

# Stoneygate

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2003

## Conservation Area Society

### SOLVING 21st-CENTURY CAR PROBLEMS



This drawing was done between the wars by an artist concerned that cars and overcrowding would make cityscapes intolerable.

SCAS welcomes the city council's proposed residents' parking scheme, even though we have reservations about burgeoning street signs (December 2002 newsletter). If the scheme goes through, we hope that indicators of residents parking areas will be done with more sensitivity to the visual environment.

A residents' scheme would reduce misuse of our streets by commuters. However, restaurants, pubs, clubs, community centres and churches bring people and cars into the area at times when the residents' parking scheme does not apply. These are times when there are not enough on-street spaces for all the residents, let

alone strangers. It will be galling to pay for a parking permit and still have nowhere to park.

What are the solutions? Some councils attempt to discourage car use altogether. We are relieved there are few signs of Leicester pursuing that line, since Stoneygate is likely to continue attracting workers who need to be mobile at work and prefer to be mobile at leisure. Some imaginative, long-term thinking is necessary if we are to manage 21st-century car use in a Victorian area effectively.

Londoners have developed solutions that could work in Leicester. Some areas have invested in secure underground car parks, which conserve the area while catering for local need. Others re-mark wide streets with little traffic on them to expand parking.

One local possibility is Knighton Park Road, although there are many others. Additional spaces could be created by marking diagonally parking spaces down its sides, or down the centre; meters could be added; the road could even be blocked off to make a car park.

These are unlikely to be popular suggestions with people who live in wide streets, but we need to recognize the need to hold such debates, soon.

### Put this date in your diary

The Society's AGM is on Wednesday, June 4, at 7.30pm at the Octagon, St John's Church, Clarendon Park Road.

Refreshments will be available from 7.15pm so come early and meet committee members over a cup of coffee.

By then local elections will be complete and we will know who our councillors will be. Redrawn boundary maps will be available, and the new councillors' views of Stoneygate considered. There is some concern that the reorganization cuts across Stoneygate, losing its coherence.

The AGM will be followed by a talk from local historian Helen Boynton, who will preview her study of 'Clarendon Park and the Knighton Estate.'

*Are you  
a wizard of  
the web?*

A modern society really needs a website to be effective. A community network called The Beehive was advertised in the Leicester Mercury so we downloaded information about it. Its name comes from its aim to 'get the community buzzing.' It supports people representing non-profit organisations to set up and maintain their own website, free of charge.

Our problem is that nobody on the committee feels they have the aptitude or the energy to do it. Is there a reader who would like to join a lively, friendly committee and who is interested in learning how to set up and maintain this site for us?

# Stoneygate Footprints event launches society's jubilee year

A grand total of 116 local residents visited Stoneygate Footprints on February 1, the first in a series of events in 2003 planned to celebrate 25 years of SCAS's advocacy of the area.

The exhibition achieved our aims of raising awareness of Stoneygate's character, while hosting a community event with a broad appeal. The three local councillors, Joan Garrity, Ned Newitt and Barry Coles, spoke warmly of SCAS's work as they opened the exhibition at the Friends' Meeting House in Queen's Road by cutting our birthday cake.

The exhibition included displays about Stoneygate's key buildings and architects provided by the city council's planning department, and enlarged maps of the area made by committee members from resources at the Wigston Records Office.

A renovated wooden lion carved by Ol-



From left: Councillors Ned Newitt and Barry Coles, SCAS chair Diane Hall and visitors to the exhibition.

wen and Geoffrey Pool, who willingly shared their enthusiasm and skills with other potential restorers. Mona Walkden, the granddaughter of this woodcarving family, also visited the exhibition.

Local historian Helen Boynton was on hand for much of the day to discuss her book *The changing face of*

*London Road*, as well as material gathered for her next project, a history of the Knighton Estate.

A pictorial history of the recent renovation of Albert Sawday's Christchurch by the ADW partnership showed how well an old building can be adapted by a sensitive architect.

St John the Baptist's display about their Goddard-designed church, refreshed by the addition of Roy Bardoli's Octagon in 1990, recorded another renovation. However, the highlight was their extraordinary choir register. Wilfred Orme kept it for 17 years, showing how a mundane task can be brought alive with cartoons, calligraphy and illustrations. He recorded with great care the way events such as the Coronation affected this small group.

Pictures of the area by 32 children from nearby primary schools stopped the exhibition from feeling too concerned with the past. Supported by teacher Chris Broadbent, children from Avenue Road Nursery and Infants made a strong submission - book token prizes went to

☐ Continued on facing page

## Keep an eye on the local trees

Our greatest current concern is the increasing number of applications to remove and fell trees, reducing the greenness of the area valued by the character statement. Seventeen applications to fell were approved, and four are pending.

Paul Champion, Planning Officer (Trees), Urban Design Group, (tel 252 7263) assures us that while approval is given for old and damaged trees to be removed, their policy is that replacement trees of appropriate size and species should be planted in the same place as soon as possible. This was a specific requirement of approval for the application to fell from Montessori School at 58 Stoneygate Road and 223 London Road.

Replacement of felled trees has been carried out by the council in its management of street trees, most recently in North Avenue and Central Avenue.

It will be helpful if members familiarise themselves with recommendations made about felled trees near to them, and ensure that replacements are planted if required. We also hope members will help us identify new places where street trees could be planted without impeding pedestrians or blocking light from houses.

□ From previous page

their pupils Isabella (Nursery) and Harry (Infants). Also commended were Adam (Avenue Road Nursery), Mary (Avenue Road Infants) and Georgina (St John's School).

Children visiting the drawing area were encouraged to make their own pictures, adding to the vivid display.

Stoneygate Footprints encouraged old members to renew and new

## Jubilee year launches with exhibition

people to join SCAS, and provided an amiable start to our anniversary year.

Other events planned include a jubilee walk led by Richard Gill (see story below). We would also like to develop an exhibition on the design and planting of gardens and open spaces, although that may have to await energy and

resource.

Under more active consideration is an autumn exhibition that would turn away from architecture and design to focus on local building materials and their restoration.

We would be delighted to hear from members knowledgeable about these topics.

## *Gill's August guidance . . .*

To mark our jubilee, Richard Gill has agreed to lead a walk around Stoneygate buildings that have changed significantly over the last 25 years. A fortunate few were able to attend his last walk in October.

Richard has offered to guide another group on Sunday, August 10. However, we regret it has to be for a limited number. More people would like to attend his walks than is possible - if everybody came they would not be able to hear, and the group would be too large to guarantee road safety.

We are limiting numbers to the first 30 paid-up members who telephone Odette Fogler (270 5623) to book their place. She will let you know the time and meeting place, and will be the person who collects the £3 fee from you on the on the day.

## Shifting graffiti

Council cleansing department staff completely removed graffiti from St James the Greater the day it was reported. Since it did not return, resistance is worthwhile. Report graffiti to the excellent Environment Service (252 6339), open until 10pm as a trial.

People experiencing repeated graffiti to their homes can discuss it with Hughie Blair (252 8598, working hours). While the council cannot usually work on private buildings, the easy-clean paints and other deterrents they advise can make the difference.

## MORE FROM THE CHARACTER STATEMENT: SOUTH STONEYGATE

This sector includes Knighton Road.

Stretching between Avenue Road, London Road and Ratcliffe Road, South Stoneygate is described as the most spacious of the sectors.

Its generous tree cover includes a superb cedar behind Knighton Hayes. Trees enhance the gently curving townscape passage in Ratcliffe Road, while a straight line of horse chestnuts establishes a more formal quality in Knighton Drive.

A number of earlier houses in

the south contain neo-classical details such as small pane windows based on the Golden Section.

Nos 34 Elms Road and 147 Ratcliffe Road are important examples of the Queen Anne style, showing motifs such as jettied upper floors and imposing doorways.

Ernest Gimson's 1892 house Inglewood on Ratcliffe Road used local materials and restrained decoration, arts and crafts style also seen in the White House, North Avenue (1898) described previously.



Arts and crafts . . . Inglewood.

# Planning applications and decisions

December 2002- March 2003

There is continuing concern about the erection of telecommunication masts and satellite dishes on public buildings in the area.

However, one area of concern was removed. Following very effective public consultation about changes to the Mayfield roundabout, SCAS did not object because the roundabout is to be retained, albeit in a trimmed form.

The following summarises significant planning applications in the past few months.

120 Queens Road: change of use to restaurant/bar - refused.

26 Knighton Park Road (The Laurels): removal of two holly trees - refused; erection of railings - approved.

Adjacent to 2 Southernhay Road: felling of one tree and works to two others - approved; erection of 2-metre fence to London Road - pending.

Rear 196 Queen's Road: three bungalows - approved.

279 London Road: change to day nursery - approved.

BT Stoneygate Road: erection of 8-metre antenna - approved.

27 Knighton Road: demolition of coach house and extension with 19 flats - pending.

99 Clarendon Park Road: conversion of garages to

house - pending.

254 London Road and 9 Elmfield Avenue: conversion of Grade II listed building to eight flats and erection of 15 houses in the grounds - pending.

38 Ratcliffe Road: conversion of nursing home to seven flats - pending.

Barratt Close: erection of block of 14 flats - pending.

24 Knighton Park Road: demolition of bungalow and erection of two blocks providing 24 flats - pending.

10 Woodland Avenue: erection of house and garage in side garden - pending.

10 Central Avenue: conversion of house to five flats - pending; designation of coach house as separate dwelling - pending.

We have recently experienced the frustration of individuals who expect SCAS to do more than is in its power. While we have a deep commitment to working with members and non-members to help one another to maintain the character of Stoneygate, we remind readers that this is a voluntary society.

Beyond ensuring that due process has been followed, and commenting on applications, committee members have no power to affect decisions taken by the council. Disputes should be taken up with elected councillors.

## SCAS CONTACTS

Chair: Diane Hall 221 5630

Co-ordinator: David Oldershaw 270 0010

Treasurer: Henry Evans 270 2169

Membership: Odette Fogler 270 5623

PR: Madeleine Cooke 270 6420

Newsletter: Jennifer Clegg 270 5181 and Julia Killey 210 9077

Trees: Caroline Cook 210 9685

Members: Tom Copp 270 4975, Anna Revill 270 9885

Meetings are quarterly, enjoyable and informative. New committee members are always welcome. If you would like to join SCAS or renew your membership, please return the form below.

### Stoneygate Conservation Area Society

JOIN US!

I/we wish to join the Society/renew membership and enclose cash/cheque for £3 (per household per year) as from 1 April 2003. Cheques should be made payable to Stoneygate Conservation Area Society.

Name .....

Address .....

Tel .....

Send to: Odette Fogler, 5 Calbri Court, 37 Knighton Drive, Leicester LE2 3HD (tel 270 5623).