

## HIDDEN NATURE IN STIRCHLEY WARD – HAZELWELL PARK

This trail in Hazelwell Park can be picked up at any of the five entrances – Hazelwell, Road, Hunts Road, Cartland Road, Newlands Road, or the footpath between Edwin and Newlands Roads. Have fun!

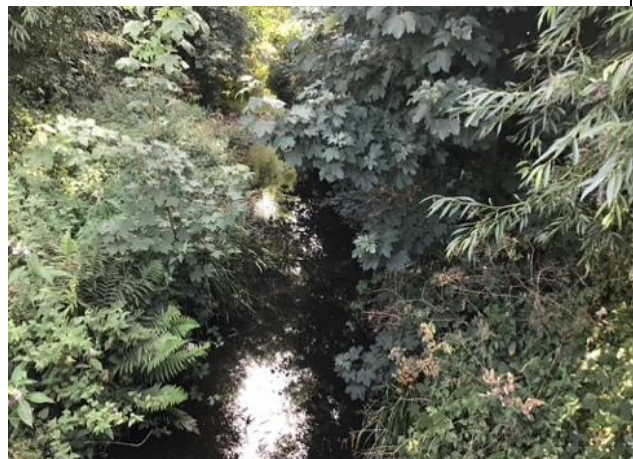


The name 'Hazelwell' may originate from there being a natural spring in the area. You probably won't see any water bubbling up through the ground, but you might find some boggy spots higher up the field.

As you wander around, decide whether things are animal, vegetable or mineral.

Where is nature hidden in the park?

Even the constituents that were put together to make this path would have originated in nature.



This photograph of the River Rea was taken from the bridge adjacent to Hunts Road

How fast is it flowing today?

Can you see or hear wildlife today?

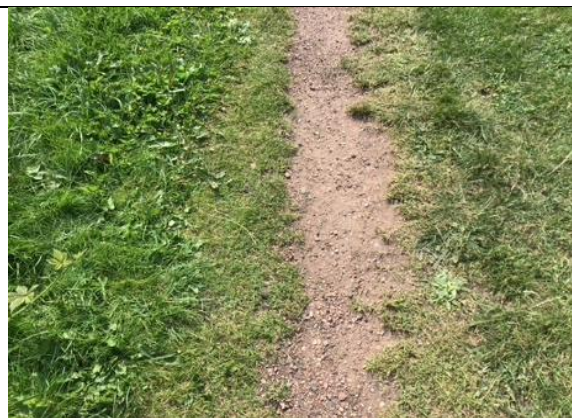
The name of the river – Rea – derives from Anglo-saxon *aet theare ea* which meant 'at the water'

If you have a 'smart phone' you may wish to download an app that helps you recognise different trees and gives you information about them.

Opposite the brick bridge, look through the gate to the allotments. Many years ago, there was a brickworks here where clay was used to make lots of bricks.

Why are bricks so good for us to build with?

Where can you find bricks or brick-dust in the park today?



Have a look at this narrow path that leads up the slope (adjacent to the allotments) you may still be able to see traces of brick-dust that was put down to make it some years ago.

Find this bench or one that looks similar.  
What does it feel like?  
Smooth or rough?  
Warm or cold?  
What does it sound like if you tap it?  
Is it metallic?  
Are metals animal, vegetable or mineral?



This oak tree is at the top of the park.

Did you know that Oak trees represent strength and survival because they can live for hundreds of years and the wood is strong.

Many, many, years ago, oak wood was used for making warships. Nowadays, it is still used for making furniture.

Look at and feel the shape of the leaves.  
In autumn, you might find some acorns.





To calculate the approximate age of a broadleaf tree such as this one, measure the girth then divide the number by 1.5, 2 (or 2.5 if it is living in open parkland).

Oak is good for making railway sleepers; after they leave the railway they can be recycled and put to good use somewhere else.

Holly bushes can often be found near oak trees.  
Sometimes holly wood is used to make walking sticks or in furniture.  
Have you ever used holly to decorate your house?  
Did you know that holly leaves aren't always prickly.



Can you find a beech tree?  
Beech is known as 'Queen of Trees' because it, also, can live for a long time. Its wood is very good for making certain chairs.

At the top of the slope & behind the row of large trees, you will see a path (strictly speaking it isn't part of the park). It may be what is left of a very old path and therefore, known as a 'green lane' In medieval times, perhaps a farmer drove (guided) his cattle along here on their way to market in Birmingham when it was still just a village, Stirchley didn't exist and there were only farms in this area.





A number of trees have been planted at the top of the field, they are still quite small – heritage for the future.

Where are the mountains in Stirchley? This is a trick question – find the signpost that is not far from the play area!



Did you know that these small mounds represent mountain-ranges.

Animal, vegetable or mineral?  
Some years ago, these large slabs of stone were brought here especially for children to play on.







This photo which was taken near to the bridge is of a rowan tree – sometimes they are called mountain ash as well. The leaves of these trees are eaten by certain caterpillars and many birds enjoy the berries.



If you walked along the shared path/cycle route, did you notice these little things at the edges? Yellow on the westside and blue on the east. They are solar powered and should light when it gets dark.



Alongside the shared path are lots of willow trees. Crack willow gets its name from the sound made when branches or twigs fall. It is often used on riverbanks to stabilise them. The slender flexible stems are sometimes used for making baskets. What colour are the leaves underneath? Are they smooth or hairy?



*All photos taken by Paula Aubrey and used with kind permission. Certain pieces of information have unashamedly been acquired by 'googling'. If any information is found to be incorrect, please, let us know so that we can make corrections.*