



## October 2012

### Park News

#### Long Appreciation

In response to the articles by Elizabeth Horton and David E. Blick in our July newsletter Gill Lamarque writes,

#### My Secret Park

I like the way you go round the corner and suddenly find unexpected openings. There are all sorts of surprise turnings, and it's peaceful as well. The children used to love damming the stream. Cannon Hill is the premier park of Birmingham and it is lovely and big with different areas but Highbury Park is an unexpected delight. A lot of people don't know about it and I think it's the nicest park in Birmingham. We used to play tennis there too on summer evenings – it had a real community feel and there was always someone you knew. I've moved away now but come back to visit people and still love to walk around the park. (Ed. note – the tennis courts were adjacent to the Henbury Pond).

#### Introducing Park Keeper, Andy

Andy began work in Birmingham Parks in 1968 as an apprentice in Kings Heath Park. Since then he has worked at Cocksmoor Golf Course and the Billesley Depot before arriving at Highbury Park in June.



His autumn and winter tasks need a keen eye for safety. Leaves must be removed from the wet paths while the sump by the lake and the stream entry into the lake must be kept free to prevent flooding.

### Cyclists in Highbury Park

A Highbury Park Friends member has been troubled by cyclists travelling at speed along the main park paths. There are no dedicated cycle paths in this park so it is down to cyclists to take great care when there are pedestrians on or near the path in front of them.

### Park Nature Notes

#### Horse Chestnut Leaf-miner *Cameraria ohridella*

You may have noticed changes to the leaves of horse chestnut trees in the park and in streets and gardens round about. The brownish patches on the leaves are caused by a little moth called the Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner. Its larvae munch the leaves but are protected from predation by the upper and lower skin of the leaf.



This moth was only discovered in 1985 and appeared in the UK in 2002. It has found a situation very much to its liking with many Horse Chestnut trees and few predators. The moth does not cause the tree to die, but does weaken it and reduces the size of the conkers. It may make the tree more susceptible to fungus, drought and other ills. (E.P.)

### Herons in Highbury

The heron has been a regular visitor to Henbury Pond and the Long Pond. Herons nest communally in heronries – the nearest one is probably at Edgbaston Nature Reserve next to Birmingham University, but they will range more than 10 km in search of food. Like a grey sentinel, the heron stands in the shallows motionless waiting to spear a fish, frog or even a rat. (E.P.)

Anne Gilbert describes her Highbury Heron encounter.

Seven thirty, a bright September morning in Highbury Park, the landscape deserted apart from a few dog walkers. I stopped at the Henbury pond; silence and dragonflies. Someone had installed a statue of a heron. My first thought – wow, that's fantastic! My second thought, how come no one had told me that there was to be a new statue? Nobody at the HPF committee meeting had mentioned it, and so life like it almost looked real.

I stood and admired for a few minutes, suddenly the heron tilted his head and fixed me with his beady eye.

(Ed. note - if you have succeeded in photographing a heron in Highbury Park we would like to see your photos.)

### **Recent Events**

#### **'Discover Highbury Park' Guided Walk and Exhibition visit.**

On a fine Saturday morning in July a group set off to follow the Discover Highbury Park walk. We were guided by the newly published leaflet and by its authors, ecologist Ellen Pisolkar and botanical artist Catharine Clarke. They aimed to take us to parts of the park we did not know well, and sure enough once inside the wood near the railway line I was well off my beaten track. This enchanting walk showed us signs of the park's history - from medieval plough lines and hedges to the gardens and ponds of the Henburys and Chamberlains. At the same time it opened our eyes to the wealth



of wild life in the ponds, stream, meadow, hedgerows, and woodlands of Highbury Park. The walk was followed by a visit to the associated exhibition at the All Saints Centre and Cafe in Kings Heath.

#### **Wild Life Walk, 5 October**

Three of us joined Paul on a dry but cold afternoon. The birds seemed to be sitting tight and defending their new winter quarters. This was particularly true of our native robins. The

continental robins have moved south. There were few blackberries or other berries and insects were not very active. There will soon be a good supply of sweet chestnuts. Magpies and jays were numerous. A few parakeets were swooping by. We saw a nuthatch and a cole tit. Paul said that a shortage of acorns on the continent was causing the jays to come here. High in the sky above our heads a lesser black backed gull soared. There had been a remarkable change from Summer to Autumn. the tree colour was impressive. (Margaret Tyler)

### **Future Events**

#### **Wild Life Walks with Paul Anthony**

**Friday walks: 2nd November, 7 December. Meet at H.P. car park, 1 p.m.**  
**Saturday walks: 17th November, 15th.December.**

**Meet at H.P. car park, 10.30 a.m.**

Paul suggests that people bring cameras and binoculars if they have them.

#### **Litterpick and Christmas Fayre**

**Saturday 15 December, meet at H.P. car park at 11 a.m.** Bring gloves.

A litterpick in the park followed by refreshments at the **Four Seasons Christmas Fayre**, Chamberlain House Training Centre, 2 Yew Tree Road, Moseley, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Plant sale, mince pies and drinks, children's face painting, craft stalls, HPF cards and Christmas Wreath making stall.

### **Useful Contacts**

#### **General HPF Enquiries**

David Papadopoulos: (0121) 242 1845  
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#### **HPF Membership Secretary and HPF mail:**

c/o York Supplies, 55/57 Waterloo Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7SD.

**HPF Newsletter** Christine Hardy, email  
[contact@highburyparkfriends.org.uk](mailto:contact@highburyparkfriends.org.uk)

#### **HPF web site**

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

#### **Birmingham & District Beekeepers**

**Association**, John Madgwick: 558 8623