

# HIGHBURY THEATRE

2023/24 SEASON

PLAYERS  
100TH  
ANNIVERSARY



PLAYS BY HIGHBURY PLAYERS | FILMS BY HIGHBURY CINEMA | PRODUCTIONS BY VISITING COMPANIES

[highburytheatre.co.uk](http://highburytheatre.co.uk)  
0121 373 2761



## **FIVE TIMES BFAME AWARD WINNERS, 2022/23**

*Outstanding achievement - Jekyll and Hyde*

*Most outstanding female performance - Pip Olliver (old PM), Handbagged*

*Best direction - Paul Steventon-Marks for Jekyll and Hyde*

*Best supporting cast - Northanger Abbey*

*Technical achievement - Jekyll and Hyde*



## WELCOME

Welcome to Highbury Theatre's guide to our 2023/24 season, made up from nine plays from the Highbury Players, ten film screenings from Highbury Cinema and a range of visiting company productions.

Highbury Theatre exists solely for your enjoyment and we would love you to join us here at your local theatre for some award-winning entertainment!

### A WORD FROM ROB PHILLIPS

#### Highbury Players Chairman

*Last season was our second after the disruption of the pandemic and we were delighted to see it go from strength to strength. Productions received excellent reviews and the feedback we got from our growing audiences showed they enjoyed them enormously.*

*We are absolutely thrilled to present our new season to you and have already started rehearsals for our opening production.*

*We are always looking for new members to help in various areas, including Box Office and Front of House plus the technical areas such as lighting and sound, as well as prospective actors. So if you would like to lend a hand and help your local theatre go from strength to strength, do get in touch.*

*Finally, 2024 is Highbury Players' centenary and so to mark this very special milestone we'll be arranging an open day, celebrating 100 years, not out! Look out for more detail...*

*We hope you enjoy all that we have to offer over the forthcoming months.*

## FOLLOW US



@highburytheatre



/HighburyTheatre



highburyplayers@blogspot.com



@highburytheatrecentre @highburyplayers #thehighburyplayers #highburycinema

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# WHAT'S ON?

## THE 2023/24 SEASON AT A GLANCE

6 - 7 Sept	Visiting	<b>Unity Productions</b> <b>The Long Road (studio)</b>		
12 - 23 Sept	Play	<b>Relatively Speaking</b>	<b>COMEDY</b>	7.30pm
Sun 17 Sept	Film	<b>The Banshees of Inisherin</b>	<b>15</b>	7pm
Sat 30 Sept	Visiting	<b>The Flying Ducks Theatre Company</b> <b>Unusual Shorts! The comedies of David Tristram</b>		
17 - 28 Oct	Play	<b>Taking Sides</b>	<b>DRAMA</b>	7.30pm
Sun 22 Oct	Film	<b>Muriel's Wedding</b>	<b>15</b>	7pm
3 - 4 Nov	Visiting	<b>Great Barr Musical Theatre Cooperative</b> <b>Jack and the Beanstalk</b>		
Tues 7 Nov	Visiting	<b>Wyld Green Flower Club</b> <b>Flower arranging demonstration</b>		
Sat 18 Nov	Film	<b>All Quiet on the Western Front</b>	<b>PG</b>	7pm
28 Nov - 9 Dec	Play	<b>The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate</b> <b>Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society</b>	<b>COMEDY</b>	7.30pm
Sun 10 Dec	Social	<b>Carol service</b> <b>at Emmanuel Church</b>		7.30pm
12 - 16 Dec	Visiting	<b>From the Top Theatre Company</b> <b>Dick Whittington</b>		
Sun 17 Dec	Visiting	<b>Street Katz</b> <b>Show to be announced</b>		
Wed 27 Dec	Film	<b>Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical</b>	<b>PG</b>	2.30pm
Sat 6 Jan	Film	<b>Film to be announced</b>		7pm
23 Jan - 3 Feb	Play	<b>Abigail's Party</b>	<b>COMEDY</b>	7.30pm

Highbury Players' plays are performed Tuesday to Saturday over two weeks.  
Studio plays are performed Monday to Saturday.



12 - 17 Feb	Play	<b>Beginning (studio)</b>	DRAMA	7.30pm
18 Feb	Film	<b>Film to be announced</b>		7pm
5 - 16 Mar	Play	<b>Blue Remembered Hills</b>	DRAMA	7.30pm
Sun 10 Mar	Film	<b>Film to be announced</b>		7pm
23 - 24 Mar	Visiting	<b>BFAME Festival</b>		
Sat 13 Apr	Film	<b>Film to be announced</b>		7pm
23 Apr - 4 May	Play	<b>A Bunch of Amateurs</b>	COMEDY	7.30pm
7 - 11 May	Visiting	<b>From the Top Theatre Company Calendar Girls - The Musical</b>		
13 - 18 May	Play	<b>How to Date a Feminist (studio)</b>	COMEDY	7.30pm
Tues 14 May	Visiting	<b>Wylde Green Flower Club Flower arranging demonstration</b>		
19 May	Film	<b>Film to be announced</b>		7pm
11 - 22 June	Play	<b>Travels with my Aunt</b>	COMEDY	7.30pm
Sun 16 June	Film	<b>Film to be announced</b>		7pm
Mon 24 June	Social	<b>2024/25 season launch</b>		7.30pm
28 - 29 June	Visiting	<b>Street Katz Show to be announced</b>		
3 - 6 July	Visiting	<b>Script Youth Musical Theatre Company We Will Rock You</b>		

For full details of visiting productions and to purchase tickets, please visit their company websites which can be found on page 18. Highbury Theatre is not responsible for visiting productions or their ticket sales.

# GET INVOLVED

## OUR ACTIVITIES



### BE A PART OF IT

Highbury is run by a team of friendly and dedicated volunteers. There is much for you to get involved in whatever your interest: acting, directing, wardrobe, set building, props, lighting, sound, front of house, box office, bar, stage management, back stage crew and marketing... the list goes on!

We're always encouraging of new members and would be delighted to see you. If you'd like to meet members of our teams, come along to a coffee morning on Wednesdays between 10am and 12 noon. Or call into one of our regular Monday evening work parties between 7.30pm and 9pm (except on weeks when Players' productions are running). You can also email [volunteering@highburytheatre.co.uk](mailto:volunteering@highburytheatre.co.uk).

You will be made very welcome and get the chance to find out what we are all about.

### JOIN OUR PLAYERS' PRODUCTIONS

If you're interested in any involvement in a forthcoming Highbury Players' production, not just acting, we suggest you come to the production launch, which takes place in the theatre's upper foyer about three months before the play starts. Details can be found at [highburytheatre.co.uk](http://highburytheatre.co.uk) where the production launches and subsequent auditions are listed within the events.

All the main stage Highbury Players' productions run for a full 10 performances, spread over two weeks running Tuesday to Saturday evenings. The studio productions run for 6 performances, from Monday to Saturday evenings.



## HIGHBURY ACADEMY

Highbury Academy meets from time to time to rehearse and perform in the studio theatre. If you are interested in participating, have a new script to offer us or want more information, please email Rob Phillips at [players-chairman@highburytheatre.co.uk](mailto:players-chairman@highburytheatre.co.uk).

## SIGN UP TO OUR NEWSLETTER

To keep up-to-date with what's going on at Highbury, sign up to our email newsletter. You can do this via the news section at [highburytheatre.co.uk](http://highburytheatre.co.uk) or email [boxoffice@highburytheatre.co.uk](mailto:boxoffice@highburytheatre.co.uk).

## BAR AND COFFEE BAR

Relax with a drink in our well-appointed bar or coffee bar before the show. Enjoy tea, coffee, alcoholic beverages, snacks and ice-cream, and pre-order drinks for the interval.

## ART EXHIBITIONS

We organise exhibitions in our front foyer and coffee bar. As well as paintings we can exhibit photos, textiles, framed sculptures and calligraphy. The artist usually holds a Sunday viewing and invites family and friends. We are always on the lookout for new artists. For further information please email [exhibitions@highburytheatre.co.uk](mailto:exhibitions@highburytheatre.co.uk).

## SOCIAL EVENTS

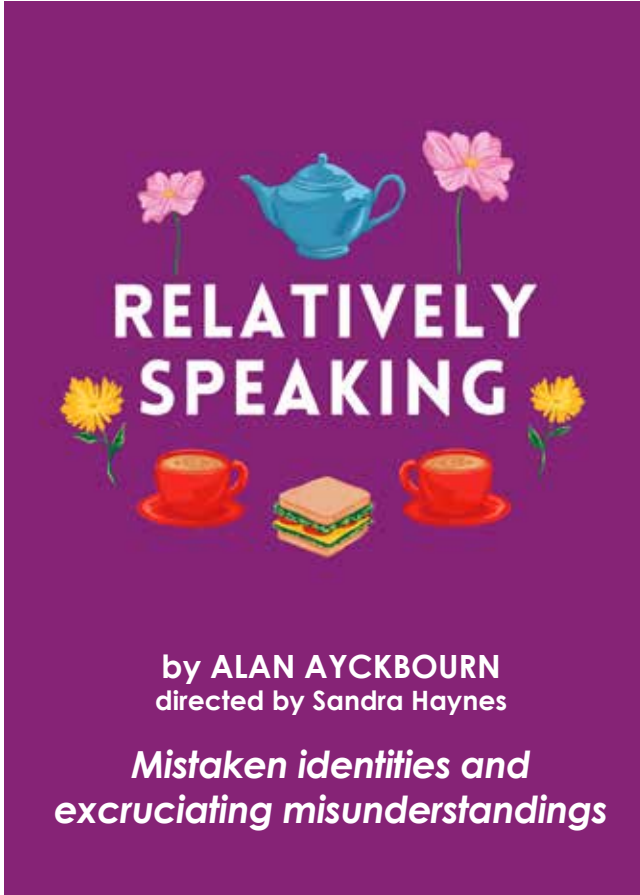
Information about occasional social activities is sent out in our regular email newsletters, and publicised on our website and via our social media accounts.

# HIGHBURY PLAYERS

PRESENT

COMEDY

12 - 23 Sept 2023, 7.30pm



Ginny decides to take off alone one Sunday, ostensibly to see her parents in the country. In reality, she is going to surprise her married boss, Philip, and end their affair. When Greg, Ginny's partner, impulsively follows Ginny, the way is open to a dizzying series of misunderstandings.

*An amateur production by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd*

Highbury Players' plays are performed Tuesday to Saturday over two weeks.

Studio plays are performed Monday to Saturday.





**DRAMA**  
\*STRONG LANGUAGE\*

**17 - 28 Oct 2023, 7.30pm**

# TAKING SIDES



by **RONALD HARWOOD**  
directed by Alison Cahill

*Conductor or collaborator?  
Who decides?*

Wilhelm Furtwängler was established as a great conductor when the war broke out. He continued conducting in Germany when many musicians left the country. After the war he was accused of collaboration with the Nazis. Here, he is brutally interrogated.

*An amateur production by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd*

# HIGHBURY PLAYERS

PRESENT

COMEDY

28 Nov - 9 Dec 2023, 7.30pm



THE FARNDALE AVENUE  
HOUSING ESTATE  
TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD  
DRAMATIC SOCIETY  
CHRISTMAS CAROL

by DAVID MCGILLIVRAY  
and WALTER ZERLIN Jr  
directed by Rob Phillips

*Bring tissues again for  
more tears of laughter*

In a festive mood, the ladies of the Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society present their stage version of A Christmas Carol. Playing ghosts, Scrooge, Bob Cratchit, Tiny Tim and some less familiar characters, their enthusiasm cannot disguise the sheer awfulness of the production.

*An amateur production by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd*

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COMEDY

23 Jan - 3 Feb 2024, 7.30pm



# Abigail's Party

by MIKE LEIGH  
directed by Ian Appleby

*Frantic comedy  
ends in tragedy*

Beverly prepares for the arrival of her guests. She and husband Laurence will play host to neighbours Angela, Tony and Sue. The alcohol flows and the 'nibbles' are handed around in Mike Leigh's ruthless, achingly funny examination of 1970s British life.

*An amateur production by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd*

# HIGHBURY PLAYERS

PRESENT

**DRAMA**  
\*STRONG LANGUAGE\*

**STUDIO**

**12 - 17 Feb 2024, 7.30pm, Studio**



beginning

by **DAVID ELDRIDGE**  
directed by Maura Judges

***Love is in the air***

It is past midnight and Danny is the last straggler at Laura's party. The flat's in a mess. And so are they. One more drink? We look at the first fragile moments of risking your heart and taking a chance.

*An amateur production by arrangement with Nick Hern Books*

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DRAMA

5 - 16 Mar 2024, 7.30pm



Easy going Willie tags along as burly Peter bullies Raymond and is challenged by fair minded John. Plain Audrey is overshadowed by Angela's prettiness and wrecks her anger on the boys as children mirror the cruelty of adult life.

*An amateur production by arrangement with Concord Theatricals*

# HIGHBURY PLAYERS

PRESENT

COMEDY

23 Apr - 4 May 2024, 7.30pm

**a bunch of  
AMATEURS**

by **IAN HISLOP** and **NICK NEWMAN**  
directed by **Laura McLaurie**

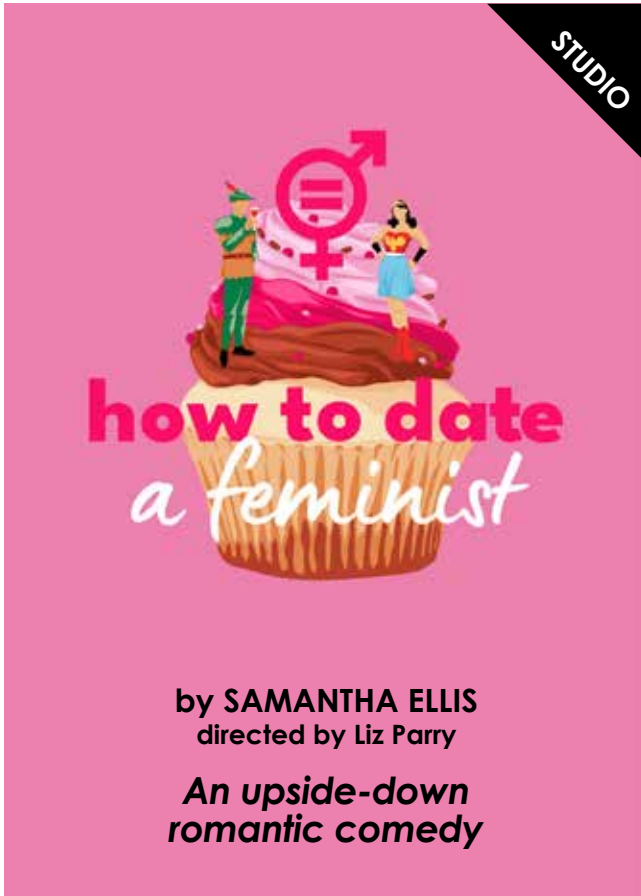
***Amateur theatre meets  
Hollywood***

Fading Hollywood action hero Jefferson Steele arrives in England to play King Lear in Stratford – only to find that this is not Stratford upon Avon, but a sleepy Suffolk village. So, instead of joining the RSC, he finds he has joined a bunch of amateurs.

*An amateur production by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd*



**13 - 18 May 2024, 7.30pm, Studio**



**COMEDY**  
**\*STRONG LANGUAGE\***

A satirical look at the Hollywood rom-com featuring two proposals, two weddings, an elopement and cast of lively characters. Kate talks feminism, likes her men tall, dark and smouldering Heathcliff. She has a fatal attraction to bad men. Then she meets Steve. Steve is a feminist...

*An amateur production by arrangement with Nick Hern Books*

# HIGHBURY PLAYERS

PRESENT

COMEDY

11 - 22 June 2024, 7.30pm



written by **GRAHAM GREENE**  
adapted by **GILES HAVERGAL**  
directed by Paul Steventon Marks

*An unforgettable journey*

In this Olivier award winning play we follow retired bank manager Henry Pulling and his seventy year old aunt who has insisted that he accompany her on her travels. En route Henry encounters a hippy, a war criminal, fortune tellers, smugglers and the CIA.

*An amateur production by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd*

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Sunday 17 Sept 2023, 7pm  
**The Banshees of Inisherin (2022)**

Set on a remote fictional island off the west coast of Ireland. The film stars Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson as two lifelong friends who find themselves at an impasse when one abruptly ends their relationship, with alarming consequences for both of them.



Sunday 22 Oct 2023, 7pm  
**Muriel's Wedding (1994)**

This 1994 Australian comedy-drama film, starring Toni Collette, focuses on the socially awkward Muriel whose ambition is to have a glamorous wedding and improve her personal life by moving from her dead-end hometown, the fictional Porpoise Spit, to Sydney.



Saturday 18 Nov 2023, 7pm  
**All Quiet on the Western Front (1930)**

Follow a young German soldier and his comrades, experiencing first-hand the earth shattering events of WWI being played out around them. The first all-talking non-musical film to win the Oscar for Best Picture.



Wednesday 27 Dec 2023, 2.30pm  
**Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical (2022)**

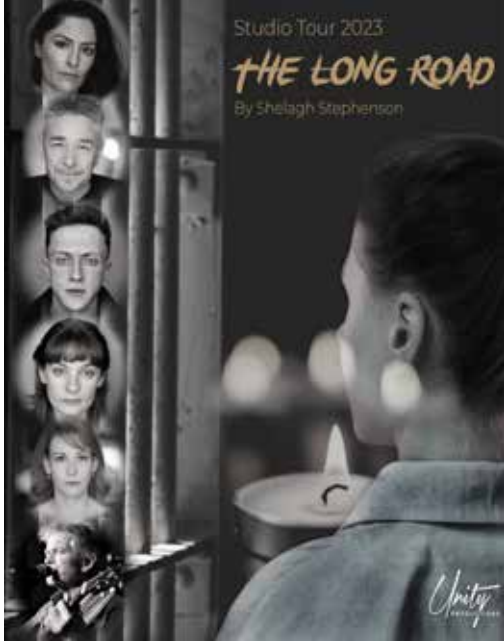
This is the tale of an extraordinary girl who, armed with a sharp mind and a vivid imagination, dares to take a stand to change her story with miraculous results.



The dates for the rest of the season's films are given on pages 3 and 4. Look out for announcements on our website, social media accounts and in our email newsletters.

# FRIENDS OF HIGHBURY

PRESENT



## THE LONG ROAD

6-7 September 2023, 7.30pm  
in the Studio

When eighteen-year-old Danny is fatally stabbed in a random attack his family struggles to find meaning and forgiveness. His mother's determination to understand the atrocity brings her face to face with his killer and forces the family to confront the bitter senselessness of their loss.

Sadly, knife crime in 2023 is a reality, particularly in the West Midlands. As well as aiming to deliver a first-rate piece of theatre, the cast and production team would like to raise money to be able to donate to anti knife crime charities.

## UNUSUAL SHORTS!

30 September 2023, 7.30pm  
in the main auditorium

To commemorate the historic milestone of 10,000 worldwide performances, successful comedy playwright David Tristram is going back to his roots with a tour of local small theatres and village halls. Gain hilarious insights into the mind of a comedy writer and enjoy live extracts of David's best-loved plays performed by Alan Birch and Sarah Raymond, two members of the original Flying Ducks Theatre Company.



# VISITING COMPANIES

## OUR PARTNERSHIPS

We're proud of the partnerships we've fostered with local organisations and visiting companies from around the local area. Here's how you can find out more about them and their visits to us, plus purchase tickets from their individual websites. (Highbury Theatre is not responsible for visiting productions.)

### **BFAME**

The Birmingham and District Theatre Guild was formed some 90 years ago and now organise the popular Birmingham Festival of Acting, Music and Entertainment (BFAME), an annual festival, again being hosted by Highbury.

[bdtg.magix.net/bfame.htm](http://bdtg.magix.net/bfame.htm)

### **FROM THE TOP THEATRE COMPANY**

A fun and friendly community group based in Shenstone that perform two shows a year at Highbury.

[fromthetoptheatre.org.uk](http://fromthetoptheatre.org.uk)

### **GREAT BARR MUSICAL THEATRE CO-OPERATIVE**

GBMTC have been performing musicals, concerts and pantos for over 30 years.

[gbmtc25.wixsite.com/gbmtc](http://gbmtc25.wixsite.com/gbmtc)

### **SCRIPT YOUTH MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY**

A local amateur theatre company based in North Birmingham for young people aged 9-19.

[script-ymtc.org.uk](http://script-ymtc.org.uk)

### **STREET KATZ**

Some 7 years ago Jane Mason started a group which has since developed into a community interest company that gives young adults with special needs a chance to tread the boards. The group meets at Highbury each week in term time to work on their projects.

[streetkatztheatreandfilm.co.uk](http://streetkatztheatreandfilm.co.uk)

### **WYLDE GREEN FLOWER CLUB**

Wylde Green Flower Club are a small group who meet at the Emscote Drive community centre on the first Tuesday of the month. Highbury has been a long-time host to their Winter and Spring flower demonstrations.

# TICKETS AND MEMBERSHIP

BE A PART OF IT

## BOOK ONLINE

Simply visit [highburytheatre.co.uk](http://highburytheatre.co.uk) and click 'Buy Tickets' or use this QR code:

If you have any questions you can also contact us by email at [boxoffice@highburytheatre.co.uk](mailto:boxoffice@highburytheatre.co.uk) or by phoning **0121 373 2761** where you can leave a message and we will get back to you.



## BOX OFFICE

Monday 7.30pm - 9pm

Wednesday 10am - 12 noon

Play nights 7.30pm - 9pm

(Ticket collections or tickets for that evening from 6.45pm)

## TICKET PRICES

Our new ticket prices are as below.

- Standard Highbury Players' play ticket - £12
- Concession Highbury Players' play ticket - £11 (*under 16, student, unwaged, over 60*)
- Highbury Cinema film ticket - £5

Please note that Highbury Theatre does not sell tickets for visiting company events. If you wish to find out more about visiting company events, please contact the companies directly.

## MEMBERSHIP

Highbury Theatre is a membership organisation. If you are not already a member, the season membership fee (which is £2 for centre / audience membership) will typically be paid when buying your first ticket. For subsequent purchases, you will need your membership number to buy tickets online at the members' rates. If you book more than 15 tickets at a time, apply to the Box Office to take out group membership. For more details please email [boxoffice@highburytheatre.co.uk](mailto:boxoffice@highburytheatre.co.uk).

## BE A PART OF Highbury PLAYERS

We'd be delighted if you'd like to become a member of the Highbury Players. Annual membership is £15 or £6 for concessions. To get involved, email us at [players-membership@highburytheatre.co.uk](mailto:players-membership@highburytheatre.co.uk) or ask for more details at the box office.

# PLAN YOUR VISIT

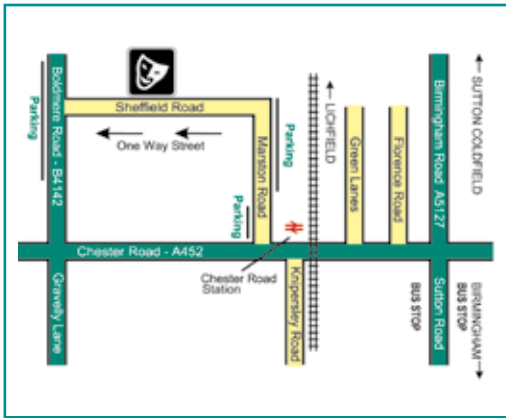
## A WARM WELCOME AWAITS



### BEAT THE PRICE RISE AND SAVE WITH Highbury Discount Vouchers

Only 200 books of vouchers will be on sale to members, for a limited period from August, costing £70 or £63 for concessions. Each book will have 7 vouchers (one for each play in the main auditorium) which can then be exchanged only at the Box Office for a ticket for the play. See every show and save £14. Buy your vouchers early and book your tickets in advance to ensure a seat on your preferred night.

### FIND US



Sheffield Road, Sutton Coldfield, B73 5HD

Highbury Theatre is located close to the Chester Road end of Boldmere Road in Sutton Coldfield.

We are a five minute walk from Chester Road train station on the cross-city line running between Lichfield and Bromsgrove/Redditch.

You can find free on-street parking along Marston Road, where indicated.

Please note that Sheffield Road is one way.

### ACCESSIBILITY AND SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

We are committed to making Highbury Theatre Centre as inclusive and accessible as possible. Please do get in touch with us if you have any questions or particular requirements for your visit.

The theatre has ramp access to the front door, adapted toilets, a lift, a chairlift, auditorium handrails, and a hearing loop induction system. We have wheelchair positions on the front row that can be booked in advance.

We are also able to offer, on request, 'distanced' seating arrangements for our own productions (excluding those in the studio) on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights. If you wish to maintain a space around your party and if there are sufficient seats available, we'll reserve your seats and take immediately adjacent seats off sale. To book these in either the main auditorium or one of the boxes, please email your request to [boxoffice@highburytheatre.co.uk](mailto:boxoffice@highburytheatre.co.uk).

# OUR HISTORY

## HIGHBURY'S HERITAGE



### WHAT WE DO

At Highbury, we believe that a good theatre never stands still. Which is why each year we and our dedicated team of volunteers work towards our mission to **raise, develop** and **redefine** the standards of community theatre. Here, you can learn about our beginnings and see how we've been engaging the community since 1924.

### THE BEGINNING | 1924

During our 2023/2024 season we will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the start of The Highbury Players. Our beginnings were not in the excellent space you find us now but as a play reading group. The first meeting was at 16 Kings Road, Erdington on 27 April 1924. The first play read was **The Storm** with subsequent readings including **Lady Windermere's Fan** and **The Importance of Being Earnest**.

### THE EARLY YEARS | 1925 to 1942

In 1925 we began performing at The Folkhouse, Erdington. The first production on 5 March 1925 was **In Search of a Wife** directed by B.C. (Bertie) English. The group adopted the name Highbury Players after the English family home, and in 1928 John English, Bertie's teenage son, took over as director. From 1932 the Highbury Players began performing at Church House and other venues. In 1937 a plot of land hosting a wooden mission hut came up for sale in Sheffield Road, Boldmere. The Players bought the plot and the hut for just over £200.



All the building work was done by the Players themselves. The wooden hut was cut into two sections, raising the rear section six feet to help form the auditorium. Behind this, the stage, and below, the storage cellars were built and excavated almost exactly as you see them today. When war broke out in 1939, the remaining 80,000 bricks were laid by two actresses. The building was complete in the spring of 1942. Highbury Little Theatre opened on 22 May 1942 with a production of George Bernard Shaw's **Arms and the Man**.



## RECENT HISTORY

Since opening, Highbury has continued to grow and improve. We are particularly grateful for some very generous donations, as well as grants from charities and other funding bodies, which have supported our development.

Our small studio space can be used for photography sessions and will also be hosting several productions this season. We have a workshop area that allows us to build sets for the stage, as well as the purpose-built Harlequin Suite at the rear of the site which provides rehearsal and storage space. We re-commenced regular showings of films in 2014 and Highbury Cinema now presents a film a month, providing a varied programme for audiences.

## THE LITTLE THEATRE GUILD (LTG)

Highbury is a founder member of the LTG, a group (founded in 1946) of over 120 members that grew from the idea that theatre groups like ours, who own or operate their own building, benefit from regular meetings. The Guild has an annual programme which includes regular regional and national conferences. In March 2019 Highbury hosted the national conference and AGM.



# HIGHBURY THEATRE

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