



May 2008

Upcoming Events

First Tree Trail for Highbury Park

The first ever tree trail for Highbury Park is being launched on 31st May. (See Arbour Day below.) There will be an inaugural walk and a free colour brochure will be available on the website too. The brochure is a joint effort by Highbury Park Friends, the volunteer tree surveyors and a local designer. It is funded partly by local councillors through Community Chest.

Arbour Day, Saturday May 31

Our next major event is nearly upon us. We have planned another tree-focussed celebration for May 31, from 11-2. We will continue the activities set last time and add several more. The inaugural tour of the first tree trail will set off at 12. There will be other tree walks before and after, including a conifer walk led by Martin Collins and a longer tree trail with Ellen and other tree survey volunteers. There will also be a self-guided tree orienteering, which was a hit with the young ones last time. Emerson Howells (Assistant Ranger) will run a reed and willow weaving crafts workshop for making dreamcatchers, and John Madgwick of the beekeepers group will do guided introductions to the apiary. Tea, cakes, and information displays will be set out in our new gazebo. Please come along!

Location: Off the main footpath near the car park.
Date: Saturday 31 May, 11-2

Events Diary

May 24: *Butterfly Monitoring*, Ranger-led
May 31: Arbour Day 11-2
June 14: Park walk with Friends of Manor Farm Park
June 29: *Make a Bug House*, Ranger-led

See also *Out & About* guide

Recent Events

March Tree Planting Day

A successful but windy day with 15 trees planted, tree packs with quizzes etc. given to children, orienteering activities and refreshments in a splendid Bedouin tent.

Many thanks to all who supported this. Trees were provided by Birmingham Trees for Life and labour was enthusiastically provided lively a combination of volunteers and Parks department workers.

Mystery Photo



Can you name this insect? *Answer on reverse, and at our website.*

Conifer Workshop

Expert botanist and local educator Martin Collins gave us a fascinating tour of the many conifers in Kings Heath Park (including a visit to the BBC garden). We learnt names of the different pines, firs and cypress (both 'true' and 'false') and munched on cake to aid the memory cells.

Emerson breaks arm

Emerson, the Ranger, was out of action for a few weeks due to a broken arm. He is back at work now and catching up. We wish him a speedy recovery.

Website Update

Our website has had a major upgrade for the second time in a year. The first upgrade changed the appearance and features. The second upgrade was mostly behind the scenes as we changed to a commercial hosting service that makes database creation very easy. The first thing we did was set out the tree data that we've collected over the past year. That data is set out in table form, and can be set out in individual pages as we gather photographs and map data for each group of trees. You can view the current results using the link on the Featured Pages menu.

Historical Survey Update

We have had word from two sources that the historic survey has not started. It is now set to start in June, and we will report further details as we get them.

Ongoing & Other Activities

Tree Survey

324 trees in the park have now been subjected to the eagle eyes and tape measures of our surveyors – more survey days are planned so do join us if you can (tel 444 0819 for dates). The basic information has been set out on our website, with further updates planned over the summer.

Highbury Concept Plan

Our vision for the future of this neglected resource known to few and used by even fewer is the Highbury Concept Plan produced with other community groups.

It is now being circulated more widely, including a display set up by Kerry at Kings Heath Library, and is a major item for action at the Kings Heath Neighbourhood Forum on 15th May. But still no word from Birmingham City Council in spite of the fact that the chair of the Charities sub-committee promised to meet with us. Watch this space.

Bluebells



Now is the best time to spot bluebells. We have native, Spanish and hybrid bluebells in the park. For information on identifying them, see the Natural History Museum website at www.nhm.ac.uk

Wildflower Meadow

Emerson has arranged for a wildflower meadow to be created on the lower Henbury field (downslope from the car park). This will be cut in the summer and the hay removed. Look out for flowers coming up in the grassland – anyone interested in surveying them?

Ranger vs. Assistant Ranger?

We are concerned that Emerson's role as a lone-working assistant ranger' means that he is limited in the work he is able to carry out in Highbury Park. We are writing to local councillors to clarify the situation and to ensure that the Highbury Park Ranger can fulfil

all his duties. Given the years that went into getting a warden/ranger position, we now find that keeping the job duties as intended requires a continued campaign. Your support in this is crucial, so please let your councillors know your opinions.

Membership Reminder

We are still taking memberships for 2007/8, even though we have passed the halfway mark to the next fiscal year. We have started going through the membership list to see who we have/haven't heard from. We will be sending out reminders, but if you wish to join, renew or simply query your status, feel free to do so now. Subscriptions run from September, £5 waged, £3 unwaged. Contact Margaret Tyler on 249 2806 for further details.

Constitution

Highbury Park Friends has run as an informal voluntary group for several years while having ambitions for greater things, particularly around the restoration and upgrading of park features. In addition, as a voluntary group we are excluded from certain legal and financial opportunities, so we have been looking into applying for charitable status. An important step in that direction is to bring our constitution into line with Charity Commission requirements. The committee have been reviewing the necessary changes and expect to put forward changes at the next AGM in September.

Useful Numbers

Assistant Park Ranger:

Emerson Howells – 0776 692 2843

District Parks Manager:

Sue Amey - 464 8728

Ranger patrol: 454 7810

Police non-emergency calls:

0845 113 5000

Birmingham and dist. Beekeepers Assoc:

John Madgwick - 558 8623

Mystery Photo answer: Lesser Stag Beetle. See the story at our website article *Tree survey and Conifer Workshop - successful days*

(<http://highburyparkfriends.org.uk/wp/?p=122>)