



SHIRLEY HERITAGE PROJECT NEWSLETTER

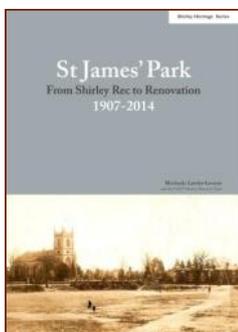


APRIL 2015
ISSUE 10

St. James' Park—From Shirley Rec to Renovation

FoSJP Book Launched, Sunday 22nd March

It's been five years in the making, but worth the wait—the FoSJP book "St. James' Park—From Shirley Rec to Renovation, 1907-2014" is now published!



The book is a colour publication full of photographs, old postcards, and fascinating information about St. James' Park and the local area.

It contains a potted history of the Park, the story of those Edwardians who strived to provide a Recreation Ground for Shirley, a 1907 photo of the

original Recreation Ground opening, the story behind how FoSJP was started, the Park's 2010-2011 renovation, and memories and photos of the Park from the 1920s to the present day.

The book was launched on Sunday 22nd March at a well-attended celebration at Shirley Parish Hall. Lead collaborative author **Michaela Lawler-Levene** gave a presentation about the book, and following afternoon tea, key contributors to the book kindly signed copies for the audience.

A formal reception will be held in April at Southampton Civic Centre to present complementary copies of the book to the City of Southampton.

FoSJP History Research Group

For those interested in researching local history, the [FoSJP History Research Group](#) meets regularly in the ParkLife Community Room at St. James' Park—our next meetings are **2.00pm—4.00pm** on these dates:

- ◆ **Saturday 9th May**
- ◆ **Saturday 13th June**
- ◆ **Saturday 11th July**

There will be a book stall at both the St. James' Park Spring events on Easter Monday, 6th April, and on the Spring Public Holiday, Monday 4th May. A limited number of books are also being sold at Shirley Parish Office.

Profits from this book will go to FoSJP to help towards more books and community projects.



A first look at the Book!



An event for all generations!

If you can't make it to Shirley Parish Office, copies of the book can be purchased online for **£19.99 + p&p** from [Lulu Press](#)—the book will arrive direct to your door by mail.

If you'd like to view the book first, copies are due to reach the local libraries in April.

Shirley Timeline—History Unveiled

Monday 4th May, 1.00pm—4.00pm

On Monday 4th May (Public Holiday) at 2.00pm, the Shirley Timeline will be unveiled in St. James' Park by The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Southampton, Councillor Sue Blatchford.

To coincide with the unveiling of the timeline, FoSJP will be holding a celebration afternoon from 1.00pm—4.00pm in the Park, with activities for all including musical entertainment from local band **The Guvna's**, children's activities, and history information. You're invited to join us at the celebrations—bring a chair and sit back and enjoy an afternoon of entertainment in the Park. *Keep your eyes on the FoSJP website and Park noticeboards for details.*



The Guvna's at St. James' Park

The Shirley Timeline is an interpretation panel to be displayed on the Park building. This depicts how the land that is now the Park has changed over time, dating from 700,000 BC to the present time, including significant events from both Shirley's local history and wider British and World History.

On the timeline are silhouettes of people dressed according to the period—some of which are actual people from Shirley, who have modelled in costume, while others are designed by artist Anna Vickers.



FoSJP is grateful to all those members who have shared their photos, postcards and memories, many of which have been used in this timeline. Particular thanks go to Peter Wardall for sharing his private postcard collection.

Thanks also go to the expert staff of local archives and libraries who have helped us source relevant images and shared their images with us. Karen Wardley, Head of Collections at Southampton City Council, has also provided valuable information, sourced images for the earlier time periods and checked the historical information. The remaining content material has been provided by Michaela A. Lawler-Levene and the History Team. Last, but not least, thanks go to artist and graphical designer Anna Vickers who has turned our information into a creative visual masterpiece!

We hope that this visual information will be of use to local children especially should they decide to study history! It will also be of use to the rest of us who thought we knew this information, but perhaps need a gentle reminder every now and then...

Sea City Museum—WW1 Exhibition

by Vicki Stacey



The Belgian War Refugees Fund was set up in Southampton in September 1914—temporary accommodation was offered and volunteers met them at the port when they arrived.

I wonder if any were housed in Shirley?

From 1914, Southampton Common was transformed into a camp of tents and wooden huts for troops preparing to embark to France and beyond. The exhibition included pictures of US troops camped on the Common (the USA joined the war in April 1917).

In 1917, under the Cultivation of Lands Order, Southampton Corporation requisitioned areas of parkland in Shirley and Portswood for use as allotments.

Children were given a day off school to gather blackberries to make into jam (in relation to the voluntary scheme of rationing which became official in 1918).

The exhibition included a photograph of German Prisoners of War being marched around Four Posts Hill en route from the Docks

to the former Roller Skating Rink on Shirley Road, which was used as a holding centre until they could be sent elsewhere.

Vicki Stacey



German Prisoners arriving at Southampton 1916/17

Southampton Family History Club and World War I

by Madge Heath

In February four of the FoSJP History Research Group went to listen to a talk entitled “Women at War 1914-1918”.

The Family History Club is an informal group for those researching their family history, and meets in the Central Library local studies area on the first Wednesday of each month, 3.00pm-5.00pm.

Among the source material used for the talk were copies of the Southampton Pictorial Newspaper, available on microfilm to view at the Library, and the Southampton Volume of The National Roll of the Great War.

The talk reminded us of the exhibition on WW1 which was on last year at the Sea City Museum, where we'd seen information about two sisters from Northlands Road who met the ambulance ships returning from France to give comforts to the soldiers.

The National Roll of the Great War was a commercial venture—entries were compiled by subscription, the information being provided by the family or the people themselves. The entries are not just for those serving in the forces but include people engaged in various types of war work.

We heard about people such as Miss R Ball, Special War Worker of 22 Albany Road, Freemantle, Southampton.

"During the war this lady rendered valuable services. She was first employed at the Government Roller Mills on work of national importance..."

The Library has a printed copy of Volume IV which covers Southampton. Digital copies of all the volumes are available on the main commercial family history websites. Remember that the book is by no means comprehensive as families had to pay for their entries.

Looking through the list for entries with an address in Shirley the first one for a woman is:

BAILEY, E.M. (Miss), Staff Nurse Q.A.I.M.N.S.

She volunteered in August 1914, and was first engaged on important duties at Lewisham until 1917. She was then sent to France and again carried out splendid work until February 1919, when she went to Germany. She was mentioned in dispatches in March 1917 for her valuable services and in May 1919 was demobilised on her return from Germany, and holds the General Service and Victory Medals.

24 Howard Road, Shirley, Southampton.

Other women from Shirley mentioned in the talk were:

Mrs L Young, 1st Nursing Officer, V.A.D. (St.John) who served at the Clifton House War Hospital;

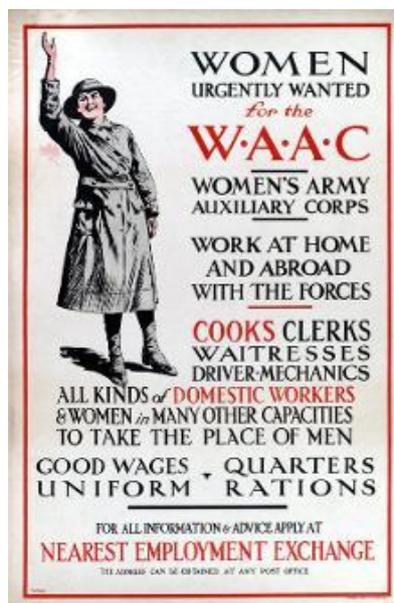
N Butt who served as a grocer's assistant, thus releasing a man for the Army;

Miss Hayball who also worked at the Roller Mills, she was a greaser and electric crane driver;

C Cobbett who was employed at the Schultze Gunpowder Company's works at Redbridge.

After the talk we took the opportunity to look at the microfilm of the Southampton Pictorial to locate the original of an article about Shirley School that we'd seen in the school archives. We found that the article was one of a series that the paper ran. We also got rather distracted by looking at the illustrated advertisements which give a good idea of the clothing being sold at the time.

Madge Heath



Examples of the contributions of women to war effort

Weald & Downland Open Air Museum



WEALD & DOWNLAND
OPEN AIR MUSEUM

by Liz Wilkins

I had the opportunity last year to attend a course at the [Weald & Downland Open Air Museum](http://www.wealddown.co.uk) entitled "Energy Conservation in Traditional Buildings".

For any of you who aren't familiar with this wonderful place, I suggest that we arrange a FoSJP History Research Group outing and pay this place a well-earned visit. From a personal point of view this is a very special place from my childhood—I recall it being my first ever school trip and now some forty years later I try to visit regularly to complete one of their courses or take my children to one of their "Wonderful Wednesdays" in the school holidays.



However, this is certainly not a place just suited to children—they hold the most informative range of professional and home owner courses, including single day courses, a few grouped days and an MSc course, all aimed at promoting the repair and restoration of buildings as opposed to what has become the common norm of 'modernization'.

The museum itself is set in 45 acres of the beautiful [South Downs National Park](http://www.southdownsnp.gov.uk) and the buildings that they have carefully collected and reconstructed on this site range from medieval to Victorian times...

There is so much more to this place than I have described here—you can find out more at www.wealddown.co.uk or why not pay a visit to this wonderful place in Sussex?

At some point I will interpret what I learn through this extracurricular study, from my work, and from others local to this area, and will present a talk entitled "Love Your Home".

Liz Wilkins

◀ Some of the museum's many reconstructed traditional buildings

A Letter from Scotland

by Madge Heath

In July 2014 *The People's Friend* magazine published a letter from a Mrs C.E.P from Inverness in which she talked about her memories of D-Day. Her mother was the midwife at St.James's Road Nursing Home in Shirley.

She wrote:

"One day, troops walked along our road heading for the docks. When some saw the plaque on the gate, Miss Ivy Trail S.C.M, they burst into song with: 'there's a long, long trail a-winding in the house of my dreams'. My mother lifted me on to the windowsill to wave them goodbye."

I got in touch with the lady (whom I now know is Mrs Cynthia Preece) via the magazine and she wrote to me with further memories. Their house, the Nursing Home, was 'Strathclyde' No 46 St.James Road. It had been previously owned by the Misses Bidwell.

Mrs Preece also remembered the Misses Bidwell's next house No 146 St.James Road, on the corner with

Belle Moor Road. It was a large Victorian dwelling with a large back garden which was used for Shirley Parish Church Fêtes in the summer in the 1950s.

Mrs Preece also remembers her infant school days:

"We started at Western Infants School... We were forbidden to go into the bombed buildings in Malmesbury Road. However, being a group of girls we could not resist picking some lovely old fashioned red roses which climbed in those gardens, for our mothers, and received a good telling off for our pains when we reached home. The flowers were put in water nevertheless."

Mrs Preece has written up her mother's history into a book "*The Family and Early Life of an Edwardian Chauffeur's Daughter*"—[available on Amazon](http://www.amazon.co.uk)—the daughter being Ivy Trail who was the midwife who ran the Nursing Home in St.James' Road.

Madge Heath

