



September 2008

Kings Heath Floral Trail

Two judges walked through Highbury Park as part of the Kings Heath Floral Trail. The meadow looked good, the graffiti had been removed from the path and the tree planting and tree trail raised some interested murmurs from the judges. What did they think? Difficult to tell but it will be interesting to read their assessments in September.

Historic Survey

At last! The Historic Survey of Highbury Park, Hall and Grounds is being written. The consultant is Phillada Ballard, whose extensive knowledge of the Chamberlain family and her previous research into Highbury has given us most of the historical knowledge we have to date. She is interested in all manner of details, so **if you have information you want to share, please tell us and we will let her know.**

Mystery Photo



Can you name this insect? *Answer on reverse.*

Tree Survey Update

A total of 386 trees have been surveyed so far! Sixty species have been recorded and the oldest oak has a girth of three and a half hugs. We are now looking at the arboretum area near the Lodge. Please join us: no experience necessary – call 444 0819 for details.

Highbury Park Friends AGM, September 23rd

This year's AGM will include a bit of celebration in that we have had a park ranger for a year, and our own accomplishments include tree planting, tree trails, and progress on the Highbury Trust issue.

We have invited District Parks manager Sue Amey and Assistant Ranger Emerson Howells to talk about the past year and a bit about what's anticipated for the coming year. So if you feel that Park staff deserve a word of thanks from the public, please attend the **Highbury Park Friends AGM on Tuesday 23 September at the Kings Heath Community Centre, Heathfield Road, from 7:00 PM.**

We will keep the usual business to a minimum and will have a variety of displays set up, plus a bit of fun in the form of a 20 Questions / Pub Quiz game about the park. Light refreshments will be available.

The new membership year has begun, so if you want to join or renew, now's the time! Our rates are £5 and £3. (Which goes mainly toward publishing and posting this newsletter!)

2008 Retrospective

Has it been 12 months already? Since Emerson took up the position of Assistant Ranger; since the Henbury laurels were cut back amid some controversy; since the Queensbridge footpath was cleared; the grounds maintenance has improved; the wildflower meadow was established; graffiti has been cleaned from the Henbury wall; the tree survey numbers in the hundreds; nearly two dozen trees have been planted; the long-awaited historic survey is underway; and that we've raised and spent hundreds of pounds on tree trail flyers, website, and events?

In addition, the steering group have started or completed tasks set out nearly a year ago, including formalising our charitable status, applying for grants, and broadening our range of activities.

Newsletter contributors and editor wanted

Highbury Park generates story after story, whether it's tree surveys, floral trail wildflower meadows, tree planting, storm damage, historic landscapes, events, fundraising, consultations or any number of other topics. We would like to share more information with our members and the wider public, so we are asking if you can help with the newsletter. We are looking for people to write short notices or to help assemble the newsletter every 6-8 weeks.

We would also welcome longer pieces for our website and for our displays. If you can help with any of this, please contact us by phone or e-mail.

Try our Second Tree Trail !

Did you know that poplar trees can be male or female? Or that alder trees have a successful marriage with a tiny bacterium? These snippets can be found in the Highbury Park Tree Trail 2, which follows the Walk 2000 route. It gives information on a selection of interesting common and lesser known trees. Please contact Ellen (444 0819) for copies, or download them from the Highbury Park Friends website.

Focus on Beekeeping

The Training Apiary was recently visited by BBC writer Tessa Burwood. She then wrote a long story on bees and Birmingham beekeepers for the BBC Birmingham Nature features website. (See link below)

She has this to say "Highbury Park is the perfect place to discover more about the fascinating world of beekeeping. Local enthusiasts who use the site claim that, despite the stings, keeping bees is much easier and much more rewarding than one might assume."

If you attended the Gardener's weekend at Kings Heath park, you may have met these same beekeepers at their honey stand. Contact John Madgwick (below) if you would like more information.

Park Photos

Some stylish cards with images of Highbury Park can be bought at local venues including Armadillo in Poplar Road, Kings Heath. We are selling these to raise funds to cover some of our activities. You may recognise some of the photos from our website, and we hope you will recognise the locations where they were taken in the park!

Have your say!

'A lot of us have lived in Birmingham for many, many years and simply didn't know about Highbury Park. It is a jewel. The paths are accessible at all times of year. When I go round with my friends there is no hassle, no stress and all those dog bins – it really does help.'

Diane, Northfield.

100 years of History

'Joseph Chamberlain bought 25 acres of land in 1878 and built his house Highbury at the top of a south facing slope. His carriage drive ran from Shutlock Lane parallel to the newly built Yew Tree Lane. Adjacent to the house was the kitchen garden and further from the house were a lake and smaller pools. In 1908 he bought more land and leased some from Richard Cadbury and had built a series of gardens: Dutch, Italian, rose, tea and rock. All of these were in addition to the 25 hot houses containing his prize

orchids and other plants.

Also in the grounds were a herd of cows, sheep, pigs and poultry. The farm bailiff was housed in a place specially built for him although the herd of cows was first Austen's responsibility and then Ida's. The grounds were frequently used for flower shows and the Moseley and Kings Heath horse show. After Joseph's death in 1914 the house became a military hospital and an old people's home in 1925. In 1930 the grounds became a park. At first there was a fence and gate between Uffculme and Highbury parks but now the whole area is called Highbury Park.'

Extract from a talk presented to the Kings Heath Local History Society 18 June 2008 by Miss M. Shepherd.

I Remember....

"When I was a child in the late 1930's, you went in to the Uffculme park from the High Street and you could see the open air school on the right hand side. Then you came to a fence with a gate. Through the gate you came into Highbury Park. We never went to the tearoom; money was tight. We then walked through to Shutlock Lane."

Margaret, 2008

We are always interested in details of the park that have changed over time. We are also interested in people's memories of the park. If you want to drop a us a line about either, we'll print it here or on our website.

Contact Highbury Park Friends

e-mail: contact@highburyparkfriends.org.uk

<http://www.highburyparkfriends.org.uk>

Ellen 444-0819, David 242-1845

Useful Numbers

Assistant Park Ranger

Emerson Howells – 0776 692 2843

District Parks Manager

Sue Amey - 464 8728

Ranger patrol

454 7810

Birmingham & District Beekeepers Association

John Madgwick - 558 8623

Police non-emergency calls

0845 113 5000

Mystery Creature: Speckled Wood butterfly, which feeds on meadow grasses.

Bee Feature:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/birmingham/content/articles/2008/07/29/urban_bees_feature.shtml