The Chamberlains, the expansion of Kings Heath, and the landscaping of Highbury

Maureen Perrie's talk at the AGM explained how the Chamberlains' attitude towards the location of Highbury changed as Kings Heath expanded at the end of the nineteenth century.

When Highbury was built in 1878, Moor Green was still largely rural. The first sign of suburbanisation came when the Chamberlains acquired a 'next-door neighbour': in 1890 Richard Cadbury bought land immediately adjoining Highbury for his Uffculme estate. The Chamberlains greatly resented this intrusion; they viewed the Cadburys' house as 'hideous', and tried to hide it with planting along their boundary.

The next stage in suburbanisation occurred with the building of mass housing on the Grange estate, on the far side of the railway line. In 1893 Richard Cadbury bought the Henburys estate, on the near side of the railway, as a buffer between Uffculme and the proposed new development. He rented the eastern part of the Henburys to Joe Chamberlain, who planted rows of trees along the railway line to screen the new houses from view from Highbury.

Although the new buildings were fairly distant from their house, the Chamberlains felt that their privacy had been invaded, and that their enjoyment of Highbury had been spoiled. Maureen suggested that they reacted in this way because the spread of the suburbs threatened their self-image as the proprietors of a true country home.

Maureen's talk was partly based on her chapter in a recent book, *Gardens and Green Spaces in the West Midlands since 1700*, edited by Malcolm Dick and Elaine Mitchell (University of Hertfordshire Press, 2018, paperback, 228 pages, price £16.99).