Bulletin July 2020

Welcome to our Summer bulletin

We hope you are all well and have avoided becoming ill. At the present time we are still not holding any events but are continually reviewing the situation to see when we might start up again. In the meantime we would like to update you on some things happening at Highbury.

Our AGM

We are hoping that Highbury Hall will be open in time for our AGM on October 7th, at 7.00pm. Please put the date in your diary and we will confirm in due course. Our guest speaker will be Justine Pick who has written a booklet for West Midlands History entitled, "Highbury During the First World War". This will be the subject of Justine's presentation.

Kings Heath Station

Plans to re-open our local railway line for passengers are continuing. Some of you will have contributed to the recent consultation about plans for the station in Moseley.

You may be aware that the Kings Heath plans include a proposed temporary roadway across the playing field above the car park in Highbury Park in order to transport and store materials needed for construction. We have been promised that any damage to the area will be made good and replanting undertaken. Notices will be erected in the vicinity with the opportunity for the public to comment on the proposals in due course, so please look out for them.

News from the Chamberlain Highbury Trust

Highbury Hall remains closed although the decision as to when it is safe to re-open is reviewed regularly.

If you have walked in the park during lockdown you may have noticed the scaffolding around the Hall as essential repair works are carried out by Birmingham City Council with the assistance of a grant of £243,000 from English Heritage .

This is not the full restoration project that The Chamberlain Highbury Trust plans to deliver; rather this initial phase comprises the repair of the roof and the restoration of historic wallpapers that had suffered water damage.

Rhododendron Project

The CHT has launched phase two of their rhododendron research, propagation and pruning project. There are many varieties of rhododendrons which are only found at Highbury, hybridised by Chamberlain's gardeners. The project aims to showcase them and teach community volunteers to protect this asset for future generations

Incident in Highbury Park

The following message comes from West Midlands Police

There was a car-jacking on 22nd June in Highbury Park where a woman was returning to her black Land Rover Discovery Sport when she was approached by two Asian men. One of the men pushed her to the ground and grabbed her by the throat, demanding the car keys before fleeing in the car. Fortunately the woman was not seriously injured but was shaken by the incident. If you have any information relating to this incident we urge you to contact us via Live Chat at west-midlands.police.uk between 8am and midnight, call 101 anytime or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 quoting crime reference 20BE/144169F/20.
You can watch a video on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/81751285098/posts/10163645618485099/

Lockdown litter and other anti-social acts

During lockdown we got used to seeing our bins overflowing as local residents flocked to the park to picnic. In spite of regularly asking folk to take their litter home, it was a common sight to see bins full to overflowing. We also had graffiti on our noticeboard, twenty tyres dumped, many scorch marks from barbecues and various other anti-social behaviours. So please be alert when in the park and ring the police on 101 or dial 999 if it is an emergency.

DIY solutions

It was hard not to have a chuckle at the DIY solution to litter of one park user, who donated us an extra bin and made sure no one went off with it by securing it to one of our red dog poo bins. Thank you, we appreciate the sentiment

Nature Notes
Common Knapweed

A spectacular purple flower in July is the Common Knapweed – bees, butterflies and other insects love the nectar and Goldfinches feed on the seeds. With the early dry spell this year, many meadow species have struggled but the drought-tolerant Knapweed is thriving. Look for it in the northern meadow adjacent to Shutlock Lane. A few years ago this area was sown with wildflower seed from Eades Meadow SSSI in Worcestershire which is famous for Green-winged Orchid and Meadow Saffron. EMP

Reflections of a local resident
The Alder

Back in September 2019 I went along to a mindfulness walk in Highbury with Sherri Meese, who runs Walk 'n' Wonder. It was here that I first found this magnificent tree and instantly felt drawn to it. I was going through a period of intensely poor mental health at the time, getting to the point where the only place I was comfortable outside of the house was under the boughs of this tree, in the middle of the meadow. The sinews of her strong trunk became a thing of wonder for me, as I learned her every curve, every patch of lichen. Watching her change as winter drew in felt like a mirror was being held up to me with the spring and my recovery offering the same reflection. A friendship was borne between me and the tree, with poetry being left within the gnarled nooks of the trunk, and as lockdown eased, I met with other friends to sit in the log circle beneath.

The alder offered me a sense of protection and grounding when I needed it most. It sparked my creativity and brought me so much joy. People say nature is the greatest healer. Never have I agreed with anything so profoundly. This tree and the raw beauty of Highbury continues to play a huge role in my recovery, I'll be forever grateful for her sacred and steadfast protection.

Helen from Unbind Your Wild.

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