

ADMINISTRATION

The most important item under this heading is the constitution, which is covered in a separate insert giving notice of a general meeting before the talk on March 19th. We hope it will not take too long. As we write membership stands at 96 and is increasing at a steady rate. We have now joined the *British Association for Local History* (BALH). Membership comes bundled with all the public liability insurance we need.

PEOPLE

We give the warmest of welcomes to Meg Hole, who has kindly taken on the key position of Secretary. Meg is very experienced, has all the right computer equipment and software (and knows how to use it) and is already proving a rock. We are very grateful to her, especially as she is already very busy: she not only works part-time, but visits hospitals with Barney, her black labrador, with the *Pets as Therapy* scheme.

This has relieved Gillian Knight, who wanted to give up the position for various personal reasons. Gillian will continue to be responsible for collecting modern records (the history of the future) and general sales. She is also our Dorridge expert.

Mulling over the constitution we thought it would be a good thing to have a Deputy Chairman to take over in case the chairman cannot act. John Johnson, who has effectively been doing the job, has had his arm twisted.

VILLAGE VIGNETTES: THE GHOST AT 'FAR END'

Those of you who were at the talk on *Kixley Lane* in October may remember that Mrs. Cherry Austin (née Goade) mentioned that *Far End*, where she once lived, was haunted. This is Mrs. Austin's account of *Old Ben*, as told to Valerie Morton:

Mr. Willcox told Mr. and Mrs. Goade about the ghost when they were considering buying the property and referred to 'Old Ben'. They were undeterred. Mrs. Goade had many experiences of an elderly man with peaked cap and long mac appearing at various times and in several parts of the building. Mrs. Austin herself saw him twice, once when dusting one of the downstairs rooms in broad daylight. His face was blurred but the image was very clear. On the second occasion she was decorating the end bedroom, when there was loud hammering on the outside of the end wall for which there was no explanation. She was so alarmed that she dropped the paper and ran down the stairs. There were also many instances of items being moved and put down in other places, and Mr. & Mrs. Austin's Staffordshire Bull Terrier was quite terrified and would never go inside the house.

More 'village vignettes' are welcome, which we will include in future newsletters as space permits. If you would like to make a contribution please e-mail us or ring Sylvia Moody on 01564 779921

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU DURING THE YEAR

The next newsletter will be circulated at the beginning of June



KNOWLE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Newsletter

Volume 1 No. 2

February 2008

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Firstly - thank you to everyone who has joined the Society since the last newsletter. Our membership is now nearing the magic number of one hundred. We hope everyone will find their membership enjoyable.

There has been a great deal of activity since last October, as we get the Society established. By December we felt justified in changing our title from *Knowle Local History Group* to *Society*, which you may have noticed from the heading. When we mentioned this at the Christmas Social there was a general murmur of approval. We were anxious to get it done whilst there was only the bank account to unpick.

You will find a number of enclosures with this newsletter: firstly the programme card for 2008; secondly a copy of our proposed constitution and rules, with a notice of a general meeting and associated notes. We have had to squeeze a lot into a very short time-scale with Christmas in the middle. It has been hard work, but in future there should be less to do and not so much rush. There is some way to go - next stop a web site, which we would like to get underway before we start preparing exhibitions and talks. Luckily, two of our members with some experience have offered to help.

More details of everything overleaf.

Elaine S. Warner
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Diary

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| Wed Mar 19th
7.30 p.m. | <i>The History of Wroxall Abbey</i> at the Guild House
Speaker: Beryl Ellerslie |
| March | Exhibition: <i>Chester House Reborn</i> at Knowle Library |
| Wed May 14th
7.30 p.m. | <i>Knowle History from National & Local Sources</i>
at Knowle Parish Church. Speaker: The Revd. Dr. A. A. Upton |
| Sat June 21st | Exhibition: <i>The Railway Station</i> at Knowle Festival in the Park |
| Sat June 28th | Exhibition: <i>The Railway Station</i> at Knowle C of E School Fete |

MEETINGS

We are well aware that if the audience continues on the same scale as last October we shall have to find a larger hall. For the moment we shall use the Guild House until we see how the numbers settle down: it is a glorious building (complete with coffee facilities and not as expensive) and so very suitable for a history society. There will be no problem for Dr. Upton's talk in May as we are in the church, by kind permission of the vicar. After that we shall see. All our speakers this year are members of the Society, with the promise of three interesting evenings.

Our first meeting, on March 19th, will be *The History of Wroxall Abbey*, when the speaker will be Beryl Ellerslie - well known to many of you as she has given a number of talks in the village. This one is new - and Beryl has also written a book (unpublished) about Wroxall. As ever she is supported by husband Max, who is a retired professional photographer and a wizard with all things digital.



Wroxall Abbey with the chapel in the foreground

In May the Revd. Dr. Anthony Upton will speak on *Knowle History from National and Local Sources*. Dr. Upton has long experience of research into primary records, many of which he has transcribed and translated from Medieval Latin. One cannot overstate the expertise and time involved in this, as well as the need to travel all over the country and stay overnight in London. Dr. Upton is the author of *Knowle Collegiate Church* (£15) and *Remember Walter Cook* (£12.99) and has another book in preparation - as well as taking church services on Sundays. His talks are always fascinating and we are lucky that he has made time in a very busy schedule to speak to us. Dr. Upton is usually accompanied by his wife, Dr. Penny Upton, an historian in her own right. Both books are still available. Please ring Valerie Hamley on 01564 773449 if you would like one. *Cheques payable to The Revd. Dr. A. A. Upton.*

We are very grateful to Tris Thacker, who has a number of talks already prepared and who has offered to speak at short notice in the event that a speaker cannot come.

Details of the October talk will be included in a later newsletter.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Thirty-four people enjoyed the Christmas social last December. We are sorry there is no photograph as a memento - no-one remembered to bring a camera. We have included it in the programme again for this year, but not so near Christmas. At

a member's suggestion the summer social has become a strawberry tea. We thought members may like to follow the talk on Wroxall Abbey with a visit, which we are at present finalising. The staff at Wroxall are very helpful, and we will be able to look round all parts of the building which are not occupied. More details next newsletter

EXHIBITION: CHESTER HOUSE REBORN

Our discussions with the library have stalled at present, but we still hope to mount an exhibition about Chester House when it re-opens. In the meantime we have included it in the programme and will start preparation soon.

EXHIBITION: THE RAILWAY STATION

This is due for its first outing at the Festival in the Park on June 21st. It is specifically about Dorridge Station (originally called Knowle of course), rather than about the railway or engines in general - a subject already covered by railway buffs. We have already started to collect material and have received offers of photographs and material. Many people seem to have memories of going down to the station as children. Any more anecdotes would be more than welcome - if you would like to make a contribution please get in touch with any of the committee.

TALK: RESEARCHING KNOWLE HISTORY

On January 21st Elaine Warner, accompanied by Gillian Knight and John Johnson, gave a brief informal talk (not in the same class as the one Dr. Upton will give in May) to a new local history group attached to Dorridge U3A. Starting from scratch, as we did thirty years ago, they were interested to learn just how much fascinating material there is. We wish them every success.

PROJECTS

At the time of writing (February 1st) we are just about to set up a small projects group for people who like to take an active part. Would anyone interested please ring John Johnson on 01564 773457 or e-mail us at knowlehistory@yahoo.co.uk.

WCRO & BALH PROGRAMMES

Both the *Friends of Warwickshire County Record Office* and the *British Association for Local History*, of which we are members, have confirmed that our members can attend their functions without any limit on numbers, although we must make a block booking. Anyone interested please contact us. The program to the end of May is:

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| Sat 1st March | Talk: the Willes Collection of Leamington & exhibition. Free.
Speaker: Mark Booth (a senior member of staff at WCRO) |
| Sat 19th April | Forum: Speakers: Lady Hamilton - Her Childhood in India;
Nick Molyneux - Kenilworth Castle. £2 inc. refreshments |
| Fri 25th April | Visit to Lambeth Palace & Westminster Abbey Library and
Muniment Room by BALH. £10. 11 a.m. Own transport. |