



## *HPF Bulletin* *October 2019*

### **Welcome to our Autumn 2019 bulletin**

We've had a busy few months with our AGM, Heritage Day and other events taking place at Highbury. If you haven't seen this year's display of autumn crocus up by the Lodge Gate, it's not too late to go and have a look!



### **Our AGM**

25 members attended our AGM on September 10th. After a short business meeting and summary of the year's activities, we were treated to a fascinating house tour by Chamberlain Highbury Trust Vice-Chair, Alison Millward.

Alison highlighted some of the John Ruskin influences on the house; Highbury looked particularly magical when illuminated for a night time visit.



The following members were re-elected to the committee; Anne Gilbert, Gail Pittaway; Paul Gaynor; Charles Barnwell; Matthew Bolton-Brown; Rosemary Dewar, and we welcome a new committee member, Sam Gamblin. Thanks to everyone who attended and made it such an enjoyable evening, and particular thanks to Alison for such an informative house tour.

## **Highbury: The History Within – HPF Guided Walk with Gail Pittaway, 10th August 2019**

On a wet Saturday morning in August, 19 of us participated in a guided history tour of the park. We studied copies of the 1883 and 1916 ordnance survey maps of the area and shared information about the buildings, past and present, that helped to shape the landscape.

We heard how the construction of the Midland Railway (Birmingham and Gloucester branch) divided the Grange and Henbury estates



and eventually led to the development of late Victorian/early Edwardian housing in Station and Grange Roads in Kings Heath. We also learned about the education of children at Uffculme school, Birmingham's first open air school, and the development of Uffculme, home of Richard

Cadbury. We then moved onto Highbury, Joseph Chamberlain's home. We explored the grounds surrounding Highbury and learnt a little about Austen Chamberlain's model farm, the crucible wall and the viewing platform

We were fortunate to be joined by a descendent of the Lyndon family, former owners of the Henburys, who were local manufacturers of small agricultural tools, as well as a trustee of Uffculme, both of whom were able to share interesting insights with us.

A copy of the article and photographs will be posted to the HPF website later in the autumn. Meanwhile thanks to all those who came along and who made a contribution to our learning. Gail Pittaway HPF.





## Oak Tree

We were very sad to see a major limb split from our magnificent oak tree above the Long Pond; it was the oldest oak in the park. What remains will be pruned back to make it safe. Oak trees are particularly important for wildlife as they can support more varieties than most other trees.

## Walk the night with Brumbats

85+ people attended our second bat walk of the year in August when we were blessed with a fine evening. We were rewarded with good sightings of common pipistrelle bats (the most common species at Highbury.) A big thank you to Chris at Brumbats and Ranger Dean for making it such a good evening



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## Nature Notes

Mixed flocks of tits are always worth looking at – commonly they will consist of blue tits and long-tailed tits but all sorts of other birds will join the gang as



they forage round the park together. Goldcrests, Britain's tiniest bird, appear to be abundant in the park this year but if we get a harsh winter many will not survive. Look out for them near conifers and yew trees – they make a high pitched 'see' sound and don't seem to mind if you get close to them. The meadow areas have been magnificent this year. Hopefully the autumn cut will be cleared away so that the fertility stays low which encourages a greater number of plants. Longer grass is valuable as well and allows grass-feeding caterpillars to pupate undisturbed. EMP

## Kings Heath Train Station

The Friends of Kings Heath Train Station held their AGM on September 24th at Heathfield Road Community Centre. Gavin Smith, Rail Scheme Sponsor, updated us. By the time you read this, the planning application should have been submitted. It is hoped that the station will be open by December 2021. Two trains per hour between Kings Heath and New Street is all that can be fitted into network plans at present. The line will also still be used for goods.

How will this affect the Park? There will be a need for some vegetation management along the tracks and network rail will need to remove some trees on their side of the fence, mostly self-seeded sycamores. Trees on the Highbury side will not be affected, we have been informed. We are awaiting further details as building materials are currently planned to be brought to the site through the park.

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## A beginner's photography event at Highbury. 31.8.2019

We learned all sorts of useful tips from Gary Tomlinson and Mike Farley when they led us round Highbury on a relaxed photography walk for beginner and more experienced photographers. We experimented with taking shots of the landscape and trees, flowers and people. If you missed the event we hope to hold more in the coming months.

## Events

**Sunday October 20th.**

**10.30am - 12.00pm.**

**Autumn Wildlife Walk with Jake Williams of Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust.**

Meet in the car park. We will walk around the park and look particularly for fungi, spiders, berries, mammal tracks (not dogs!). Everyone welcome.

Please wear suitable footwear for walking over uneven ground