HPF Bulletin January 2020

Happy New Year

We wish all our Friends a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year. Thank you for your continued support. It may be muddy in the park now but, full of optimism, we are starting to plan a new programme of activities for 2020. Our first event is the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch taking place at Highbury on January 29th at 11.00am, meeting in the car park.

Nature Notes. Fungi

Strange and beautiful fungi have been appearing all over the Park this Autumn. Hairy Curtain Crust, Grass Oysterling and Tawny Funnel were among the 40 species found during a Fungus walk led by expert Lukas Large. The large rings of Trooping Funnel *Clitocybe geotropa* lasted weeks but other fungi fruit and disappear within a day. We are only just finding out what a vital role they play in the health of habitats.

The oldest oak in the park lost a major limb in the autumn. The remaining branches were pruned so hopefully this magnificent giant can continue for another 200 years.

Look out for goldfinches on seeds and grey wagtails in the Shuttock Stream. Red admiral butterflies may be hibernating in the park – ivy flowers have sustained this species which is normally migratory. EMP

News from the Chamberlain Highbury Trust

The Chamberlain Highbury Trust writes

Volunteer Opportunity – Tour Guides

From January 2020, the doors of Highbury will be open to the public. The house will initially be open once a fortnight on Mondays from 10.00am – 3.00pm. Admission will be free.

During the open days we're arranging a series of workshops, tutorials and video presentations. The activities will be led by community groups, local practitioners, artists, civic leaders, historians and professors and will cover a range of subjects linking to Highbury and the Chamberlains. Our aim is for the public to explore Highbury, led by knowledgeable and thought – provoking tour guides.

We're looking to train volunteers to become specialist Highbury tour guides.

Experience is needed for the role. Are you an experienced communicator, story teller, historian, teacher, youth worker or actor?
Tour guides are expected to commit to at least a half a Monday per month and be willing to take part in initial and on-going training. Our first training day is January 8th.

If you are interested in getting involved, please email: chamberlainhighburytrust@outlook.com for an application form.

Neville's Island by Claire Simpson

This ebook about Neville Chamberlain is available from Amazon for £3.28. We learned about it from the author at the recent Skills Share Day at Highbury.

Claire writes: "Neville's Island" is the story of the 7 years Neville Chamberlain spent in the Bahamas setting up the Andros Fibre Company on Andros Island for his father, the Rt Hon Joseph Chamberlain. I discovered the story whilst living on the Island with my husband. When we returned to England I was given permission to research the Chamberlain papers in the University of Birmingham's Special Collection. I found the story so fascinating that I felt it should be shared with others. To the best of my knowledge biographers have only briefly touched on this period of Neville's life. Neville was 21 when he arrived in the Bahamas; his experiences must have had a profound effect on his later life

Kings Heath Train Station

The plans to re-open the railway station in Kings Heath have been approved, despite criticism there will be no car parking or drop off spaces, only cycle parking.

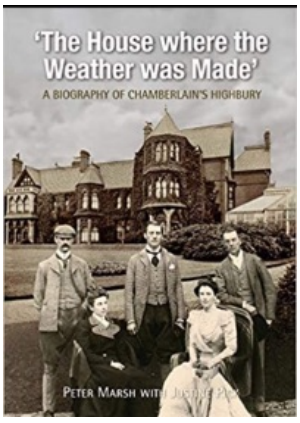
Concerns have been expressed that commuters will leave their vehicles on local streets as well as in the park whilst using the train to travel into town. The new station will include covered platforms, a connecting footbridge, lifts and ticket machines, but no ticket office or station building. We will continue to keep you updated on progress.

A Digital App for the Park

Together with our partners, the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust, we hope to develop a digital app in the coming months. The app will help you identify wildlife, trees and other points of interest in the park. Anyone would be able to use it through a QR code on their smart phone. We feel this could be particularly attractive to children and young people; schools could use it for outdoor lessons. We will be writing to you all soon to seek your views and ask for your help with the project.

The House Where the Weather was Made: A Biography of Chamberlain's Highbury. Authors Peter Marsh and Justine Pick. Paperback. 2019. £19.

We thought you might be interested to know that the book about the history of Highbury that Peter Marsh came to talk to us about at a HPF meeting two years ago is now available in paperback



2020 City Nature Challenge

We received the following message from Eco-record

The annual challenge first began in 2016 and is organised by the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and the California Academy of Sciences. The City Nature Challenge is a competition between cities all over the world to see how many wild species their citizens can spot over the space of four days in April.

We're very excited to announce that Birmingham and the Black Country (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall & Wolverhampton) will be taking part in the 2020 City Nature Challenge. In 2020 there will be over 230 cities taking part worldwide including 10 other UK cities.

We thought that Birmingham & the Black Country should also be represented!

The B&BC entry is being organised by EcoRecord, Birmingham Museum and The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country.

How do you take part? We will send you further details nearer the time and hope to organise some wildlife spotting we can all do together at Highbury. In the meantime please bear these dates in mind

Records of ANY wild species of plants or animals spotted between Friday 24th to Monday 27th April 2020 will count towards our total.

Nature Recovery Network

The Nature Improvement Area at Highbury has been renamed the Nature Recovery Network. Our NRN forms part of a green corridor across South Birmingham organised by the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust. Together with the Birmingham City Parks Department we will be planting 150 new trees above the old bowling green area this winter, including 10 Oak, 10 Spindle, 20 Crab Apple, 10 Field Maple, 20 Guelder Rose and 10 Sweet Chestnut

Events

January 29th. 11.00am. RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch returns to Highbury. We enjoy taking part in this annual event to spot how many species of birds we can find at Highbury. Come along and help us. Meet in the car park. Everyone is welcome and the event is free of charge. Please wear footwear suitable for walking over uneven ground.

Highbury Park Friends
C/o York Supplies
55 -57 Waterloo Road
Kings Heath
Birmingham B14 7SD
www.highburyparkfriends.org.uk
webadmin@highburyparkfriends.org.uk