AUTUMN Bulletin October 2023

Welcome to our Autumn bulletin. It's been a busy few weeks here in Highbury Park culminating in our AGM on the 12th September, held in the beautiful surroundings of the drawing room within Highbury Hall. Bringing members together with a shared passion for Highbury is always inspiring and informative; with this in mind, we hope to organise an informal Spring get together in 2024. We would also like to establish a pool of volunteers who may wish to help out at future events without needing to join the committee. We would love to hear from you if this is of interest! In the meantime, Autumn beckons, with the promise of dewy mornings, gorgeous Autumn colour and a plethora of fungi just waiting to be discovered! Enjoy!

Forthcoming Events

Birmingham TreePeople

Saturday 16th December 2023
10:00am

Identifying Conifers event

We are delighted to be able to co-host a training session run by the organisation **Birmingham Tree People** here in Highbury Park this Winter, focussed on our wonderful conifers. More details to follow, so watch this space!

Ring Necked Parakeets at Highbury

A loud shriek and a flash of yellow-green against the blue sky; love them or hate them, ring necked parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) are a fact of life at Highbury. Two of them first arrived about 14 years ago and lived in an old ash tree by the Long Pond. Later, they moved to the Scots Pine trees by the Henburys. They nested in late Winter / Early Spring and initially their numbers remained at 5 or 6 birds as the young birds were liable to predation.

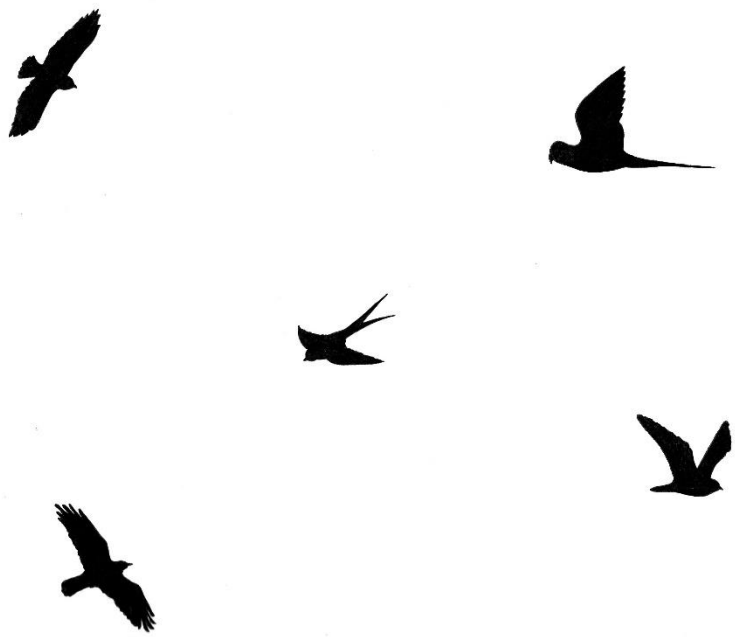
One year the parakeets were driven out of the park by the crows. We watched them on Wildlife Walk trying to return to nest and being mobbed by a murder of crows. Over the years though their numbers have increased and now, if you walk round the park at dusk you can hear them calling to each other all over the park. There are neighbouring colonies in Holders Lane woods. Local residents have reported them on bird feeders in their gardens. They eat fruit, berries, nuts and seeds.

Despite their tropical origin, the parakeets are fully able to cope with cold British winters, especially in suburban parks, large gardens and orchards, where food supply is more reliable.

Some concern has been expressed about their impact on local wildlife and the full effect is still being assessed. They may compete with other birds and bats for nesting and roosting cavities and can drive other birds from garden feeders. What's clear is that they are here to stay with us at Highbury.

HPF member Bill Perrie filmed this delightful clip at Highbury when the birds first appeared in the park and we really appreciate him sharing it with us all.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHuXmf0hE40

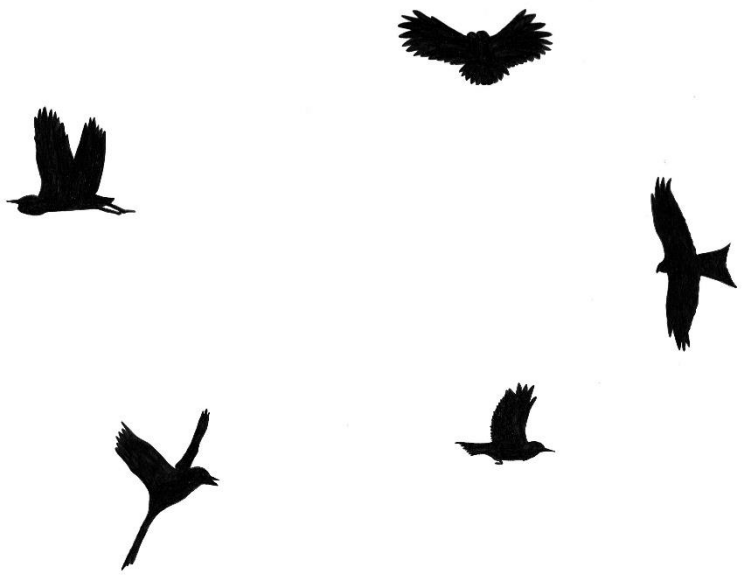


Bird Survey 2023 - Update

Calling all bird watchers!

You may remember that over the Spring months we monitored the birds at Highbury regularly to try and assess the state of our bird life. The results of this survey are in the process of being analysed, but we felt it was a useful exercise and would like to continue counting our birds, perhaps once a month, over the winter.

Any volunteers to help? You don't need great technical knowledge; budding bird watchers welcome as well as more experienced ones. We simply walk round the park for about 1.5 hours recording what we see and hear. You don't need to commit on a regular basis but if you would like to be involved, please reply to this bulletin and we will be in touch.



Nature Notes by E.M.P

Fungi in Highbury Park
Awaiting identification...

Ivy Bee *(Colletes hederae)* **on *the flowers of Common Ivy*** *(Hedera helix)*

Please send any sighting/pictures you have to enquiries@ecorecord.org.uk with the following information - How many you saw, When you saw them and where you saw them.

A deluge of rain in the autumn is always a reason for joy – a few days later the fruiting bodies of fungi will appear. Already there are the shiny yellow parrot waxcaps in the meadows and also this beautiful little grey species but we will have to wait for Lukas Large's fungus walk on 20th October to get an accurate identification.

It's going to be a great year for Ivy flowers which are starting to attract wasps, honeybees and butterflies. But another visitor is the Ivy Bee. This beautiful bee is new to Britain – first recorded in 2001 near the south coast and now spreading northwards. It nests in holes in the ground and its favourite foraging food is Ivy flowers. Not difficult to identify with patient observation – the thorax is brown and hairy and the abdomen looks a bit like a wasp with black and yellowish stripes.

Spotted recently in Highbury Park is another interesting colonist to the British Isles - the **Southern Oak Bush-cricket** *(Meconema meridionale)*. Less than 2 cm long (excluding its large antennae) it is a tree-dwelling predator of small insects. Its food includes the Horse-chestnut leaf miner *(Cameraria ohridella)* which has been causing premature defoliation of horse chestnut trees.

Highbury's History

Moor Green Hall, "gothick, crenelated" home to Arthur Chamberlain, a Birmingham Industrialist and younger brother of Joseph Chamberlain. Arthur joined the board of Kynoch's, Birmingham manufacturers of metal goods, explosives and small arms ammunition in 1889 when the company's fortunes were ailing. He helped to transform the company's fortunes and remained on the board until 1913 rising to the position of chairman. The Hall, stood on Moor Green Lane opposite the entrance to Yew Tree Road and the north end of Elizabeth Road.

It was used as a home to Arthur and his family, target of a failed attack by the Suffragettes in 1914 and then becoming a military hospital used by the Red Cross during WW1 treating 1500 injured forces personnel. Kynoch's later joined forces with ICI Metals and IMI and was later based at Witton. Arthur born in 1842, died in 1913 and is buried at Key Hill Cemetery in Birmingham.

Image: *Moor Green Hall captured in an illustration taken from a book plate belonging to Charlotte Chamberlain, daughter of Arthur Chamberlain.*

Highbury Community News

This August, after months and months of hard work, Chamberlain Highbury Trust submitted plans to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the next phase of funding for Highbury's restoration project. Full plans can be viewed on Birmingham City Council website (Planning Application number 2023/05977/PA) or find out more at their regular monthly Monday Open Days, where you can also book a guided tour of the building.

TWITTER: @HighburyPark FACEBOOK: Highbury Park Friends
INSTAGRAM: @Highburyparkfriendsbrum

Contributors to our Autumn Bulletin - Anne Gilbert, Catharine Clarke, Ellen Pisolkar and Gail Pittaway

Our next bulletin will be out in January 2024