Spring Bulletin
May - July 2025

HIGHBURY PARK Friends

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter.

In this edition, we're sharing updates on recent activities within the park, upcoming events and more. Whether you're a regular visitor or a first-timer, we hope this newsletter inspires you to explore the park and enjoy your time here. Pictured above are highlights from the last month. Enjoy the park!

Volunteering Matters - across Birmingham, the stats are in!

Highbury Park Friends is proud to be a member of Birmingham Opens Spaces Forum, otherwise known as BOSF. BOSF is a volunteer network organisation, set up at the end of 2004, that brings together all the community groups in Birmingham with an interest in green open spaces.

SCAN HERE:

Find out more about this excellent organsiation here: www.bosf.org.uk

Flood Management

The new seasonal scrape - the transformation begins

Re-using surplus soil to protect the grass from tyre marks

Work on the Highbury flood management scheme has continued apace and is nearing completion. The aim is to stop houses in neighbouring roads from being flooded by water that flows down the slopes in the park. If you have walked around Highbury recently you will have spotted the new seasonal scrape by the Shutlock Lane entrance (above left). Although it has only just been dug, it is filling with water quickly. Quite amazing considering it hasn't rained! This just shows how much underground water there is in the park.

Once the earth has settled we will replant the slopes and also the stream banks. We hope it will attract new wildlife into the park.

Soil that was excavated to make the scrape has now been placed on the side of the main drive. The aim is to stop cars driving into the meadow to avoid our speed bumps. We agree it doesn't look very pretty at the minute but we plan to seed it and hopefully grow some wildflowers there.

Good News re Trees - Network Rail

You will probably be aware that Network Rail removed a large number of mature trees along the railway line in December to stop them falling on to the tracks once the station re-opens. In the coming months we have plans to replant the whole length of the boundary with smaller bushes. In the meantime, Network Rail donated and planted 150 whips of mixed deciduous trees, above the car park in Hopyard Meadow, for us, pictured overleaf, the trees include Rowan (Sorbus aucuparia), Prunus avium (Cherry),Common Crab Apple (Malus Sylvestris) English Oak (Quercus Robur) and Field Maple (Acer Campestre). ***Continued overleaf***

Good news for trees, continued

They are tiny at the minute, but are settling in well. They do need more water though, at the minute, so if you have spare water in a water bottle when you visit the park please give them a drink.

Pictured above right, Network Rail also donated a more mature Hornbeam tree that we planted on the main drive.

Archaelogy Update - Stream Walking

Part of the recent flood management works included widening the Shuttock Stream. Ex City of Birmingham Archaeologist, Mike Hodder, suggested that this might be a good time to explore the stream banks in more detail in order to see if we might find any more Bronze Age burnt mounds.

Mike shared some introductory information. Three burnt mounds have already been identified and recorded next to the stream They were used by Bronze Age settlers as the equivalent of our modern-day saunas. Stones were heated by fire and then water thrown over them to create steam. What remains are the piles of stones that our ancestors used. There is evidence this sort of sauna was also used by other ancient people such as Scandinavians and Native American Indians.

Pictured here a sample of the stones

Continued overleaf

Archaelogy Update continued

In April a group of 7 intrepid HPF member volunteers walked along the stream banks with Mike looking for shattered stones that might have used for heating the saunas. The natural material of the stream banks is a rich red clay. The pebbles are glacial drift washed down into the stream during the Ice Age. The stream banks are uneven and steep in places so we had to concentrate quite hard. We found about six stones that appeared shattered and likely to have been used by the Bronze Age inhabitants but sadly there were no more burnt mounds. It was worth a try. A big thank you to Mike Hodder and our volunteers.

Pictured above Mike explaining what to look for.

Outings to Highbury - Childhood Memories

It's great to hear people's childhood memories of the park. We were delighted when Jenny McFadyen got in touch to share this recollection of her family outings to Highbury. With her permission, here's her message:

"My Nan and Grandpa, Lottie and Ernie Parkes, were married in 1923 and lived near Dads Lane (in Brent Road), and I spent all my young life going on outings to Highbury Park, between 1958 and 1970.

Grandpa had an allotment then. He was a survivor of the WW1 trenches and became chairman of his beloved football club, Selly Park FC. Aged about 3 (1961) I used to jump on and off a huge old oak stump near a green bandstand type structure - or a hexagonal seat?

I *have a black and white photo of my Nan and myself in 1960, amongst daffodils next to some large stone steps - one of the stately houses? As I got older I loved the way you could walk right through the park and pop out at the*

continued overleaf

Childhood memories continued

Moseley end, and walk to Kings Heath Library. Such happy memories. I wish I could see a picture of that 'bandstand structure as it must have been knocked down ages ago. "

Was it a bandstand or a seat? Jenny thinks it was located on the left handside (if walking up from the entrance from Dad's Lane. If anyone can recall it or has a photo, please get in touch via info@highburyparkfriends.org.uk

Lost Keys - Found!

Back in April, a member of the public contacted us to see if a car key that had been lost in the park had been handed in. We suggested she checked the noticeboard in the car park where lost property is often left. We also posted on social media to ask people to look out for it. Well, it took a month, but a happy ending, the key was found posted on the noticeboard! Please let us know if you find any lost property and we can share on social media to try and re-unite it with its owner. Well done to our park users who have invented this informal method for dealing with lost property !

Bye Bye 'X' (formally Twitter)

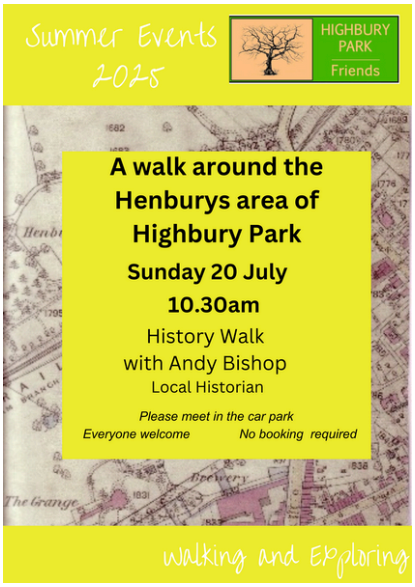
Highbury Park Friends are no longer posting updates on the social media channel 'X', and instead we have set up an account on Bluesky. If you use social media, please do 'find us' - follow the link at the end of this article to our profile.

We use social media as an additional way to share information about the park, news, wildlife, conservation updates, events and photos. You can also use these platforms to share your park experiences and photos. We will continue to post information on Instagram, Facebook and the website and via these member bulletins. So please consider heading over to Bluesky and give us a follow!

SCAN HERE:

http://bsky.app/profile/highburyprkfriends.bsky.social

Forthcoming Events



We look forward to seeing you at one of our events. if you're planning to attend, please wear footwear suitable for uneven and muddy ground.

View the 2025 Events Programme:

Look ahead to see the events planned for the rest of the year on our website (scan the QR code) and follow us on social media for the latest announcements.

If you are interested in volunteering with Highbury Park Friends please email: info@highburyparkfriends.org.uk

Contributors to our Spring Bulletin - Anne Gilbert, Sam Gamblin, Sarah Tomlinson and Sarah Hill-Daniel

Our next issue is out : Summer 2025

Don't forget to follow Highbury Park Friends on Social Media!

@Highburyparkfriendsbrum **@Highbury Park Friends** **@highburyprkfriends.bsky.com**