

Highbury Fields Association



March 1985

Spring Spectacular!

Any day now the first signs of the 10,000 daffodil bulbs, recently planted by the Recreation Department, will be showing through the grass on the gentle hillock, that has buried the once celebrated but long derelict paddling pool, to the south of the new pool. The whole area has been carefully landscaped, with the aid of a special grant from the GLC and over 4,000 plants and shrubs have been laid out. Special emphasis was placed on decorative foliage and winter stem colours. Spring '85 should be spectacular at the entrance of the Fields!

ROBIN NICHOLSON

8,000 Waterbabies

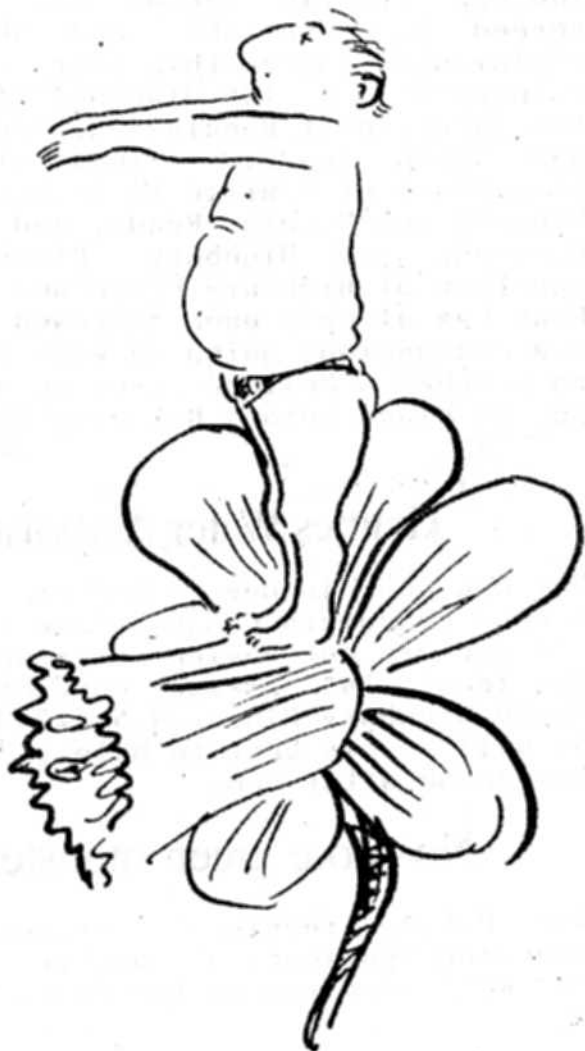
The Highbury Fields swimming pool is now the busiest of all the pools in Islington. In the 8 months since it opened last year on the 23rd May there have been over 180,000 visitors. There have been 54,000 children plus a further 14,000 since school parties started coming in September and over 8,000 babies and toddlers under the age of 3, who do not have to pay.

The pool has been closed since the 4th of February. There have been some tiles coming off so Mr. Holmes, the Borough Baths Manager has chosen the quietest period of the swimming year to drain the pool and do the necessary repairs. Work is also being done to regulate the heating system. The pool will open again on Monday 4th March and Mr. Holmes feels confident that the pool will need to close only rarely in the coming years.

No special changes are planned for the forthcoming year, except that the adult charge will go up 5p to 60p. It is hoped even more of the people in the area will want to get the benefit of the pool - if you have not swum for a long time, be encouraged that there have been over 2,500 visits by old age pensioners!

More Swings and Roundabouts,

No start has yet been made on constructing the first phase of the new playground on the Fields. Three quarters of the cost is to be borne by the Department of the Environment, who have asked for a breakdown of the costs, and to date there have been no further developments.



What's green, and 100 this year?

The Centenary of the Fields will occur in December 1985. We shall be celebrating this in September with various activities on the Fields.

If anyone has any memorabilia; photographs, etc.. which may be of interest for an exhibition please get in touch with Jenny Blanchard, 68A Calabria Road, N.5.



Pelicans crossing?

The new traffic scheme has now been agreed by the GLC and should be implemented later this year. The Key changes will be two diagonal closures at the junction of Ronalds Rd. and Horsell and Arvon roads. This will mean reductions of traffic in Arvon, Baalbec, Benwell and Ronalds Roads, and Highbury Crescent and Highbury Place. The junction of Highbury Place and Holloway Road has already been narrowed and there are discussions going on with the GLC as to whether a Pelican crossing should be put in place across Holloway Road.

ROBIN MABEY

Thames Water Authority

Bay Hodgson is now a member of North London Consumers Consultative Committee.

If you are not having satisfaction from the local TWA please contact Bay at No.10 Highbury Place, N.5 (226 8393) and he will do his best to help you. Please telephone after 6pm.

No more green monsters!

The H.F.A. receives notice of all planning applications and its opinions are well received by the Planning

Department. However, several recent applications have raised some fundamental questions about the planning process. Are planning controls effective in restraining the determined developer? Are they fair to ordinary folk who do not have access to architects? Should all schemes in a conservation area be represented by scale drawings with plans, sections and elevations, including colours and details of railings, etc..? If you imagine that they normally are, you should visit the Planning Department and see for yourself.

All such controls are exercised according to fashion. In the past, they were so lax that outrageous buildings like Murphy's offices (now used by Social Services) were allowed; While now they tend to be so restricted that many of the idiosyncracies that we so like, would almost certainly not be allowed, such as the porch to No.10 Highbury Place or the windows on the first floor of No.7 Highbury Place.

The question of fair conduct in both conserving and creating a future for ourselves and many others to follow is something we should all discuss ... YOUR OPINIONS please for the next newsletter.

ROBIN NICHOLSON

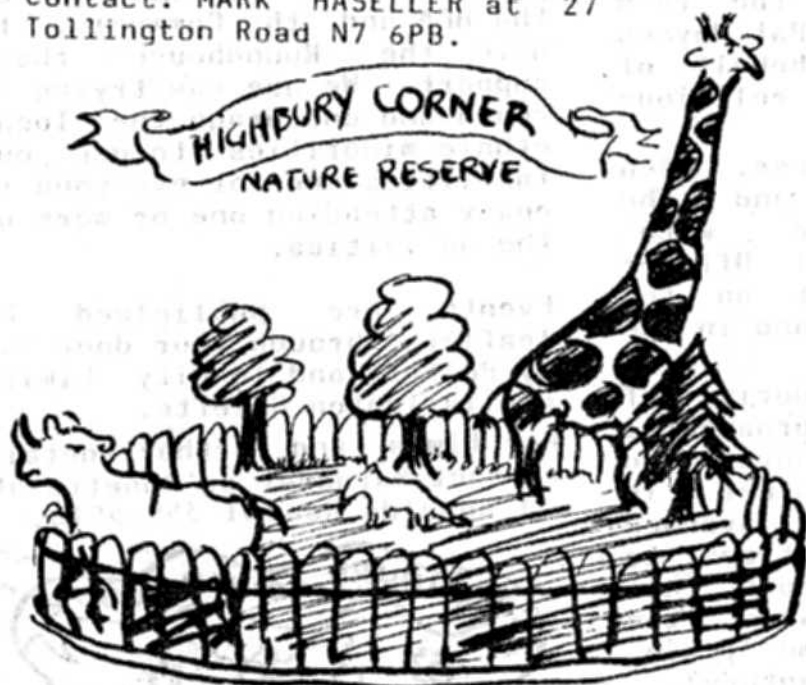
Bouquets

We greatly appreciate the interest shown in the Fields by Mr. Mugford and by the Park Superintendant, Mr. R. Payne and we look forward again to the cheerful clumps of daffodils around the sides of the Fields in the Spring, and to Spring and Summer flowers in the War Memorial enclosure.



Islington Wildlife!

The Islington Wildlife Group was set up in 1982 to encourage urban wildlife conservation and is forming links with many other 'green / environmental / conservation' groups in the Borough, including the H.F.A. Membership is open to all at £2 and £1 for the unwaged. Contact: MARK HASELLER at 27 Tollington Road N7 6PB.



Chairman's Report

We have had a good year in 1984 and all sorts of interesting things have been happening. One matter of considerable importance has been the revival of the Association's membership and we have over 90 paid up members. This will give added support in our negotiations with the local authorities. We have started to deliver a copy of the Committee meeting minutes to each member which is a sort of newsletter in itself. This of course involved more work and expense but we think it is worth it. So I do thank all committee members who are involved in the printing and distribution. This newsletter includes a list of the names and address of the Committee so if you have any ideas about the Conservation of the Fields please get in touch with a Committee member and the matter can be raised at the next meeting. We have about five committee meetings a year.

In the area around the Fields particularly in the past year, there has been a great deal of building activity

with the rehabilitation of flats and the conversion of houses. This has involved constant vigilance in order to preserve the character of the area. Various representations have been made by the Association to the Council and the developers and in many cases a satisfactory agreement has been reached.

Some of the matters which have been dealing with during 1984 include - the children's playground, football pitch resurfacing and fencing, lighting of the Church path, swimming pool, South High Traffic scheme, road sweeping, policing, location of refuse skip and bottle bank, lopping trees, sweeping leaves, do clock tower area, post office cricket and games, rubbish Highbury Terrace Mews.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all officers of the Recreation Department and other Council Departments who do so much to look after the Fields particularly Mr. Peter Bonsor, the Chief Park Officer, Mr. Payne, the supervisor of the Ground Staff. Pe Broadbent, our ward Council on the Council continues to be very supportive and we are specially fortunate in this.

JOHN HARDY

Leafy Vistas

This year is the Centenary of Highbury Fields being opened to the public - they were declared open on December 24th, 1885.

The mature avenues we see today around and across the Fields were planted about 1885.



time of year. In recent years numerous young trees have been planted from November to March. People who have moved into the area recently may be interested to know that some of the trees have been given by local groups. For example -

In March 1977, eight Islington Primary schools generously gave nine trees to the Fields.

In December 1978, HFA gave a Norway Maple to the Fields and during last year's tree-planting season, the then Mayor of Islington Councillor Pat Haynes planted a Tree of Heaven on behalf of Islington members of the religious group, the Baha'is.

Many young trees have, of course, been provided by Parks Dept., and the Association has discussed with Mr. Mugford, the Arboricultural Officer which kinds of trees to plant on the Fields in this Centenary year and in the near future.

Planting will include two categories of trees. One is pleasant, ornamental trees; these are relatively short-lived - about 40 years. The other is long-term. These trees forming avenues are old; and long-living trees to replace them need to have grown tall enough to form an avenue when the present trees are cut down (some years, even decades into the 21st century). This means the trees for the future avenues will be planted not too long ahead.

The Hungarian oaks to replace the Avenue called 'Queen's Walk' have already been planted. They grew for several years in a nursery before being planted on the Fields about two years ago. DORA HOWARD



Highbury Roundhouse

at 71 Ronalds Rd and the Community Building behind.

This Organisation has just celebrated ten years of existence. For five years it was purely a Youth Club. Now with the refurbished factory building, more activities are possible. We ask members of the HFA and the Community to give the Roundhouse their support. We are now trying to reach and encourage the local ethnic minorities to use our facilities and for everyone to enjoy attending one or more of the activities.

Events are publicised by leaflets through your door and by Posters and in City Limits and Islington Gazette.

For times and further details contact Margaret or Annette at 71 Ronalds Road 01 359 5916.



Members of the Association who have been elected to the Committee:

John Hardiman	Chairman
Martin Jones	Vice Chairman
Maryse Jones	Treasurer
Jennifer Aykroyd	Membership Secretary
Mia Beaumont	
Ray Hodgson	
Robin Mabey	
Iina Shapur	
Robin Nicholson	
Carrick James	
Alan Taylor	
Diana Matthews	
Delphine Jelbert	
Richard O'Keefe	
Rob Wood	
Ginny Worsley	Secretary
Jenny Blanchard	

Highbury Fields Association



Nov 1985

Playground Progress

After more than six months deliberation, the not-so-distant Department of the Environment determined that the 1984 proposals submitted by Islington Council were too expensive. Over the summer, discussions with the H.F.A. and others, saw the older childrens' play space that used to project so controversially into the Fields, swing back onto the existing playground, while leaving the younger children and their guardians out in the open and the sun as before. These financial restrictions have caused a great improvement in the layout of the whole scheme while losing nothing of the original concept. The playspace will project considerably less than previously intended - 5 metres opposite the new pool and over 15 metres in front of the vent shaft. The proposals form three connected spaces. The older children will have a cable net, climbing frame, roundabout, tyre swings and a swinging tyre laid out on the existing playground on bark or safety mats. This will be extended just past the vent shaft with a heavily planted mound off which will dip a high slide and a double width slide. Separated by the vent shaft the younger children will have a collection of play pieces set in a large sand pit overlooked by a grassy bank and seats. They will also have swings, a delightful pedal-powered round-about and a shallow water feature. Towards Highbury Place the existing planting will be extended into a wilderness. On September 10th, the Recreation Committee approved the revised design and tenders will now be invited with a view to starting a 9 month contract in early next Spring. The long awaited playspace will provide a very real and exciting start to the next hundred years of public enjoyment of the ever changing Fields.

ROBIN NICHOLSON.



Elms Rescued!

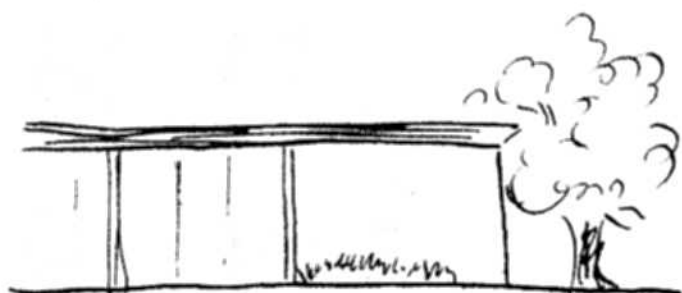
Those of us who witnessed with sadness the felling of our native Elms a few years ago are very conscious of the precious trees and spaces of Highbury Fields.

So it was with particular interest that we joined the "tree walk" through Highbury fields on a Saturday morning a few weeks ago.

It was pleasing to discover we have 6 Elms in our fields which have been rescued from the ravages of the fungus caused by the Dutch Elm beetle, and these were clearly depicted in the booklet prepared for us by the department of Parks and Recreation.

Our guide for the walk was Mr. Martin Bennett (Asst. Tree Officer) who very patiently described the present 39 species of tree in the Fields. The improved environment of recent years had permitted this greater variety, and special care had been exercised to stimulate interest all year round. With so many new arrivals on the Fields, one must admire the "London plane" which provides much colour and form, whilst constantly delighting the artists' eye as it decorates many an odd corner of our metropolis. Sadly, the plane trees on the fields are getting old, and maples are already in place to take over from them.

PATRICIA HANNING.



A smaller splash

Figures in the pool

After the enthusiastic start in May 1984 visits to the new Highbury pool have dropped slightly this year. The figures below are for a longer period of this year - note that while adults have persevered, and the unemployed have found a healthy way to pass the time, there has been a large drop in the use by juniors and under 3s.

A survey has been carried out to see if users approve of music with their swimming: 85 per cent do, and a variety of music will be played in future - not too loudly and with the occasional quiet period for those who like to doze while they do their backstroke. The hoist for the disabled will at last be in place by mid-November.

LESSONS TO START SWIMMING-- -- OR TO IMPROVE.

There are a whole range of lessons for adults on weekday evenings and for juniors on Saturday mornings, starting at the beginning of November...BOOK NOW!

Martin Jones

POOL ATTENDANCES:

	23.5.84. -31.5.84.	1.4.85.- -26.8.85.
Adult	61,126	61,619
Junior	44,088	27,263
OAP	1,682	1,210
Unemployed	10,308	14,796
Under 3's	6,402	4,401

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on Tuesday, 12th. November 1985 at 7.45 pm in the Roundhouse. (pl. note not in the Library as previously notified)

Chairmans Report

Looking through the 1985 committee meeting reports, it is interesting to note the varying items of interest both minor and major which we discussed and the action that was taken. The outstanding feature is the constant liason we maintain with the Planning, Recreation, and Cleansing Departments of the Islington Council. In nearly all cases the officers concerned consider our requests and recommendations with care and courtesy. Consequently it is undeniable to say the Fields continue to be well cared for and a nice place for people to enjoy.

Our conservation roll is important in relation to the wealth of Grade II listed buildings in this official conservation area. In the last year or so there have been a considerable number of planning applications for the rehabilitation of houses in the Place, the Terrace and the Crescent. These are examined by the Highbury Fields Association before planning consent is granted. Unfortunately the planning inspectorate have insufficient staff to ensure that the work authorised is carried out exactly as agreed. The Association has an important role to maintain a careful vigil of what is, in fact, being done.

If we are unhappy about any aspect, the Planning Department, on request, will intervene. Although we do as much as we can to help in this respect, I believe it is important for any of us to report to any member of the Association's committee, any questionable reconstruction work and we will quickly do something about it. It is to be remembered that when a building is listed Grade II that no alterations to the historic style are permitted. For example, if defective bricks or windows are removed and repaired, they must be reinstated in the same style as the original. So do please help. Unhappily, one or two things have slipped by, which is a great pity.

I hope by this time next year we shall see great improvements in the lower end of the Crescent, including a much improved childrens' playground and in the top end, a newly painted clock tower, with a clock that works, and new landscaping in the clock tower/church area, with better lighting in Church Walk.

I am grateful for all the support I have had from the committee.

JOHN HARDIMAN.
Chairman.



Pressure needed!

Work should have started by now on the new traffic scheme mentioned in the last news letter. However, the costs have increased and the GLC have to apply to the Government for their agreement to go ahead. Subject to this it is hoped that the work will begin before Christmas. Keep the pressure up and write to Cllr. David Yorath at Islington Town Hall.

ROBIN MABEY.

Islington Alert !



Neighbourhood Office

One of Islington Council's new neighbourhood offices has been opened to cover our area. This is part of the policy to decentralize certain services to local areas. The new Neighbourhood Officer, Ms. Susan Lacy came to our July committee meeting and outlined the functions of the office. These fall into five main areas:- 1) Social Services, including children at risk, mentally and physically handicapped people, the homeless and residential care. 2) Council Houses. 3) Cash payment facilities e.g. rents, rates and parking fines. 4) Advice on welfare rights and benefits. 5) General information. The Environmental Health Officer and the Environmental Improvement Officer are located in the office. They deal with such things as shops, factories, playgrounds and street improvement schemes. It is proposed to use the Highbury Fields Association as one of the channels of communication with the residents of the area, possibly through representation on a Neighbourhood Forum.

Drayton Park. Tel 354 5999

MILES THOMPSON.

You may have heard that the Government has commissioned Ove Arup to carry out a study of the routes between the M1 and the Blackwall tunnel. We expect this report early in 1986.

Following a public meeting in the Town Hall in June 1985, a committee calling itself ISLINGTON ALERT has been formed to co-ordinate traffic groups and other interested local voluntary bodies in a campaign against the widening of present roads and the building of new trunk roads in the borough. ISLINGTON ALERT favours more public transport of all types-bus, rail and tube, and is against company cars and heavy lorries.

Bay Hodgson is a member of ISLINGTON ALERT and he will warn us when we must take to the streets!

Members of the Association who have been elected to the Committee.

John Hardiman

Chairman

Martin Jones 16

Vice

Maryse Jones 16

Treasurer

Jennifer Aykroyd

Membership
Secretary

Mia Beaumont

Bay Hodgson

Robin Mabey

Robin Nicholson

Carrick James

Alan Taylor

Diana Matthews

Delphine Jelbert

Richard O'Keefe

Rob Wood

Ginny Worsley

Jenny Blanchard

Pete Broadbent

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