

The Guild House, Knowle



Historic England

1715 Warwick Road,

Guild House

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II*

List Entry Number: 1281619

Date first listed: 05-Dec-1949

Statutory Address: The Guild House, 1715, Warwick Road, Knowle
(North-East Side)

District: Solihull (Metropolitan Authority)

National Grid Ref: SP 18208 76732

C15 with 1912 front in C15 style. Heavy timber frame with fairly close set studding. Old and machine tiled roof. Casement windows. 2 storeys. Eight side elevation has diagonal bracing. Guild of St Anne founded 1413. VCH, IV, p 92.

Nos 1709 to 1715 (odd) form a group.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1281619>



The Guild House

On 18th February **1413** the King granted Walter Cook a licence to found in Knowle a fraternity and guild perpetual in honour of God and of St. Anne.

The Guild was a religious society whose main object was to unite its members in prayer and to encourage them to observe holy days and Festivals of the Church.



KDBH Neighbourhood Forum

The Guild House, Knowle

The Guild was like present-day benefit societies in that assistance was provided to those that needed help. The Guild raised its finances from membership fees, donations and rents from land and properties it owned.



The Seal of St. Anne

At its height it had over 3,000 members, including many senior churchmen and most of the local gentry: the Lucys of Charlecote, the Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton, the Fetherstons of Packwood, the Throckmortons of Coughton and some of the Shakespeares.

In **1416** Walter Cook founded the College of Knowle which was a religious establishment providing a communal life for the resident priests. Both Guild and College were dissolved at the Reformation in **1547** and their property confiscated.

Miraculously the second Guild register (**1451-1535**) survived and is now in Birmingham Reference Library. It is a world-renowned source for the early history of the Shakespeare family.

The Guild House originally extended as far as the pharmacy. It was sold in **1550** to two London merchants and eventually divided into houses. About **1873** it became a shop and later housed the post office for a time. It was restored and returned to the Church in **1912** by Mr Jackson of Springfield House and is now used for Church meetings and other events. In the **1939-1945** war it sheltered refugees from Coventry and Birmingham.

On the front wall of the Guild House there are two plaques depicting the seals of the Guild of St. Anne and the College of St. Anne. These are situated one on each side of the upstairs window.

The left-hand plaque shows the seal of the Guild of St. Anne. It depicts the three saints to whom the church is dedicated. The centre shows St. Anne, mother of the Virgin Mary. On the left, St. John the Baptist and on the right St. Lawrence the Martyr (reputedly roasted to death on a gridiron).

The right hand plaque shows the seal of the College of St. Anne. It shows St. Anne and the Virgin Mary.



The Seal of The College

The two seals are also shown in the stained-glass windows below. On the far right of the front wall there is a sundial.

Behind the Guild House, the new verger's house was built in **1980**. It received a civic award. It was later converted to a parish office and named St. Lawrence House.

St. John's Hall was built and dedicated in **1995**. This has been a major contribution to the life of the Church and is often being used for overflow services at the main festivals. It is also used for a monthly family communion service and for special youth services.

*Extract from: 'A Short Guide to Central Knowle',
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