



## Newsletter

November 2005

### Local MP visits park

In late October the chair of Highbury Park Friends took a walk around with our local MP and park user, Lynne Jones. The Friends wanted to draw Lynne's attention to a number of problems in the park and we particularly wanted to have it 'unannounced' so that she could see the park in its 'normal' state. We have found in the past that announced visits tend to bring about a sudden flurry of maintenance activities in the week beforehand and then relative in-action for weeks thereafter.

Amongst the problems we noticed were:

- The overgrown land behind Chamberlain House, the Four Seasons, and Highbury Hall, plus vast areas of Japanese knotweed which urgently need clearing. We also saw the 'pulpit' Chamberlain used, noting that one of the coping stones has been knocked off and needs replacing to prevent further damage
- The vast growth of brambles everywhere
- Paths which need clearing - this has not been done at all recently, so in some places the paths are completely covered with mud and leaves
- Drainage was poor- we came across several wide streams running across the footpath into the large pond- two of them were producing foamy

water in the pond, showing that they must be polluted by something

- The beech hedge round the Italian garden needs the knotweed tackling once more. The rockery needs weeding
- Graffiti which has been on the walls, benches, bins and trees for over a year
- Ivy and winter jasmine so overgrown that their weight will bring down the wall in the park centre unless cut back
- Benches which need repairing or replacing
- Wheel tracks across the grass from the workers' trucks
- The damaged drain which appears to be the cause of sewage getting into the park.

PC



*Our Dogs' Day in the summer*

### Useful phone numbers

Park Ranger: 454 7810

Police (non-emergency): 0845 113 5000

HPF Treasurer: 449 3498 (evenings and weekends)

## Membership of the Friends

Subscription levels have been pegged for the third year running: £5 per household (£3 unwaged).

Please pay your subs, if you have not done so already, to the Treasurer, Bob Blackaby, 266 Moor Green Lane, Moseley, B13 8QL, 449 3498.

Our subscription year started on 1 September

## Our website

[www.highburyparkfriends.org.uk](http://www.highburyparkfriends.org.uk)

## Burnt mounds and ridge and furrow

One Saturday morning in September a group of about 15 of us teamed up for a very interesting archaeological walk in the park. Our leader was Mike Hodder, an archaeologist working for Birmingham City Council.

Mike first showed us the burnt mound, which is situated close to the bridge over the stream near the Moor Green Lane entrance. It is a feature that many people may miss but once it is pointed out to you, you see it as a distinctive hump in the ground. Near to the mound, and also a little further up the stream, archaeologists have found a lot of heat-shattered stones in the bank and on the bed of the stream.

The mound consists of the debris resulting from the heating of stones. The theory is that the hot stones were used as a kind of 'Bronze-age sauna' in much the same way as we create saunas now – water is poured onto a hot surface enclosed in some kind of structure. These 'sweat lodges' could have served both hygiene as well as social functions.

Mike then pointed out to us the examples of ridge and furrow agriculture. The most noticeable of these are just below the beech copse

that is at the Highbury Hall end of the park. This form of strip farming was used for a long period in our history – from medieval times to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and it is difficult to date it.

BB

## Thanks

Our thanks to Phil Evans for kindly donating the paper for this newsletter.

## Forthcoming events

**Saturday 19 November 2005,  
11:00 a.m.**

### Tree walk

Our third walk led by Ros Marshall. Come and hear about some of the interesting trees in the park.

Meet opposite the post box in Moor Green Lane.

**Saturday 8 April 2006, 11:00  
a.m.**

### Two park walk

A walk in Highbury and Kings Heath Parks to compare and contrast two different parks – one informal and the other more structured and 'manicured'.

**Sunday 25 June 2006**

A summer afternoon in the park with a variety of activities. Watch this space!

**Saturday 16 September 2006**

Litterpick and tidy up