



**March 2009**

### **New Park Keeper!**

We have been told that a Park Keeper has been allocated to Highbury Park. However we have yet to find out what the Park Keeper's duties will be. The previous 'parkie' was an Assistant Ranger – a situation we felt needed rectifying as he was not able to cover the whole week, did not have a proper base to work from and there were restrictions on the things he was allowed to do. We need to think about the ideal situation to aim for here. Do we want someone to police the park on a regular basis, someone to oversee management and carry out ad hoc management activities, someone to develop activities in the park and ensure that all groups are happy to use the park. Or do we want someone to do ALL of these? Let us hear *your* priorities!

### **S106 Improvements Consultation**

The Parks department have asked us to identify three priorities for park improvements, and to report back by the end of March. The 'Section 106' money is meant for improvements, so we want to see it go toward making the park more useful for more people. We understand that there may be up to £100,000, which could produce more than one set of improvements. Given the deadline, we need your feedback *now*, if possible.

We have come up with a shortlist, and want to know if it meets with your approval.

1. Improve the drainage above the Long Pond;
2. Set up a play area for younger children;
3. Wheelchair access improvements;
4. Repairs to Henbury Garden wall and Italian garden;

Our thinking is as follows. The committee (and the Beekeeper's Association) feel that the drainage issue is paramount. We would like to see a comprehensive and environmentally sensitive approach to fixing it, and think that this could improve footpaths and ease of access. Our second preference is for a play area, and possibly some refurbishment of sporting pitches, given that these facilities would be highly popular. We are seeking clarification about wheelchair access, and hope to see significant improvements there too.

This leaves repairs to historic structures like the Henbury wall and the Italian garden as lowest priority.

Each deserves attention. The former is unsafe, and the latter is badly damaged by vandals, but also presents trip hazards along the brick/stone footpaths.

We feel that these structures are important, but that money for restoration should be available by other means. Longer term, we expect to identify funding for repairs, amenity furniture, sports provision, wetland works and so forth. This is not a last chance by any means. It is a first chance for major improvements.

Please let us know your views today.

### **2009 Events & Possible Dates**

We are still working up our events schedule, but are hoping to do all of the following. The events we're pretty sure about are tick-marked. Others need further planning and confirmation. In addition we hope to run shared events with **Uffculme Allotments**, **King's Heath Local History Society**, and resident's groups. Please see our website for further bulletins.

#### **Festival of Walks**

Ridge & Furrow Archaeological Walk: 28 March ✓  
Historic Survey Walk No. 1: 18 Apr ✓  
Ramblers Walk: 10 May  
Art Walk: 31 May ✓  
Historic Survey Walk No. 2: 18 July ✓  
Bat Walk: 2 Aug

#### **Arbour Day: 30 May**

Tree survey celebration  
Launch of Tree Trail 2

#### **Big King's Heath Party Weekend: 4 & 5 July**

Floral trail launch ✓  
Park Staff Introduction event

#### **Autumn Events**

Holly wreath workshop: 28 Nov  
Christmassy event: 5 Dec

#### **King's Heath Gardener's Weekend: 5 & 6 Sept**

Booth at Gardener's Weekend  
Car park display ✓

#### **Litter & Trail work**

Litter pick & Trail Clearing - Spring: 25 Apr  
Litter pick & Trail Clearing - Fall: 24 Oct

#### **Miscellany**

Beekeeping events (Saturdays): from 2 May ✓  
AGM: mid September ✓

#### **Related events** by KH Local History Society

KH LHS Committee discuss Highbury Park history.  
17 June, 7:30 PM, KH Library. £1  
Walking Tour: 15 July, 7:30 PM. Meet at KH Library.

#### **A new noticeboard...**

with exquisite wood carving and a map of the park is going to be displayed at the car park. It will have a section for special notices, e.g. the Wildflower Hay

Meadow. It is all ready to be installed. We just need to find some metal posts and a couple of willing assistants. Many thanks to the **Kings Heath Centre Partnership** and **Community Chest** for enabling this!

## Forthcoming Exhibition & Art Walk

We have been graced by good fortune once again in having an artist-led project with the park as its focus.



Page from sketchbook, (work in progress), Catharine Clarke, 2008

**Catharine Clarke and Jeni Neale – New Artworks**  
June-August, 2009, Kitchen Garden Café, York Road, Kings Heath.

Two members of the *Birmingham Society of Botanical Artists* will have a botanically themed exhibition at the **Kitchen Garden Café** this June through August. Drawing inspiration from the natural world, each artist will be showing new work which reflects their own particular interests and passions within the discipline of botanical illustration.

Cathy is currently putting together a collection of artwork inspired by Highbury Park and its histories. The work evolves out of observational, seasonal drawings and photographs taken from her frequent visits to the park. These are combined with an interest in the unique history of the park, and informed by research within the city archives. The results are both illustrative and evocative.

Jeni's work is focussed around plants and vegetables, inspired in part by visits to **Ryton Organic Garden** and through her own teaching practice. Working predominantly in watercolour, the paintings exhibit an exacting attention to detail, colour and form: a celebration of the beautiful and the edible!

In another shared effort, as part of Highbury Park Friends *Festival of Walks*, Cathy will be leading a walk on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May. She will discuss how the park and its multi-layered history prompt creativity. Bring along your sketchbooks and cameras and be inspired!

## Highbury Estate Update

The Highbury Trust issues we've been reporting on have been picked up by local and national media. We hear that the Charity Commission and Birmingham Council will be running a proper consultation – date to be announced. We also hear that provision for sale of assets will be struck from the scheme. This is a big step forward, but leaves the Trusteeship unresolved. We will keep pressing for reformation of the Trust in line with proper charitable standards.

## Committee Members Needed

The HPF committee consists of five regular members. We would like to increase this and hope to hear from two people who have an interest in the park generally, and who will help produce our newsletter or organise events. Are you interested in helping?

## Walking Group

Are you interested in joining a Highbury Park walking group? A *Walk 2000* route was created 2 years ago but has not been promoted. So we are trying to get a group started. If you would like to be a volunteer walk leader, Birmingham City Council runs free courses.

## Parks Maintenance Contract

The new parks maintenance contract has been announced, and we are in the area served by highly-regarded **Quadron**. We have asked Parks manager Sue Amey to arrange a litter-pick for late April, so hope to have the new crew attend. We also hope they will attend a meet-and-greet event in the park this summer during the **Big Kings Heath Party** weekend.

## Useful Contacts

### HPF Committee

David: 242 1845 or Ellen: 444 0819  
HPF c/o Flat D, 65 Oxford Road, B13 9ES  
E-mail: [contact@highburyparkfriends.org.uk](mailto:contact@highburyparkfriends.org.uk)  
Website: [highburyparkfriends.org.uk](http://highburyparkfriends.org.uk)

### Assistant Park Ranger > Park Keeper *tba!*

### District Parks Manager

Sue Amey: 464 8728

### Ranger patrol

454 7810 (use this to report urgent matters)

### Birmingham & District Beekeepers Association

John Madgwick: 558 8623

### Local Councillors

[Emily.Cox@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Emily.Cox@birmingham.gov.uk);  
[Ernie.Hendricks@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Ernie.Hendricks@birmingham.gov.uk);  
[Martin.Mullaney@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Martin.Mullaney@birmingham.gov.uk);  
Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BB

### Police non-emergency calls

0845 113 5000