HPF Bulletin April 2019

Nature Improvement Area

Work has continued on our Nature Improvement Area above the Old Bowling Green this winter. You might have noticed the new hedging in place to protect the 100 hazel trees that have been planted. Below the car park it has been rewarding to see some of the flowers planted in previous years (primrose and native wild daffodil) appearing in the woodland for Spring.

Fruit Tree Grafting

The Highbury apple and pear pergola was commissioned by Joseph Chamberlain over 110 years ago. It is unique in that one side is apple trees and the other pears; and it is impressive that the pergola has lasted as long as it has as the trees in it are now very mature. In March four workshops took place under the guidance of Dr Rob Tilling of "Lets Grow Together" to propagate new trees from grafts. Once the young trees take they will be able to replace some of those that are in poor condition. The project was a great success with approximately 20 volunteers helping to graft and label the trees; now it is a matter of waiting for them to take root.

Nature notes

Bluebells are coming up all over the park. Many are the native bluebells with tubular dark flowers hanging on one side. Spanish bluebells as well as hybrid bluebells can be seen near the railway line. They have more robust leaves and the blue or white flowers flare out. In the woodland by the railway line is also a great place to watch the Cow Parsley or Queen Anne's Lace unfurling its ferny leaves and frothy white umbels. Spring is the ideal time to learn to identify birds from their song as they can be spotted through the trees, often singing from a favourite perch each day. EMP.

Social Media

We are pleased to welcome Matthew Brown-Bolton to the HPF Committee. Matthew is helping with Twitter, and Facebook. He has also created an instagram account for us with some lovely pictures of Highbury. Why don't you check it out!

Tree work at Highbury

We have received a number of comments about how many trees have been felled or crowned over the winter. The Council maintains a database of all trees across the city and they are inspected every five years for safety. Unfortunately there was a backlog of work to be undertaken at Highbury, which has attracted adverse comments. Please rest assured that new trees are planted annually. We have already planted over 100 hazel trees over the winter, and will continue planting on a regular basis. The dead wood and arisings are left in the park because this is the most environmentally friendly way of dealing with them.

Alongside Matthew the committee comprises; Anne Gilbert (Chair and Membership), Gail Pittaway (History and Heritage), Helen Brown (Social Media), Charles Barnwell (IT), Paul Anthony (Wildlife), Paul Gaynor (Treasurer), Rosemary Dewar (Tree Trail activities for children

Our anonymous litter pickers

We want to say a big thank you to all those of you who quietly do a bit of litter picking when you walk round the park. In recent months a few of us have noted that not only do some individuals come to Highbury equipped with a carrier bag so that they can pick up rubbish as they walk, we've also spotted people walking round equipped with litter pickers. This helps us enormously and the park is looking pretty good as a result of these socially minded individuals, who remain for the most part, incognito. So if you are one of them, once again, a big thank you!

Tree Trail Walks for Children

Highbury Park has a Tree Trail that includes stimulating, investigative activities for children; they are easy and fun as well! The trail includes a series of ideas aimed at primary aged children to help them explore and enjoy the trees.

I would really like to see schools, clubs and groups of families taking advantage of these walks and would be happy to talk to people and set up a few walks this summer term.

As a taster try this activity –

Colour Dabs

Materials; cut some card (old cereal boxes) into small strips about 4cm by 12cm. Take a tube of Pritt stick type glue and just before you start cover the card with glue leaving a little bit at the bottom to hold on to. Then collect as many different colours as you can. Take a small piece of leaf, about the size a large insect might bite and stick it onto your piece of card. Fill your card with colour. You can take your card home with you, cover it with sellotape and you have your own original bookmark. If you put the date on the back you could do the same at a different time of year and you will probably have some very different colours. You might want to try just collecting shades of just one colour, you will discover that in the natural world green isn't just green.
Rosemary Dewar

For more information contact Rosemary via Highbury Park Friends

Student placement

We have been pleased to welcome Amy Johnson, a third year Geography student at the University of Birmingham on a placement at Highbury Park from January - March 2019.

Amy has helped with coppicing and planting hazel trees, alongside Alf Dimmock, Senior Park Ranger. Towards the end of her placement she also undertook a survey of park users. We welcome the energy and enthusiasm that students on placement can bring and look forward to hosting more of them in the future.

Events

April 28th.
Spring Wildlife Walk with Jake Williams, Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust.
10.30am - 12.00pm.
Meet in the car park.

May 9th. 8.30pm. Annual Bat walk with Brumbats and the Park Ranger Service.
Meet in the car park. Wear warm clothes and bring a torch.

June 5th. 7.00pm – 9.00pm Celebrating the life of Joseph Chamberlain: a film/memorabilia event with Jason Gelder. Highbury House

July 7th. Summer wildlife Walk with Jake Williams.
10.30am – 12.00pm.
Meet in the car park.

August 10th. 10.30am – 12.00pm. A history of Highbury Park. A walking tour of historical buildings around Highbury Park with Gail Pittaway. Meet in the car park

September 10th. 7.00pm – 9.00pm. Highbury Park Friends AGM, at Highbury, including house tour with Alison Milward, Trustee of the CHT

October 20th. Autumn Wildlife Walk with Jake Williams.
10.30am – 12.00pm.
Meet in the car park

For all park events please wear suitable footwear for walking over uneven ground.
Everyone welcome
All events are free of charge

Walking meditation every Friday morning from April 5th. 10.30am – 12.00pm. Meet at the High Street entrance to Highbury.

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