbers were dumped in a field in Chessetts Wood Road and some later went to Baddesley Clinton. Arthur Burton of Washpit Farm said they made very good log fires. Myffy Parsons was born at the White Swan and later on became the first Chairman of the Planning Sub Committee. She was very enthusiastic about Knowle.

In 1958 I visited a six year old boy with tonsillitis in a Victorian villa in Drury Lane, Solihull which was like a bomb site. Cottages were being demolished everywhere and Touchwood Court, a fine Georgian house in Drury Lane, was boarded up prior to demolition. Residents were alarmed and formed the Solihull Society. They had a good committee including Charles Lines the historian. Maurice Mell (the Town Clerk) refused to see them. The Society faded out. Solihull was left without its soul and Mell had the square named after him later on.

In 1962 Sidney Bryson called a meeting in the Welfare Clinic in the Village Hall to discuss the possibilities of forming a society in Knowle with the specific purpose of maintaining a watching brief on local developments, preservation of the character of the village and generally promoting a greater interest in the activities of such local affairs as education, health facilities, historical record and so on. The meeting was chaired by the squire Horace Everitt.

There was a slow start. Dell Farm opposite the old surgery was demolished and the lady of the house was in tears after polishing the oak beams for years.

We suggested a precinct parallel to the High Street to preserve cottages but the Borough Engineer, now called the Planning Officer, and the Developer both refused. I remember Mrs Blundell in bed in her cottage surrounded with massive oak beams which were all demolished later on.

We had one planning success - a ten storey tower block in Lightwood Close was refused but generally planning had no teeth.

A history exhibit was organised and the return of the Register of the Guild of Knowle was arranged for the first time after 400 years.

A nature reserve was proposed and accepted and the use of local names for streets was accepted by the council e.g. Crabmill Close and Queen Eleanor Drive.

In 1967 a miracle occurred. Duncan Sandys, Churchill's son-in-law, who was in Anthony Eden's cabinet brought in a private members bill to introduce a Civic Amenities Act to promote the formation of conservation areas. This was quite against the rules.

At once the High Street and Kenilworth Road were registered as conservation areas. Without this I am sure everything would have gone because there were only five listed buildings - the Wilson Arms, Chester House which was falling down, the Guild House, Milverton House and Grimshaw Hall.

In my opinion Duncan Sandys is the patron saint of planning.

A new patron saint is now needed because developers have produced the idea of bogus brown-field sites by buying up houses and demolishing them, replacing with apartment blocks. The future is serious.

Ronald Bower - October 2002



19th November 2001.

Total Income for the year amounted to £3,416 the main source being subscriptions of £2,606.

There were no unusual items in the Expenditure. As usual a contribution of £250 was made to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council towards the cost of watering the hanging baskets in the High Street.

Financial Report

The Knowle Society Balance Sheet and Accounts for the year to 30th September 2001 were presented at the Annual General Meeting on

The surplus of £1,217 was transferred to the Accumulated Fund, which now stands at £6,412, with a further £5,000 in the Reserve Fund.

The Eva Wootton Fund now stands at £3,724 after a donation of £500 to Jobs Close.

Messrs R A Lea & Co. audited the accounts but did not seek re-election. Mr. Andrew Chadwick was elected as Auditor.

Sandra Lea
Hon Treasurer
Knowle 776850

Membership Secretary's Report

The collecting of subscriptions is underway and we begin to see the changes that have taken place over the year more clearly. People have moved away or their circumstances have changed and this shows changes in Membership. This edition of the newsletter sees a total membership of 1771 - a net increase of 94 since this time last year.

May I take this opportunity to remind members that we started a new financial year on 1st October. Yes! You probably guessed what's coming. It is subscription time again! Please expect a knock on the door from your Distributor and a request to 'Pay up'. For those members whose newsletter is delivered by post, please send your subscriptions to



me at 31 Kenilworth Road, Knowle, Solihull B93 0JB. The subscriptions remain at a modest £2.00 for single members and £3.00 for family members. If you are a postal recipient and would like to contribute to the postage charges it will be much appreciated.

Once again, as has become the tradition at this time of the year, there is an easy reference foldable reminder slip of committee members' details enclosed with the Newsletter.

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined us since the last newsletter and hope that we shall have the pleasure of their company at some of our

forthcoming functions.

Mr & Mrs D J Knowles

Mrs J Brown

Ms B Brett

Mr & Mrs P Carvill

Mr & Mrs N Howlings

Mr & Mrs G Stephens

Mrs D L Harris

Mr & Mrs S Poole

Mr & Mrs P Brown

Mr & Mrs D Cox

Mr & Mrs C Godsall

Mrs J Lumb

Mr & Mrs G Aldous

Mr & Mrs N Barnard

Mr & Mrs G E Thomas

Mr D Cann

Mr & Mrs S Lewis

Mr & Mrs J F Tickell

Mrs J L Harris

Mr & Mrs A H Ersking

Mr & Mrs Brigham

Mr & Mrs J F Magill

Mrs Milton

Mr & Mrs L Cheriton

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

Local History Sub-committee.

Since the last newsletter the annual Junior School local studies project has come round once again and gone. About 60 children from Year 6 came to the library to look at photographs from the collection. They were in groups of about five and asked representatives from the sub-committee questions on the spot. An enjoyable (if exhausting) afternoon. Later we went to the school to answer questions the children had prepared in the interim. We were very pleased to receive some charming and appreciative thank you letters. Many thanks to all who gave up their time to help - they are the same people each year, without whom we could not offer this service to the school.

Everything will now be put on hold whilst we prepare our exhibition for the 600th anniversary of Knowle Parish Church next year. A draft layout has already been prepared and most of the relevant items have been extracted from the cabinets at Chester House. Sub-committee members are now trawling through 'The Records of Knowle' (Canon Downing), 'Knowle Col-



legiate Church' (Revd. Anthony Upton), 'The History of Knowle' (Eva Wootton) and the Parish Magazines (over 100 years to go through). Others will be down on their hands and knees preparing a detailed layout. The exhibition will be called 'Knowle Parish Church ~ Heart of the Village 1403 - 2003'. It will cover the origins of the church, its founder, the village at the time, the Guild and College, our incumbents over the years, Church life, the Church in the village, etc. etc. It will be on show in the Guild House on Friday 28th February and Saturday 1st March, when we hope the 15th century Guild Register will come home to Knowle for the first time in several years. The exhibition will then be at Chester House from Tuesday 4th March to

Monday 28th April. This is the last newsletter before it goes on show - do come and see it and watch for the posters.

Elaine S. Warner
Knowle 775887

Planning Sub-committee Report

Members will doubtless have noticed the Park-ridge hoarding along the Warwick Road, preparatory to building 43 luxury apartments there. Planning permission has finally been released, after some delay, but there seems to be little activity on site, leading to speculation about the developer's intentions.

Redrow were recently refused permission to demolish 1290 – 1300 Warwick Road (next to the Park-ridge site) and erect 32 apartments. They have now submitted a new application to erect 24 apartments in one block on this site. Despite the reduction in numbers, we still think this is unsuitable in terms of scale and mass, and the additional traffic on this busy road. We are also concerned that we will eventually have apartments all the way down to the Wychwood Roundabout, entirely changing the character of the area.

We have queried the need for yet another telecommunications mast in woodlands along Hampton Road, only 100 metres or so along from the existing mast at



the Knowle Cricket Club. We favour multiple use of existing masts rather than proliferation, but of course we then have to accept that this might involve increasing the height of the existing masts.

Solihull Council has advised that its Revised Deposit (funny term!) of the Unitary Development Plan will be available in late Spring.

In the meantime the Government has published its Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill, which is intended to implement many of the changes envisaged in the Green Paper. It has also published its con-

troversial Regional Assemblies Preparation Bill, paving the way for directly elected assemblies. At the moment, the West Midlands Assembly has 80 unelected members, and the assembly will assume responsibility for Regional planning from January 2003.

Ken Richards

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Amenities Sub-committee Report

Can I ask a few of you to make your New Year resolution to volunteer your services to the Society?

The activities of this sub-committee are currently limited due to the lack of participating members. For example a person that has time available during the day, in order to attend the meetings of the Birmingham Airport committees is urgently required. Some background knowledge of the workings of an airport would be a considerable advantage, but not vital. In addition the committee would be better placed to understand some of the Council workings if it had an observer available at the various Council committee meetings that affect our basis of operations and interests. The intention is not that any work is onerous, and if more than one or two people volunteer then the duties can be shared around more easily. Please give some thought to the YOUR situation, and contact me at the earliest moment, if you feel that some assistance can be given.

In the meantime please look about you as you walk within the centre of the village. Some improvements are being made to the street furniture under the Area En-

hancement Plan. Your comments will be appreciated as to the effect on the overall scene.

Junction improvement works are due to commence soon, and I am still waiting to hear if the Council are considering any further traffic calming measures following the questionnaires distributed to the residents of Lady Byron Lane, Tilehouse Green Lane, Longdon Road, and Lodge Road. Because these roads are strictly residential your Society did not consider that any recommendations could be made in this area, and awaits the action, if any, following the wishes of residents.

At the time of writing it has just been announced that as a result of an High Court action, the date for submissions to the Department of Transport in connection with the proposals for future air traffic expansion have been put back into next year sometime. At this stage it is not clear if that only affects the south-east of the country only. It has been stated that the issue of the White Paper will however be delayed, but again it is not stated by how long. We must remember that maybe the future of our village will be decided within that document. Let us

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continue to hope that our environment is not to be adversely affected.

Lewis Edwards reports on transport as follows:-



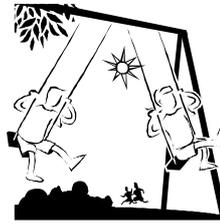
BY TRAIN FOR A NIGHT OUT IN BIRMINGHAM ? YOU MUST BE JOKING !

It was pleasant to have an evening in Birmingham by train. And the return journey was so easy - a train to Dorridge from Snow Hill at half past every hour.

And there at Dorridge was a 39 bus waiting at the station to take you to Bentley Heath or Knowle -. **not any more.**

From Birmingham there are now two trains an hour - at five minutes to and about five minutes past each hour .All well and good - but you will have a wait over thirty minutes for your bus!

We are making representations to CENTRO and the train and bus companies. **Watch this space !**



Finally, with spring just around the corner, let us put our minds to enjoying pleasing walks, or strolls, within our excellent parkland. With the use of Knowle Park in mind the Council will soon be seeking your views with regard to their proposals for making it more user friendly to a

wider element of our community. You may be wondering what this may entail, in which case make sure that you attend the exhibition that will be mounted, (details not known at time of going to press), and ensure that your opinions are given. Remember the park is your park, and is there to serve the community in which we all live.

Have an exhilarating spring, and let us hope that 2003 will be a great year for Knowle, and it's Society.

Gary Masters.

Knowle 779955

amenities@knowlesociety.org.uk

Meetings and Social Sub-committee Report

By the time you receive this Newsletter, I hope you have enjoyed a happy Christmas, and sincerely hope you will have a peaceful New Year.

I hope you liked the Knowle Society Christmas Tree. Thanks are due to Gary Masters, Leighton Jones and Phil Vince who helped the contractors erect the tree in time for the annual lighting up of the High Street.

I wasn't able to attend the Boxing Day Walk this year, but here again I hope that those members who took part enjoyed a couple of hours of fresh air, not to mention the refreshments. Thanks must go to those members who kindly donated the mince pies and to Di and Ted Reville who came up trumps again with their liquid refreshments. Thanks must also go to Leighton Jones, Susan Trucchi and Gwen & Gary Masters who masterminded it all.

Off we go on another year of meetings and talks. Your support, during last year, was amazing. Carry on the good work!

MONDAY 20th JANUARY 2003:

600 Years of Knowle Parish Church. The Reverend Anthony Upton, who wrote and published The Collegiate Church of Saints John Baptist, Laurence and 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. As a Society, restricted by our Constitution, we are unable to

contribute towards the Church's nominated charity during this year of celebrations. However members will be able to make a contribution on the evening if they wish to World Vision, a charity which funds projects in the poor and deprived countries of the world.

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

MONDAY 17th MARCH 2003: Drugs in the Community. A talk by Len Mackin of Cascade, a voluntary organisation, which is funded by trusts foundations and businesses. I am sure I do not have to tell members how serious the drug situation is in the United Kingdom. In any town or village there is a problem. Knowle is no different.

MONDAY 14th APRIL 2003: The Benedictine Priory and St. Mary's Hall Coventry. A talk by archaeologist Paul Thompson. The biggest medieval excavation ever in Britain took place in Coventry between September 1999 and March 2000. It revealed the Benedictine Cathedral and Priory founded by Leofric, Earl of Mercia and Lady Godiva in 1043. This and lots more will be revealed to you during this illustrated talk.

I look forward to seeing you.

Sandra Lea

Knowle 776850

events@knowlesociety.org.uk



Nature Conservation Sub-committee Report



Today's weather of December 10th exactly mirrors that of last year's report written on the same day, except that freezing fog is replaced by Siberian wind and -3°C. This morning's icy rain beat like sharp splinters on my face as I cycled to



Knowle:
Mini Woodland - This is a photograph of October 25th and

shows one of the woodland trees planted last March. Despite poor soil and the August heat wave and drought, we uncovered 32 of the small

whips well hidden in the long grass, and thriving. Does this success contradict current thinking that grass competing with newly planted tree roots drains away moisture and should be removed from around each tree? Maybe our commemorative trees would have fared better in unmown grass without the risk of bark damage by the contract mowers.

The Parks Concept Plan - suggests taking over this Millennium Commemorative area for an Arboretum. Perhaps some of these Arboretum trees could act as replacements for our own vandalised and damaged trees. Would you be happy with this?

Trees - The great gale of October 26th seemed to affect us, locally, worse even than the great storm of October 1987, with trees and branches down all over the place. Solihull Council Tree section faced a mammoth clearance task and is to be congratulated for their speedy work on roads and verges. I was taken to task over the loss of the great Tree of Heaven at Milverton House (Above right) "It wasn't even a native tree" But it was still a tree of great distinction (described in



more detail in the December Parish Magazine) and almost unrecorded in Solihull, except in Temple Balsall Churchyard. The Milverton wall is now being repaired—perhaps if the old base is still alive it may sucker new growth.

Local Nature Reserve Status - is almost complete for the total Knowle Park area, and full species lists for the Nature Reserve are with David Lowe, Council Ecologist. Since Jobs Close pond is included in the Local Nature Reserve we will discuss its management with David, and also the suggested nature trail around it drawn in the Concept plan. Another rubbish clearance of the pond took place on November 28th, and we are very



indebted to Mike Bignell (Seen on the left) for his huge effort in pulling out not

only the floating cans and bottles but also the heavy car tyre, the large piece of Transco equipment and the long-immersed traffic cone, all of which we thankfully disposed of, by kind permission, into a nearby skip on Longdon Road.

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust – The new centre in Brueton Park has been an outstanding success since its Opening by Prof. David Bellamy (see picture on page 8) on October 15th, and has already hosted

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various talks, tree walks and a children's party.

School visits should begin next term when we also hope to begin management of its nature reserve with funding from the Government Landfill Tax Scheme. Plans are also underway to transfer Environment Day 2003 from High Street, Solihull

to Brueton Park opposite the centre, where there will be more opportunities for exciting wildlife events.

Airport - the Governments consultation period has been extended to May 2003, giving time for more logical thought about the need for any new runways at Elmdon, let alone a new airport near Rugby. We are urged to write again to Alistair Darling, Eland House, Bressendon Pace, London. SW1. 5DU. in the fight to stave off a nightmare devastation of our countryside and rare habitats, local farms and businesses; possibly too, irreparable damage to the National Organic Centre (HDRA) at Ryton Gardens and to our own WWT Nature Centre/HQ with its 200 acre wetland reserve and 7 lakes, at Brandon Marsh near Coventry.

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Stella Jarman
Knowle 774528