



SHIRLEY HERITAGE PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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FoSJP
Friends of St. James' Park

Shirley Infant and Junior School Centenary

Celebration Evening, Wednesday 13th June 2012

The FoSJP History Research Group spent a busy Spring 2012 visiting the archives of the Shirley Infant and Junior Schools and the Southampton City Archives—indexing, photographing and researching the history of the schools.

The records pre-date the current school to a Victorian Church School, built in the 1860s on the same site. Included in the school archives were handwritten memories collected by pupils in 1987, 25 years ago, from elderly past pupils. With interviewees born in the late 1800s, some attended the Victorian School and remembered both the old school and moving into the new school of 1913. What a wonderful find! FoSJP scanned these old written records and made a hard copy of them available to view at the exhibition. It brought home the importance of recording memories for future generations and preserving information that is available. Memories recorded of older generations today will tell future generations what it was like at the school in the 1920s, 1930s depression years, World War-II 1939-1945 and the 1950s with Coronation years.

The information discovered by FoSJP and past pupil memories sent into the school were presented as a lecture and exhibition at an evening celebration at the Junior School on Wednesday 13th June 2012. This was the 100th year anniversary of the laying of the school foundation stone, which as you can see from this photograph taken by Liz Webb in June 2012, was in some need of renovation to preserve the information it contains.



School Foundation Stone

Gwendoline Kitchener (aunt of FoSJP member Raymond Hancock) born 1915, and 97 years old, was the oldest past pupil to share memories of the school. A film depicting her memories of both St. James' Park and the school of the early 1920s was produced via the Shirley Heritage Oral History Project and featured during the evening. We will be launching this film via the FoSJP website very soon.



Gwendoline in the 1940s and in 2010

Approximately 200 people including 150 guests plus staff, governors, and PTA helpers were present at the evening which included school tours, Infant and Junior choir performances, tea, homemade cakes (6 supplied by FoSJP members), and the exhibition and talk. It was a most delightful evening—after weeks of rain the sun shone as past pupils, now grown up, re-visited their old school, recognising faces from the past and viewing all things new, including the Junior School Hall and the fabulous displays prepared around the school by staff and pupils.

See next page for more about the Exhibition...

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Shirley Infant and Junior School Centenary

Exhibition, Saturday 16th June 2012

The exhibition was subsequently moved to the Infant School for general public viewing at the school's joint Summer Fair on Saturday 16th June, with audio visual presentations.

The schools, with support from FoSJP, have been collecting past pupil memories some of which have been added to the Junior School website. School Governor and FoSJP Member **Vicki Stacey** has also applied on behalf of both schools for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to help digitise some of the fabulous older school records and to collect World War-II school memories. Vicki will find out later in the Autumn if the school has been successful—so Good Luck to her and all the Centenary Team!

You can contact the schools via email at:

centenary@shirley-jun.southampton.sch.uk

for further information and to share your own memories or photos related to attending the schools.

January 2013 Event

There is a possibility of the schools hosting a similar event in January 2013 to mark the anniversary of when the first of the children were moved into the new 1913 building—do check the schools' websites for more information:

www.shirleyinfantschool.org.uk

www.shirleyjuniorschool.org.uk

Thanks to the many FoSJP volunteers who helped with the School Centenary Celebration Exhibitions—Ken Conway, Raymond Hancock, Madge Heath, Peter Janaway, Margaret Osmond, Don Smith, Mary Smith, Peter Wardall, Jill Gardner, Martin Gardner, Liz Webb, Patricia White, Dan Levene, and Michaela Lawler-Levene, with assistance from ex-pupils and staff Gill Robinson, Liz Bailey, Ann Bassil, Susan Ponsford, and John Noyce. Special thanks to Vicki Stacey and her Centenary Team of parent helpers.



The Victorian School mentioned above was built on land donated by Nathaniel and Catherine Jefferys, who have links with both St.James' Park and the school. To find out more about the Jefferys, do join us at the Sunday 2nd December Public History Talk at Shirley Parish Hall—details later in this newsletter.

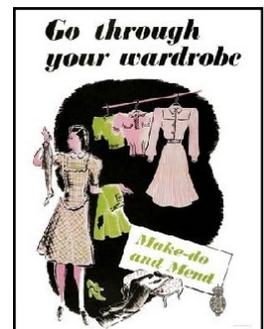
Make Do and Mend

Intergenerational Sewing Class, October 2011 - July 2012

July saw the last of our regular sewing and craft classes—thanks go to the **Heritage Lottery Fund** who part-funded the project and **Hilary Moore**, the tutor who ran the sessions.

One of the aims of the course was to share sewing and craft skills of the World War-II generation with younger generations.

Skills learnt included bead making and jewellery making, darning, hemming, adjusting straps, and taking in trousers.



*Future Art and Craft workshops are planned for the ParkLife Community Room—for more information, contact **Jan Carr** on **07525 855926** or via **jan.carr@fosjp.org.uk**.*

Letters to the Editor

Your Stories

Thank you to all who have contacted FoSJP History—we so enjoy your letters and emails and do our best to publish them on the FoSJP website www.fosjp.org.uk in the “Your Stories” section of the History pages.

The following article has been published on the FoSJP website. We reproduce it in this issue in memory of **Lynda Chantler**, a member of our own FoSJP History Research Group.

Tremona Court—by Lynda Chantler

"As a child I lived at Tremona Court with my mother and grandparents, my father was at sea and only came home on leave."



Tremona Court

"The large old house and grounds on the corner of Warren Avenue and Tremona Road was for many years the Southampton Seamen's Boys Orphanage. When they moved to Berkshire the house became the offices of a local company, Woolley and Waldren, and Nana and Grandad took up the position of caretakers. Grandad looked after the two huge furnaces in the cellars which provided central heating, and the gardens. My mother cleaned the offices and Nana provided tea and coffee. The kitchen was enormous, two sinks, two ovens, a walk in larder. Next to the kitchen were two smallish rooms for our use and upstairs we had bedrooms and a bathroom."

"I can still remember clearly the day we moved in, I really hated it, but in time grew to love the old house with the beautiful white marble fireplace and mahogany staircase with decorative ball at the bottom of the banister which my friends and I loved to slide down. The orphan boys left behind a rocking horse, books, party masks and a wind up Father Christmas. There were also a few pieces of china with shipping crests, probably donated from the liners. All this we were given permission to 'inherit'. Grandad grew

lots of vegetables in the garden and in the cellars cultivated mushrooms. At one time we looked after a pony which grazed on the large lawn at the back of the house. I loved rolling down the banks and one day chased a ball under one of the yucca plants, ending up at the Children's Hospital in Winchester Road with a scratched eye."

"I used to walk past the park each day on my way to and from a little school called Denehurst, in St. James' Road, opposite Shirley Parish Hall."

Editor's Note—Denehurst School was in the garages of the house just opposite Shirley Parish Hall.

"When Woolley and Waldren relocated their offices in town Tremona Court was empty for some time. My grandparents were still employed as caretakers so we had the whole house to ourselves. Eventually it became the Southampton School of Nursing Training Centre, which is when the skeleton arrived. Our flat was upstairs and it was my job to hurtle down the stairs every evening to collect the 'Echo'. I always imagined the skeleton might come to life and chase me down the long corridor. Sometimes I had to do the journey



Lynda's first day at Denehurst School

twice if the 'Echo' was late or I timed it wrong."

"Many years later I returned with my family to look at the old house. I knocked on the door, but no reply. We crept round to the back and peered through the windows. Empty. Soon afterwards the house was demolished and now there are flats and houses where Tremona Court once stood."

Lynda Chantler, 20th June 2011
(1938-2012)

In Memoriam

We were very sad to learn that Lynda Chantler, who shared her memories of living at Tremona House, passed away on 28th August 2012. We are very grateful that Lynda contributed this part of her personal history so that it can be shared with others.

We were also sad to learn and report of the passing of Dr Struthers, who served the people of Shirley as a GP and who in his retirement joined us at the Public History Talks.

Our best wishes and condolences go to family and friends of both Lynda and Dr Struthers.

Wildflower Walk—Medicinal and Edible Plants

Saturday 21st July 2012

The audience at the Medicinal and Edible Plants walk and talk in St. James' Park were amazed by the depth of knowledge of **Celia Cox**, MSc (Botany) BVet Med. Cert VR, who shared medicinal and edible plant use facts and folklore from Greek mythology through to Tudor salads and current day uses.

Our wildflower area on the Winchester Road bank of the Park, planted through a **BBC Breathing Places** grant in 2008 and renovated in Spring 2012 by the **FoSJP Gardening Team**, provides fabulous examples of wildflowers that were available to locals of old. Celia showed us which plants were used for medicine and which for food.

If you missed the summer wildflower walk, do come and join us for a more sedate version as Celia Cox gives the October presentation in the Autumn Public Talk Series (see below).

We hope to bring Celia back to the park again for a walk and talk next year. Check our website and park noticeboards for details.



Tudor Costume Workshop

Saturday 15th September 2012

With Anne Boleyn-style headdresses, flouncy sleeves, and ruff collars all made, Shirley folk are ready to join the procession and visit the "Olde Worlde" Michaelmas Fair during the events of **Saturday 29th & Sunday 30th September**, thanks to a Tudor Costume Workshop held at the ParkLife Community Room in St. James' Park.

This event was run by Dr Mary South, from the **Tudor Revels Project**, with textile design expertise from Jason Butler from the University of Southampton.

To find out about the events happening across Southampton to celebrate the re-opening of the Tudor House Museum, visit the Tudor Revels Project website, or pick up a leaflet at the ParkLife Café, the Shirley Parish Office, or various locations across the city.

www.tudorrevels.co.uk



Public History Talks—Autumn 2012

Our fourth series of **FREE** talks on local history

Each talk will take place at **Shirley Parish Hall** from 3.00pm - 5.00pm on the first Sunday of each month, October to December. Entry is free and refreshments will be available.



All talks at Shirley Parish Hall

Sunday 7th October	3.00-5.00pm	"Plants that affect our lives" by Celia Cox of <i>Wild Plant Discovery</i>
Sunday 4th November	3.00-5.00pm	"Shirley's Sites and Symbols—how well do you know them?"
Sunday 2nd December	3.00-5.00pm	"Nathaniel and Catherine Jefferys—who do you think they were?" by Patricia White & Erika Howells

Visit www.fosjp.org.uk/history for the latest information