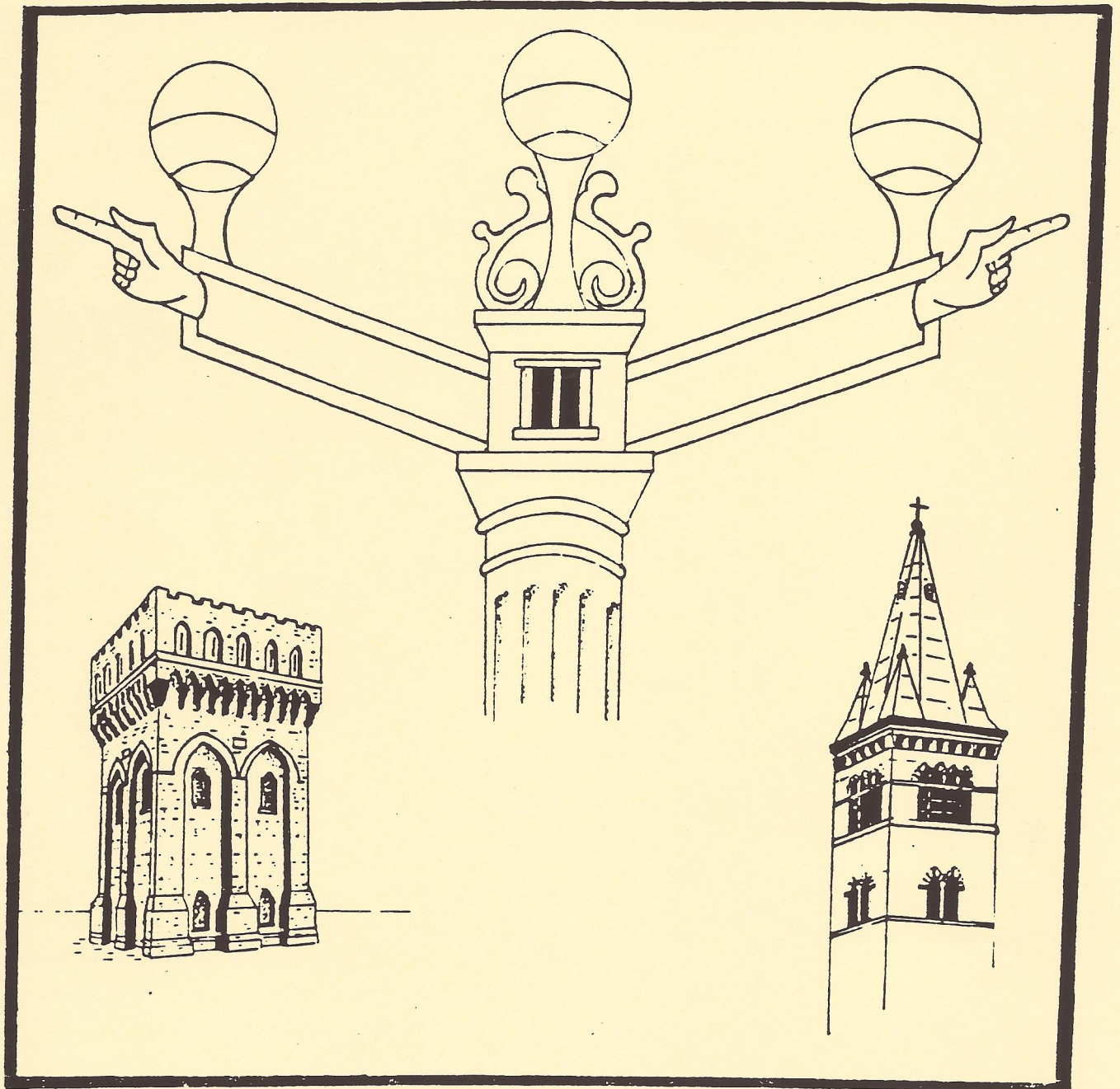


KNOWLEDGE

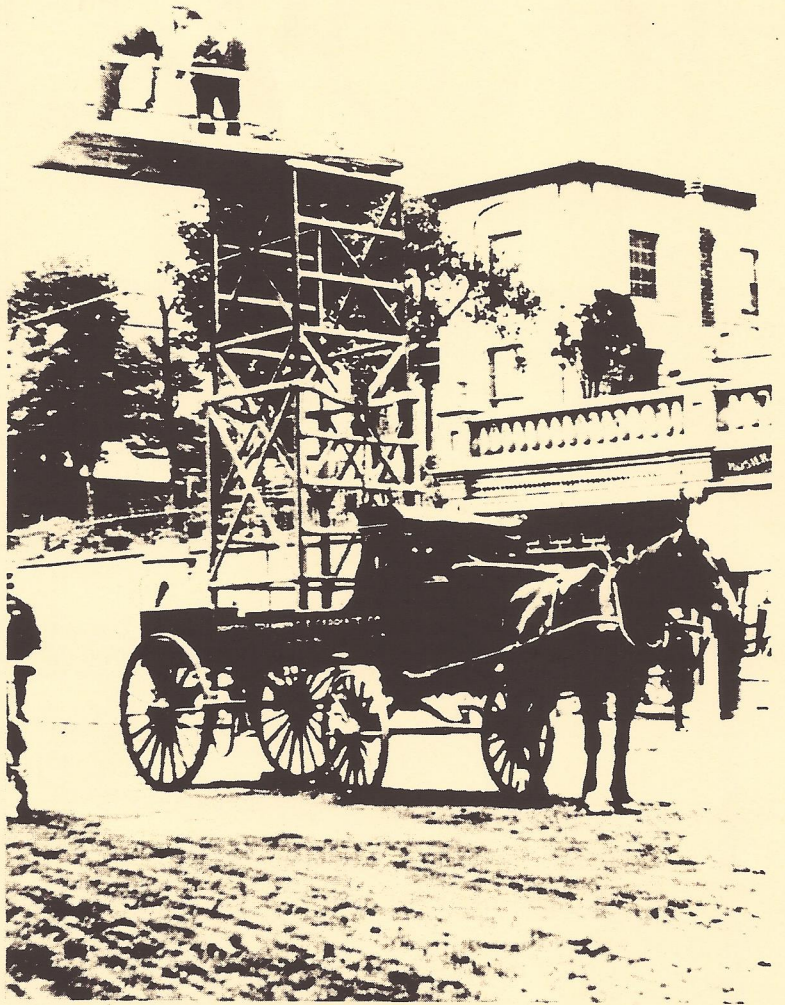


The History Magazine for the Knowle
and Totterdown Local History Society

Overhead cable maintenance at the Three Lamps junction early this century.

In the background Bath Villa is clearly visible, but Avon Villa is obscured by the tower.

The tower appears to have a turntable arrangement to position the working platform, but looks decidedly unsafe. I would hope that the brakes are fully applied on the wagon to stop the horse wandering off.



Service with a smile from the female conductor during the First World War ?

KNOWLE & TOTTERDOWN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Committee 1994

(left to right) Audrey Weekes, Malcolm Weeks, Mike Hooper, Jane Roberts, Ron Elson, Peter Clements.

Next Meetings:	10 March 1995	Anton Bastock "The Bedminster Workhouse"
	21 April 1995	Peter Goodchild "Bristol Blitzes and Members' Memories"
	12 May 1995	50th Anniversary of VE Day - Member Participation
	9 June 1995	Brian Austin "The History of Weston-super-Mare"

*Meetings are held at Redcatch Community Centre, Redcatch Road, Knowle
at 7.30 p.m.*

Members 30p Non-Members £1.00

A letter from the Secretary - February 1995

Dear Member/Visitor

I would like to draw your attention to our meetings on 21st April and 12th May.

As you know, we are celebrating the 50th Anniversary of VE Day on 8th May 1995. With this occasion in view, Mr Peter Goodchild is giving an illustrated talk on "The Bristol Blitzes" on Friday 21st April 1995. (This is the third Friday in the month: it was necessary to change the date as the 14th April is Good Friday.) You may remember how very much we enjoyed Peter's visit last year when he spoke about the history of Fry's of Somerdale, and showed some very old slides.

To back up the evening, the Committee wondered whether some of our members would like to write an account of their memories of the war years, especially the blitzes. These will be put on display on the evening of the talk. At a later date, the memories could either be published in an issue of KNOWLEdge or in a special booklet produced by the Society. You need not write a lengthy piece - everyone's memories are different - and all will be of interest. We would like as many members as possible to help in this way and, if you are able to do so, could you please hand your written copies to me at our meeting on Friday 10th March. Please write your name and address at the top.

Friday 12th May has been set aside as a members' participation evening. We have decided to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of VE Day. Several members have already agreed to talk for a few minutes about where they were, what they were doing, and how they celebrated this important day. If anyone else would like to share their story, please have a word with me either tonight or in 10th March.

We shall have a display of war-time memorabilia. If you have any photographs, ration books, magazines, papers, gas masks, shrapnel, etc., could you please bring them along on Friday 21st April. Would you clearly mark them with your name and address. If you have quite a lot, it would be best to put everything in a plastic bag, clearly marked. A copy will be made of all photographs and other suitable documents, and these will be returned to you at the end of the meeting on 12th May. We would particularly like photographs of any VE Parties held in the district: also photographs of members taken during war-time, especially if you were in the Armed Forces. These will be displayed and a competition held to see how many can be successfully identified. Please put your name and address on the reverse side. Here again, the photographs will be copied to place in the Society's archives.

A Bring & Buy Sale will also be held towards the Society's funds. Please try to bring along an unwanted gift, groceries, books, and anything someone else may like to buy.

We hope to enjoy a varied evening with war-time music, songs and sounds. Please bring along your memorabilia and write your memories to help make it a success.

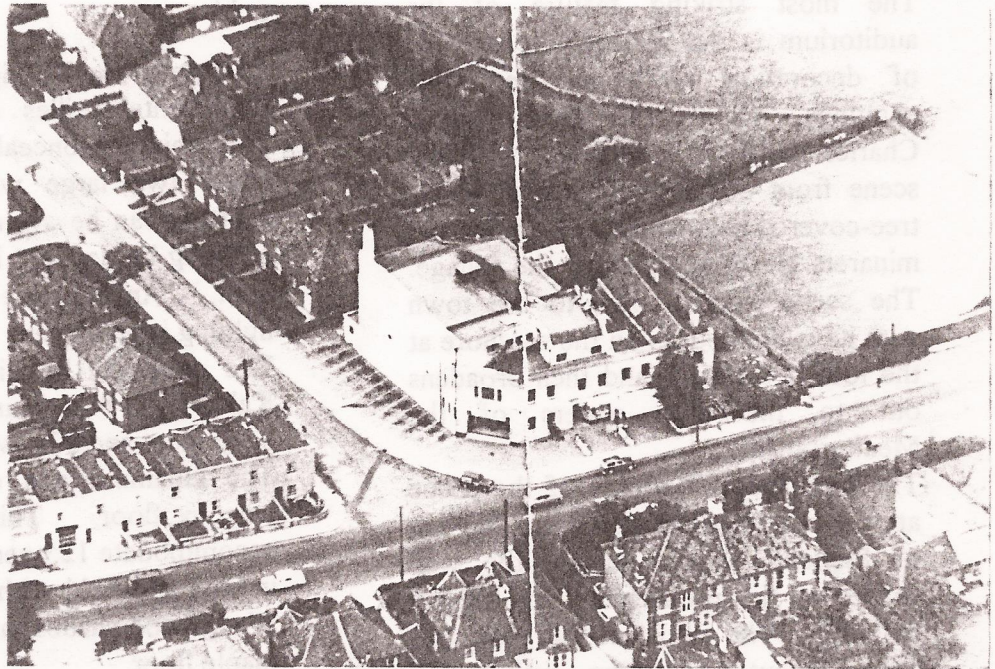
With best wishes

Jane E Roberts

Honorary Secretary

THE GAIETY CINEMA

*Extract from
publication dated
11.1.34*



Aerial view of the new cinema

ATMOSPHERIC DECORATION In Bristol Suburban Kinema

The Gaiety, the new atmospheric kinema which has been built by F. G. W. Chamberlain at Knowle, a suburb of Bristol, possesses several distinctive features.

One of these is the ceiling of the auditorium, which ascends from the back of the balcony to the top of the proscenium arch, having a drop of about 12 ft. at the screen end. The result is that the acoustic properties of the building are as perfect as possible, excellent reproduction being obtained.

The position of the operating-box is also unusual. The box is cut through the middle of the balcony. It is actually embedded in the centre of the balcony, and the projection is through a short tunnel in the front wall of the balcony, the lenses of the machine being dead level with the centre of the screen, giving perfect projection and doing away with any possibility of distortion.

New Ventilating System

The method of heating is also different to most systems in vogue today; it is really a reversal to the oldest system of heating buildings practised in this country. It is on the Roman plan. Pipes are laid beneath the floor of the auditorium and the heat is admitted through a number of small openings which are placed in inconspicuous positions beneath the seats in different parts of the building. Oil fuel burning plant is employed, and the temperature is automatically controlled on the thermostatic principle.

The kinema, which seats about 800 persons, occupies an island site, the entrance facing the corner of Crossways and the main Wells Road. The exterior has been designed in a plain but dignified style.

Black and green entrance doors with chromium plating open into a well-lighted vestibule decorated in green and gold.

Atmospheric Decoration

The most striking feature of the auditorium is the atmospheric scheme of decoration, with its fine wall paintings. The theme is the landing of Charles the First in Morocco, and the scene from above the balcony shows tree-covered hills with white domes and minarets gleaming amongst the foliage. The scene slopes down to the town with its white houses on the seashore at the foot of the hills, and then broadens out to the blue waters of the Mediterranean.

The outstanding features of the scene are the two large galleons flying the flag of England, which occupy the wall spaces at the proscenium end of the building. The whole of this work has been executed by the well-known kinema artist, George Legge, of Bryan's Adamanta Co., Ltd.

The lower part of the walls of the auditorium and also the balcony have been finished in fibrous plaster to represent stone. The ceiling is in cream, blue and gold, with a centre lighting fitment.

The seats, supplied by Lusty and Sons, Ltd., are upholstered in brown and green mohair, the floor being carpeted to match. The proscenium arch, which is decorated in blue and gold, is 23 ft. by 18 ft. The screen is a Turner No. 3,

and the curtains are mauve shot with gold.

Letting in the Daylight

Ornamental grilles each side of the proscenium conceal shutters which cover two large windows. These shutters can be swung back to permit cleaning by daylight instead of artificial light. An effective system of colour lighting is employed.

The operating box is fitted with two Kalee No. 8 machines, B.T.P. talkie equipment and a Newton rectifier.

The kinema has a dance-hall on the balcony floor. This hall, which can accommodate 125 persons, is decorated in blue and gold with hanging lamps in Wedgwood shades, and is fitted with a maple floor.

The contractor was R. J. Hurford, Bristol, and other firms who supplied materials were: Steelwork, Stock and Collings, Bristol; bricks, Prater and Co., Bristol; doors, Bryce, White and Co., Ltd., Bristol; oil-fuel burning plant, Barton Motors (Bristol) Ltd., Keynsham; seats, Lusty and Sons, Ltd., London; rectifier, Walturdaw's, London; electric lighting fittings, Greyhound Garages Ltd., Bristol; curtains, W. S. Cox and Co., Bristol; neon signs, E.S.S. Signs, Ltd., Bristol; fibrous plaster work, Bryan's Adamanta Co., Ltd., Birmingham.

Snippets

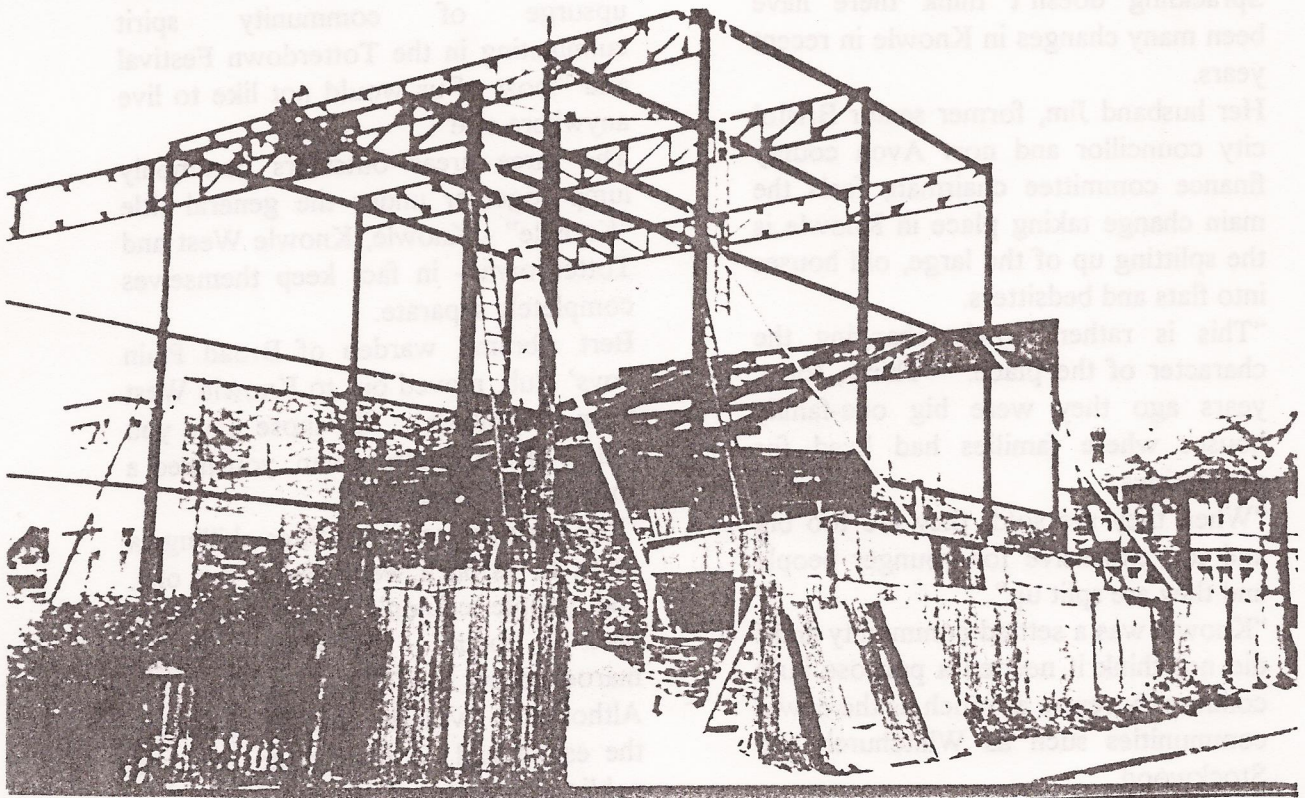
Felix Farley's Bristol Journal
7th February 1767 : p.3, col.1

THERE IS JUST OPEN'D
On KNOWLE-HILL, near this CITY,
(A very pleasant and healthy spot)
A BOARDING-SCHOOL
Where YOUNG LADIES are taught
Reading and Needle-work in all its
Branches,
by BATHSHEBA CANTLE, Snr.
And ASSISTANTS

1886 "A site for St Katherine's church has been found on 'Pylle Hill'"

1898 "Highgrove house demolished to make way for the completion of Hawthorne Street"

Does anyone have a photograph or drawing?



1955

The Gaiety cinema under construction

Bristol Evening Post
Monday 3rd November 1975

Focus on Knowle

- by Mary Wright

The £4 million shopping centre, public house and club complex which burst into Broadwalk last year has proved both a boon and a bane, according to the people of Knowle.

But whichever way you look at it, it's an exciting new concept.

The indoor centre with large, well-stocked shops such as you'd expect to find only in the centre of a large town, the miniature indoor gardens in which you can sit and gossip with your friends, the public house open till midnight and the night club open later still, all have a Continental flavour unusual for a residential suburb of an English city.

Bristol city councillor Mrs Gladys Sprackling welcomes the shopping precinct which, she says, has become "more of a social centre where you meet all your friends".

Petition

She is less happy about both the public house and the club. "It is unfortunate that the pub is open until 12. People come up from the other pubs at closing time and we have had a lot more trouble and vandalism round here since it opened".

Mrs Sprackling is not being a fuddy-duddy. More than five hundred local residents signed a petition saying much the same thing. But talks are going on between management and local councillors and some of the problems are being resolved.

The Broadwalk development apart, Mrs Sprackling doesn't think there have been many changes in Knowle in recent years.

Her husband Jim, former senior Bristol city councillor and now Avon county finance committee chairman, feels the main change taking place in Knowle is the splitting up of the large, old houses into flats and bedsitters.

"This is rather slowly changing the character of the place. Thirty, forty, years ago they were big one-family houses where families had lived for generations.

"When they are sold, they are too big and too expensive for younger people and they are split up".

"Knowle was a settled community and I did not think it needed a purpose built community centre as much as the newer communities such as Whitchurch and Stockwood.

"Now I am not sure the picture has not changed".

This husband and wife team refuse to move from Knowle while they hold local seats on either council, and they find it an advantage rather than disadvantage to have both county and district councillor in the same household.

"When people come looking for a councillor they have only the vaguest idea which council does what" said Cllr Sprackling.

"But whatever their problem - whether it be in housing or education - one of us can help".

Knowle, reputed to be the second highest point in Bristol, is well off for chemists and doctors and also for places of worship. And, unlike many other areas, it still retains a flourishing cinema.

Another local councillor, Ted Wright, gave me a list of pet hates - The Three Lamps bottleneck (the junction of Bath and Wells Roads), the "mindless" graffiti merchants, vandals of all types and fly posters.

But in recent years there has been an upsurge of community spirit culminating in the Totterdown Festival and "most of us would not like to live anywhere else".

The three areas outsiders commonly lump together under the general title "Knowle" - Knowle, Knowle West and Totterdown - in fact keep themselves completely separate.

Bert Abrams, warden of Broad Plain boys' club, moved out to Knowle West from St Philip's. "In those days you didn't hire a furniture van, you hired a truck at 2p a time.

"The jump in rent from three shillings a week to 7s 6d a week was a big one, and people couldn't afford bus fares back to town. They were almost marooned out here".

Although it was the size of Taunton, the estate had no doctor, no part, no public conveniences.

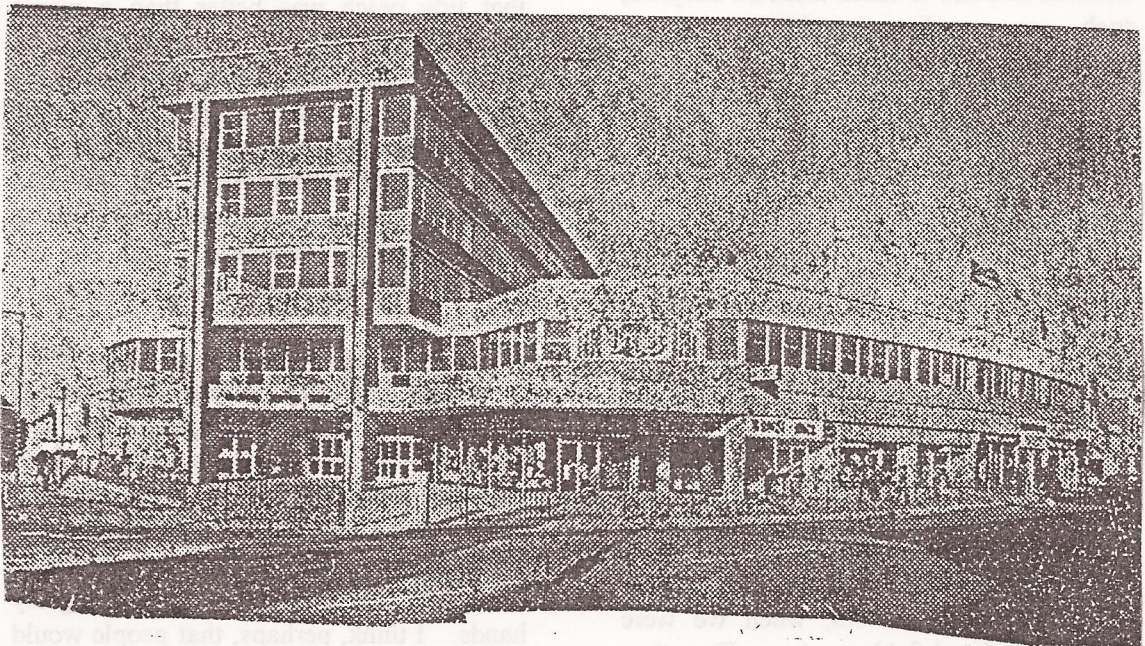
"The Monday night bus to town was the 'cougher's express', and then there was the pawnbroker's express. People used to take their stuff in to the pawnbroker every Monday night and take it out on Friday.



ABOVE: Councillors Jim and Gladys Sprackling.



*Before and after the construction of the
£4 million Broadwalk shopping complex*



SCHOOL LIFE

*by the late Vic Bevan:
as told to Ivor Grimsted*

I started school in 1913 at Knowle Infants, in School Road, progressing through the school until I left at the age of 14 years. The headmaster of the primary school was a remarkable man, Mr Harry Coward, M.A. A good bloke he was. He was there until he retired in 1921, when he was followed by Mr J. Oriel. We had very good teachers who were always well dressed, with tidy hairstyles, and they set us a very good example.

Families were much larger then, eight or nine children being quite usual, and the older children took the youngsters to school while mother stayed at home attending to the babies. A bell was rung to summon us to school, where we lined up in the playground in our classes before marching in. Anyone who was late had to go to a side door and await discipline. The day always started with hymns and prayers and, during the first world war, songs for our King and Country.

A teacher was assigned to a class of sixty children and had to teach them all subjects, such as reading, writing, history, geography, and so on. There were no mixed classes, the boys being taught by women in Standard 3, and by men in higher grades. The woman who taught my class was a great disciplinarian who, one day, made two boys, who always came to school dirty, wash themselves in bowls of water in front of the class, much to the amusement of the rest of us. Our teachers were firm but fair, and if we didn't do well it was our own fault. If we were caught misbehaving we were given the cane across our hands.

There were no real outdoor sports, simply P.T. in the playground. We didn't see a real football or cricket bat until we were about thirteen years old, when we were taken to the local fields to play. Even then we didn't get much play as there was usually only one bat for all of us. In the last few months at school we were taken

swimming, marching down to the Mayor's Paddock Baths along The Cut. Here the shallowest water was four feet deep, which frightened us smaller boys. That, and the fact that the instructor had little opportunity to teach such a large class individually, meant that I never did learn to swim.

During the war years we had some Belgian refugees attending the school. They were housed in the pavilion of the Imperial Ground at West Town Lane. An ex-pupil, George Middleton, who was a gunner in the Royal Navy, was killed in 1914. The funeral cortege left Balmain Street and stopped at the school before going on to Arnos Vale Cemetery. The senior boys lined the pavement outside the school as the procession came into view. It was preceded by the bearers on foot, then came the horse-drawn carriage in which we could see the coffin draped with the Union Jack. The procession stopped while we paid our respects by singing the hymn 'Our Blest Redeemer'. It was a very moving experience.

As well as the academic lessons we were taught:- to love and fear God and to be sure our sins would find us out; to be content with our lot; that half a loaf was better than none; to make do and mend; that tidy patch was better than a man's hidey-hole; that we had an Empire on which the sun never set (meaning that so vast was the British Empire that, although it might be night in England it was day in some part of the Empire). They also said we must pay attention and learn or we would regret it in later life. This was not easy with so many children in the class.

My first progress report on July 24th, 1914, was written by the head of the infants school, Miss Hannah Vimpany, and said "Getting on nicely, attending school regularly and early". But I was never a good scholar so never reached Standard 7. I left school when I was 14 and have always had to earn my living by using my hands. I think, perhaps, that people would get by in life a lot better if there were less emphasis on academic qualifications and more on the use of their own common sense.

Extract from "Times & Mirror"
15th May 1928

Old Traditions of Bristol Suburbs: Knowle & Totterdown

- by Fredk. C. Jones

The present parish of Knowle was formerly part of the large parish of Bedminster, of which it was an outlying district with a few scattered homesteads and farms. For the most part the property belonged to Earl Temple and the Smyths of Ashton Court. Few suburbs of Bristol have been so transformed from virgin countryside into closely-built streets of houses within such an incredibly short space of time. In an interesting pamphlet, recently issued, Mr. Edward Feltham of Knowle calls attention to some changes that have taken place in living memory in the neighbourhood of "Holy Nativity". Where Sydenham Road now is was a hedge and a row of large elm trees, being the approach to a residence belonging to the manager of the Kennet and Avon Canal. A farm stood at the end of what is now Beaconsfield Road, and not so many years ago the view from its windows of green fields, hayricks and winding lanes was a pleasant one. A field bearing the expressive name of Lilymead was covered over by a network of buildings - not even Firfield House was spared. The grounds would have made an ideal park, and the house a splendid library. The one was broken up into building plots for Belluton Road, and the other was levelled to become a quarry for builders' material.

Knowle Prison and Well

Few people in the well-planned parish of Knowle can easily conjure up the brown-garbed figure of John Wesley meandering on horseback through its country lanes. Yet Wesley appears to

have known the parish pretty well. In his Journal, Oct. 15th., 1759, the famous divine tells how he journeyed up to Knowle.

"a mile from Bristol, to see the French prisoners. About eleven hundred, we were informed, were confined in that little place, without anything to lie upon but dirty straw or a few foul thin rags, so that they died like rotten sheep."

Wesley collected £24 to provide them with waistcoats, breeches and stockings, and was instrumental in raising a public subscription of £313, and in inducing the Corporation to provide the prison with mattresses and blankets. Curiously, writing a few days later in "Felix Farley's Journal", Wesley goes back upon his statement there, and says there is *"no sweeter and cleaner prison in England than that at Knowle."* By four years later the prisoners numbered eighteen hundred. The Knowle prison appears to have been originally a pottery. Mr John Howard speaks of 151 French prisoners at work there, and the arrangements he styles as being better than those at Plymouth.

Early in the thirteenth century, William, Chaplain of Redcliff, obtained from Lord Robert de Berkeley a fine spring on Knowle (Canole) Hill, called Huge Well, as a fountain for his parishioners and the monks of St. John's Hospital at Redcliff. In former days, when a pure water supply was of untold value, visits of processional pomp were made to the spring which rose near what was termed some thirty years ago Gay's Farm at Lower Knowle.

The water was conveyed in leaden pipes by a somewhat winding course, represented now by the St. John's Housing Site, Victoria Park, Spring Street, York Road, Bedminster Bridge, and up to Redcliff Hill, where was a conduit at the narrowest point. Redcliff conduit was once nearer to the town than now. Leland describes it in

the sixteenth century as having "a castellet hard by Redcliff Church without the gate". The gate stood at the bottom of the hill. Of late, although the famous conduit seems neither to be exhausted, run dry, nor diverted, the water has ceased to flow, and it is said doubtfully to have been closed owing to contamination. The overflow of Redcliff was once known as the St. Thomas supply, for which St. Thomas Vestry paid two shillings per year. The rusted pump near the "Seven Stars" in Thomas Lane is a melancholy relic of those days.

If, however, in ancient days Lower Knowle could boast that it supplied water to Redcliff conduit, Totterdown could boast that it supplied the Temple conduit. It was a lord of Knowle, Sir John de Gournay, who, doubtless bearing in mind the Redcliff spring,

granted, a century later, ground for an aqueduct for the use of the Augustine Eremite friars at Temple Gate from a spring called Ravenswell, which feeds a reservoir near the junction of the roads leading to Bath and Wells respectively. The fountain head is in a high cliff on the Avon, and the method of transit does credit to the mediaeval engineers. It appears that Temple parishioners were allowed to take water from a cistern outside the friar's house, and a portion of the Temple Fair profits were used to keep the supply in repair. In later years two feathers were connected from the pipe, one to Dr. White's Hospital, and the other to the vicarage. Over forty years ago Mr. G. E. Weare pleaded for the restoration to the public of this never failing flow of pure water. It is said to be now used exclusively by the G.W.R. Company.



HOLY NATIVITY CHURCH

*Extract from the Church Magazine
April 1939*

An address by the Rev G W L Wynne, MA, that the political scene is very serious.

"We meet also in great solemnity of grave international anxiety - we do not know what lies before us. For my own part I do not think there is immediate prospect of war, but it is not out of place for me here to remind you of the call at the present for volunteers for National Service. It is our duty as Christians and Citizens to do all we can for the honour and protection of our country. I can inform anyone where they can obtain forms for the enrolment, which will enable those in authority to decide in what way your services can be of greatest utility"

The Organ Fund now stands at £1434-8-5d.

May 1939 Summer excursion. June 17th Vale of Glamorgan Tour:- Rail (1.2 pm from Temple Meads) to Cardiff. arr. 2.27 p.m. Motor coach to Wenvoe, Barry Island, Rhoose, Llantwit Major, Southdown (coast road) and Porthcawl. Tea 4.45 pm.

Return via -

Bridgend and Cowbridge to Cardiff to connect with the 9.6 train arriving Temple Meads 10.20 pm.

Approx cost - 8/9d. Tea extra.

July 1939 The Rev G W L Wynne "I have not heard any complaints from those who missed the train on the way home - to the contrary - they seemed to have had a very good time in Cardiff while waiting for a later train". (Re 17th June tour)



Magazine for August 1939

Hiring Charges

Hall charge to Church Organisations..... 25/-
includes use of the piano

Hall charge to Outside Organisations..... 35/-
Use of stage lighting, switch-board, per night..... 10/-
Rehearsals, Stage only per night..... 2/6d
Dress Rehearsals, per night 5/-
Use of china..... 2/6d

School Rooms

Church Organisations..... 10/-
Outside Organisations..... 15/-
Wedding Receptions..... 15/-
Use of the Piano..... 2/6d
Use of China..... 2/6d

Applications to the Verger -

*Mr H R Way, 20 Brecknock Road,
Knowle*

HOLY NATIVITY CHURCH

*Extract from the Church Magazine
October 1939*

Rev. G W L Wynne, MA

"On Sunday September 3rd 1939 I had to make the solemn announcement from the pulpit that from 11.00 o'clock on that day, England was at war with Germany. Surely there can never have been a more momentous notice given out from the church pulpit.

"For the war to be just, the following conditions must be fulfilled:-

It must be declared by a sovereign authority to vindicate an undoubted right.

All possible attempts at arbitration must have been made, and had failed.

Only sufficient force must be used, and the innocent and non-combatants spared all possible suffering.

There must be a considerable probability of winning.

"It would seem that these conditions have been fulfilled, and that we are engaged in a just war.

"In addition, we have gone to war in defence of a weaker nation.

"Our duty is to act as christians in the circumstances in which we find ourselves."

The organ fund is now at £1586-3-4d



*An unusual view of Holy Nativity Church
following the construction of the tower*

EXCITING FINDS IN KNOWLE

A couple of years ago I was asked by Mr and Mrs James, history society members of Knowle, to have a look at something interesting they had in their garden.

The path in the garden of their house, built in the 1930's, consisted of blocks of stone just over a foot square in size, and about two metres thick. On disturbing some of these stones they found that underneath there was a design etched on several of them. Some had pictures of ships, and some had designs obviously intended for packaging of tobacco and confectionery.

When I saw a couple of the stones turned over I realised what they were: lithographic stones used in the printing trade by the method outlined below by Mr Charles Watkins, who has given our Society an interesting talk in the past.

An hour or so's careful work with a spade uncovered several more designs etched in black ink on the underside of the path stones. I was grateful to Mr and Mrs James for allowing me to choose one of the stones to keep - and I picked the one with an attractive young lady in a flowing ball-gown. This proved to be a very good choice because, some time later, Audrey Weekes of our Committee recognised the design as one of which she had the printed result, which is shown with this article. This was a real coincidence because I could have chosen any one of a dozen or more of the designs.

The stones are very heavy. I weighed mine on our bathroom scales at about 40 lbs., so the printers who used huge numbers of these daily must have developed large arm muscles.

To enable the stones to hold the design, they have to be of a very, very fine limestone and were only quarried at one particular quarry in Bavaria, at Solenhofen. Not only is this quarry famous for producing these lithographic stones, but also for the fossil remains of the world's oldest known bird - Archaeopteryx. The very fineness of the grain of the rock allowed every detail of the bird to be clearly distinguishable.

Below is an account of how the stones were used in the printing trade, by Mr Watkins.

Mike Hooper

LITHOGRAPHY is a planographic process invented by a Bavarian, Alois Benefelder, in 1796, and depends on the fact that, in general, water and oil do not mix.

The image is drawn or photographed on to a stone or metal grained surface using a greasy medium. The stone or plate is then successively damped then rolled with inking rollers, the aim being to so arrange the rolling system that the image rejects water and the non-printing areas repel the ink.

OFFSET LITHO. A variation of the original process, and almost totally used today. A positive impression is printed by the original plate on to a rubber blanket, which in turn transfers its reversed image to the paper.

THE EARLY DAYS. Before the harnessing of photography to the process, origination was carried out by Litho Chromo Artists.

With an original sketch in front of them, they would draw a 'key' outline of the image on special transfer paper for each of the colours necessary to achieve the final reproduction, pressing the ink image on to the stone - all this had to be

done in reverse - a highly skilled job using magnifying glasses in addition to their natural artistry.

It was necessary to use their skills to evaluate the subject and to produce a set of stones, each containing an image containing the correct tonal values (inserted by hand stippling using a fine miniature brush) which when added together would produce the final soft, rich, colourful result typical of the process.

Litho stones were imported from Bavaria, this being the only place in the world where stones of the required characteristics occurred, these having the ability to retain moisture when rolled with water, and also to accept an image receptive to a greasy ink. After levelling, a stone would be placed in a 'jogger', a machine in the shape of an eccentrically driven tray and filled with glass marbles, which would roll randomly over the surface of the stone, imparting the required matt surface which would retain the moisture.

Later variations of the process were the addition of an extra rubber covered surface. The printed image would be transferred from stone to rubber, then from the rubber surface to paper. The main advantages of this were that the artists worked 'right way around' on the stone (i.e. not in reverse) and that the rubber would conform to rougher surfaced, thus cheaper, paper.

Charles Watkins



This is the design on the stone found under the path in the garden of Mr & Mrs James

Snippets

Bristol Mirror

10th January 1818 p.3, col.2

KNOWLE - HILL HOUSE

Classical, Commercial and
Mathematical School;

A DELIGHTFUL SITUATION

Half a mile out of Bristol, on the Bath
and Wells Road.

The Public and Friends of
Mr. J. HERAPATH,

successor to the late Mr. Durban of
Guinea-Street, are respectfully
informed, that his School will re-
commence Monday, the 19th inst.
Terms, &c. may be known at the
House, or at Messrs. Browne and
Manchee's, Clare St., Bristol.

Snippets

Knowle Parish Magazine

June 1913

"An Appeal"

"Will any Lady or Gentleman give a girl who has been dishonest a chance to redeem her character? Full particulars from:- Miss Ward, 13 Lilymead Avenue.

Continuing

The Story of The Convent of the Sisters of Charity, Knowle:

A transcript by Audrey Weekes of Reverend Mother Mary Theresa's talk to the Knowle & Totterdown Local History Group on 13 January 1993

In 1898, when they were nearly ready to come, they wrote: "It is sad to be writing our report for the last time from our dear old home. Our old associates will sympathise with us in this great trouble. Although associations must, in many cases like ours, be bound opposite and circle round the altar of St Raphael's and the Chapel of the House of Charity. We have indeed great need, both of the prayers and the active help of all our friends at this time to help us face so great an uprooting bravely and cheerfully, and if it be God's will to repair the loss of our Mother House as speedily as may be, by building its successor. No home, however beautiful, can ever be to the older ones among us, what St Raphael's has been. The very sorrows of the past have endeared it to us almost as much as the memory of all the happy hours, peaceful years, scarcely more than chequered by them, which we have lived within these dear walls. Indeed, the temptation has become very strong to postpone the evil day. But year by year it becomes more evident that the strain on the sisters' health and nerves from the increasing noise of the railway, unfits them from their work more and more. It would seem almost cowardly to defer the move and all that it entails till the younger members of the community were bereft for support and judgement of those on whom they have ever leant so trustingly for guidance."

So with great regret they were going to embark and come up to Knowle.

This is what they said when they got here. It is addressed: "The



Temporary House of Charity, St Agnes School, Knowle" (..... because there was not the building there is now, they simply did not have enough money for half of the building that they intended.....) "The address at the head of our report in itself marks the change which will always make the year 1898 a great and, in some ways, a sad one to look upon. We can hardly believe, even now that for nearly six months we have been living here, that the dear old House of Charity is no more to us now than a treasured memory bound up with much more than we can trust ourselves to put into words. Even now the sisters often say 'we always did so at home' and there is a sort of lurking hope in some of our hearts that we shall wake up some fine morning in those well remembered rooms and find that it has been only a bad dream. But there is

a better consolation. Our temporary House of Charity does not stand alone at the top of our paper and the motto 'God is Love' is surely as true for us here as it was in the old house. Perhaps even truer, as it shines out against the dark background of our troubles."

"The final move was completed in September. All through the summer cartloads of things arrived at St Agnes and each week made St Agnes fuller and the old house more bare and empty. At last one could hardly turn round here, and at St Raphael's the sisters had barely the chairs and tables absolutely necessary. Now we have shaken down and it is wonderful how we have fitted things into their places. We have turned the long cloister into a supplementary sitting room for the sisters, and our old oratory is now the refectory. The only thing that we have done in the way of building is to erect a large temporary chapel. It is absolutely plain but the old altar and fittings make it home-like, and if it is barn-like it is what someone called it 'a very devout looking barn'.

That would have been the part to the left as you enter from the front door, which has now been turned into bedrooms and sitting rooms and things - once a chapel just the length of the building.

And so, they settled in here, but there wasn't room for them all and they had to rent two villas, presumably in the area of Crowndale Road way. They had to go across two cold, wet fields to get there! It was a very unpleasant beginning for them, they found it very windy up here, like most of us!

Towards the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century when the children were still in Clevedon, it became rather expensive, with the smaller ones down there and having to spend money on a house all that distance away: also with all the travelling, which would not have been as easy as it is now. So in 1906 the Vicar of the Holy Nativity offered them the Vicarage, which is now what we know as St Elizabeth's. They were to rent that as a Home for the small children.



They came up here and promptly christened it St Elizabeth's after the home in Clevedon. So it has remained ever since. I think there were about twenty-five little ones ranging from babies to about seven years.

By 1907 they had built a new chapel, the chapel we now use at the far end of the building, and also a small wing attached to that to provide bedrooms for about a dozen sisters. The old chapel had a floor put into it and wings built out to provide even more bedroom space so that they did not have to go across the fields to the villas any more.

Apparently one of the villas was known as Bethany and the other was known as Nazareth, but in the bad weather they were just referred to as 'Those Villas!' It must have been appalling in the wet weather with those long skirts; I found it bad enough when I came because we were still wearing long skirts then and if we got wet it was absolute misery because it was all around your ankles all the time and was horrible.

In 1908, on the 23rd October, Father Arthur Ward, our founder, died. He had lived for the last few years of his life at St Vincent's Lodge, in Tennis Road, which is now St Peter's Lodge. He had built that house for himself once the sisters were settled. He lived there with his daughter and it was there that he died. His death was a great blow to the sisters for he had been their support from the beginning, with the Mother Foundress, who was much younger than he.

When the community was founded Mother Foundress was, I think, twenty-nine and Father Founder was thirty-three. They weren't old. Yet when we see pictures of our founder he resembles a Father Christmas type man, with a white beard: but he wasn't old when they founded that community. They were both young people! I think that the sisters who came first were also young people. It took all that enthusiasm to get things going, and we tend to forget that sometimes.

During the first twenty years or so of this century the work went on steadily. Some of the older sisters died and Mother Elizabeth, our Mother Foundress, died when she was ninety-two on May 4th, 1926 - a great age. I think her mind had gone all woolly by that age and someone else had replaced her as Reverend Mother by this time.

She was buried in Arno's Vale, where our first sisters were buried. There are about twenty or thirty buried there and also Father Ward is buried there. I have tried to keep the graves tidy but it is very difficult for it is such a wilderness of a place. At least the stones are standing up and they look all tidy. Once, when I had not seen them for some time, I could spot where the sisters were, for all the stones were standing up so straight!

We went on doing parish work in one place and another. We had moved around, finding that if we stayed in a place for a certain amount of time then people were able to carry on without us. Then we could move on to somewhere else that needed us. This has gone on right the way through. I have seen quite a few parishes come and go since I have been in the community.

Of course then came, after that quiet time, the war. The children from St Elizabeth's were evacuated to Clevedon again. I believe they went to the East Clevedon vicarage and were away for the entire war.

We had quite a bit of damage. In the gardens several bombs fell. A land mine came down in the quadrangle in the middle of the house and buried itself in the clay and didn't go off. Otherwise there would be no buildings there; it would have flattened the whole thing. The sisters and the buildings would have gone together, for a land mine is a deadly thing!

We had various bombs and then we had a time bomb which came down near the chapel. Having missed the chapel it came down in what was our refectory next door. It didn't go off at

once, so the sisters were all moved out. The wardens sand-bagged it so that the blast would not go near the chapel. I think the chapel was shaken a bit, but it didn't do anything else. A lot of the building was brought down, creating a gap between the chapel and the rest of the house. This was still evident when I went to the community after the war. We had to get to the chapel along a corridor known as 'Lino Lane'. Underneath were broken flagstones over which something that looked like linoleum had been placed. I don't know what it was really. At any rate it made a sort of passage and we didn't have to walk out into the garden to get to chapel. Later on, it was built up again.

In other places there was more trouble. In 1940, at St Peter's, London Docks, where we had a house, they had received a direct hit and one of the sisters was killed. She was in the kitchen at the time and the bomb came down on the kitchen. The other two or three sisters were in another room under a table and were alright. They went over to another house we had in another part of London until they could get a council flat back in Wapping, by the Docks. Then they went back and stayed there until just after the war, when the house was rebuilt. I went there as a novice in 1950 when the house was just being re-opened. They have left there now though, having moved on to somewhere else.

The Mission House at St Simon's in Seymour Road, off Stapleton Road, had fire bombs which they managed to put out with sand-bags. There was one very nasty raid down there.

Our only casualty was Sister Katherine who was killed outright. She is buried in London.

It was after the war that changes began in the community. For a time



the number of sisters kept up. When I came to the community there were twelve of us training; we all came after the war. They didn't all stay and some of those were old and have since died.

The bomb damage was repaired by about 1954 to '55, when everything was back as it should be and probably a bit better than it was originally, for it was very nice. The Children's Homes began to dwindle in numbers; the policy is not to put children into big children's homes now.

When we had the children first there were about sixty children over there; they needed a big building. There were about thirty sisters resident, I think; some of them would have been old and some young. There were all the various duties around a big house as well as the children to look after, so it required that many.

To be concluded in the next issue

BRISTOL TRAMWAYS & CARRIAGE CO., LTD.

**Totterdown, Joint Station,
AND
Bristol Bridge Line.**

TIME TABLE.

Week Days.

Cars leave
Totterdown
For BRISTOL BRIDGE.

At 8.0 a.m., 8.10, 8.20, 8.30, 8.40, 8.50, 9.0, and then every SIX MINUTES (at 0.0, 6, 12, 18, 24, 30, 36, 42, 48, and 54 minutes in each hour), until 7.30 p.m., after which every 7½ Minutes until 11.0 p.m., for Bristol Bridge, and 11.30 to Joint Station.

Bristol Bridge
For TOTTERDOWN.

At 8.15 a.m., 8.25, 8.35, 8.45, 8.55, 9.5, 9.15, and then every SIX MINUTES (at 3, 9, 15, 21, 27, 33, 39, 45, 51, and 57 in each hour), until 7.45 p.m., after which every 7½ minutes until 11.15 p.m.

On Saturdays after 11.0 a.m., Cars run every FIVE MINUTES until 11.0 p.m. from Totterdown, and 11.15 from Bristol Bridge:

Sundays. Cars run every FIVE MINUTES. First Car from Bristol Bridge 2.10 p.m., last, 10.5 p.m. to Totterdown; after which, until 10.35 p.m. to Joint Station only. First Car from Totterdown 2.25 p.m., last, 10.20 p.m.

ARNO'S VALE CEMETERY.

The above Cemetery is only a few minutes' walk from the Totterdown Terminus. On Sundays the Company run buses from Bristol Bridge to the Cemetery between 2.0 and 6.0 p.m.

SPECIAL CARS may be engaged for any day other than Saturdays and Holidays, for the conveyance of Private Parties and Schools to and from any part of the City and Suburbs where the Company have lines. No change of Cars.

PERAMBULATORS are carried on the Cars only when accompanied by passengers, the fare charged being the same as for a passenger. **PARCELS** are carried if accompanied by passengers, and at owner's risk. A fare is charged if above 28-lbs. in weight. **CHILDREN** above the age of three years, whether occupying a seat or not, are charged full fare. **DOGS** are not allowed in or upon the Cars unless they be small and carried upon the lap. See By-law 17.

Punctuality is not guaranteed, but every endeavour will be made to ensure it.

NIGHT SIGNALS.—The Cars of this Line exhibit a Yellow Light, those of the Hotwells a Green Light.



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TRAFFIC OFFICES, BRISTOL BRIDGE, October, 1892.

C. CHALLENGER. Traffic Manager.

FOLE, Sole Advertising Contractor, Bristol

October 1892