HPF Bulletin January 2022

Welcome to our Winter Bulletin

Happy New Year to all our Friends. We hope you have enjoyed the Festive season and have managed to stay well. We are pleased to send you our latest bulletin with news about what's happening at Highbury. Our events programme will start again in February and we hope to be able to run a full programme in the park as the year progresses. If you have ideas for any new events then please let us know. If you're out walking in the park in the near future, look out for hazel catkins, pussy willow and snowdrops, and try to avoid the ever-seasonal mud!

Mud and more mud

We haven't forgotten, and we imagine you haven't either, all the off-road driving that churned up the grass off the main drive last winter. An order has been raised to fell some poplar trees at another site in Birmingham and the logs should be delivered to Highbury to line the main drive by February. So watch this space .....

Children's play area

We're aware that the Children's play area is looking a bit sad. We've lost a few items over the years through vandalism and theft. We have a local volunteer who is willing to help fundraise for one or two small pieces of equipment to replace them. If you think this is a good idea or can make suggestions of anything you would like to see then please let us know.

News from the Chamberlain Highbury Trust

The CHT announced in October that they had been awarded a £368,000 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to further restore the grounds and house of Chamberlain's Highbury. This is obviously great news for the estate as trustees can now begin planning a series of improvements to the estate over the next four years.

If you've visited recently you might have spotted the new signs welcoming visitors to the Highbury Estate that have been placed close to the House.

The Chamberlain Highbury Trust is also looking to recruit an administrator and fundraiser and also an artist for a new project they will be undertaking. Further info from the CHT website.

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Tree of the Month

If you follow us on Twitter you will have seen the informative and beautifully presented series entitled Tree of the Month by Cat Clarke, Botanical Artist and HPF Committee member. A short extract follows:-

Monkey Puzzle *(Araucaria araucana)*
Family: *Araucariaceae*

In January the Monkey Puzzle is more visible amongst the other trees that have lost their leaves, towering above the smaller shrubs below. It is located close to the Lodge Gate entrance, in an area of the park sometimes referred to as 'Tree Collectors Corner'. Find out more about trees in Highbury Park by visiting our website and download our illustrated *Discover Trees in Highbury Park* leaflet https://highburyparkfriends.org.uk/wp/habitat-wildlife/shrubs-trees/tree-surveys/

Nature Notes

Ivy

Ivy is found throughout the park, creeping along the ground and using trees for support. as it reaches for light. Although it may outcompete young trees for light, its roots do not penetrate the bark. The dense mass of ivy around a tree is ideal roosting space for bats, birds and hibernating insects. The caterpillars of the Holly Blue Butterfly and the Swallow-tailed Moth and Yellow-barred Brindle Moth are some of the many insects that feed on ivy. The flowers provide nectar at the end of the autumn when most other flowers are over and then in early spring, the berries ripen just when last year's berries have been eaten. And sprigs of holly and ivy in the house are said to keep evil at bay! EMP.

New Bins

By now you will probably have noticed the two new bins that you all helped crowdfund for. One is in the car park and the other is at the corner of the main path leading down to the Orchard. In the last bulletin we omitted to acknowledge Matthew Brown-Bolton for his help with the fundraising - so a belated thank you to him

Farewell to Paul Gaynor

Our longest serving HPF committee member, Paul Gaynor, has finally stepped down from his role. We're not quite sure, and neither is Paul, how many years he has been involved with Highbury Park Friends but we reckon about 14 years. During this time Paul served as our Treasurer. He carried out his duties quietly and competently and we really appreciate his contribution over the years. We wish him well as he moves on to pastures new.

Pollution of the Shuttock Stream

We have received a further recent report of milky water and a foul smell from the Shuttock Stream. If you witness any pollution there please let us know but you can also phone the
Environment Agency Pollution Hotline. 0800 80 70 60
The more people who report to the Agency the more chance there is of them investigating and putting things right at an early stage, rather than risking threat to all the little creatures who live in the stream.

Events for 2022

The RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch returns to Highbury, Friday 4th Februrary, 11.00am.

Alf Dimmock, Senior Park Ranger will lead us around Highbury on our annual count of the birds. Please wear footwear suitable for walking over uneven and muddy ground. Meet in the car park and bring binoculars if you have any. Everyone welcome.

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