



SHIRLEY HERITAGE PROJECT

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2015
ISSUE 11



FoSJP
Friends of St. James' Park

Our Final Edition

Welcome to the final edition of the Shirley Heritage Project Newsletter!

Welcome to the Autumn 2015 edition of the Shirley Heritage Project Newsletter, after what has been probably the busiest and most productive part of our St. James' Park Shirley Heritage Project.

In our Spring 2015 newsletter we'd just launched the St. James' Park book—this was swiftly followed by the completion and launch of the History Timeline and Welcome sign, now installed on the side of the building in St. James' Park. After six years of activity and research, these achievements mark the end of our Shirley Heritage Project as funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund—our only remaining task from the project is to archive our material and make the oral history recordings publicly available.

The project funding may now be finished, but the interest and enthusiasm for the local history of Shirley continues to grow—current interest is around Shirley at the time of the First World War and finding out more about local architecture and builders, especially

houses built around the time of the 1829 Enclosure of Shirley Common.

The History Research Group has continued to meet and has recently welcomed several new members. In the past few months the FoSJP History Team have taken displays to street parties and held stalls at events in the Park. Our members have been invited to give public talks at several local groups including the WI, local history groups and local societies, and will continue to do so in 2016.

If you'd like to know more about local history or are interested in being involved in future projects, do come along to our Autumn talks to be held at Shirley Parish Hall.



*Michaela A Lawler-Levene
Shirley Heritage Project Coordinator 2009-2015*

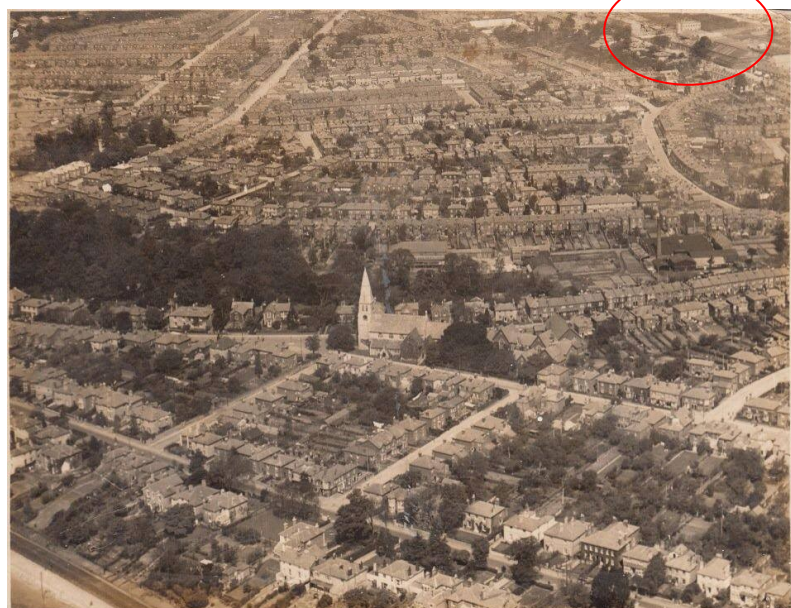
FoSJP History Research Group Meetings

The History Research Group met three times in Spring and Summer 2015.

Meetings are held on Saturdays in the Community Room at St. James' Park, and will resume in 2016 after our public history talks—keep an eye on [our website](http://www.fosjp.org.uk/history) for future dates.

Can you help us?

At one of the meetings, the photo on the right—Freemantle in 1927—was sent through by a group member. We spent some time puzzling over it, especially wondering what the larger building to the top right was—if anyone has any ideas, we'd love to hear from you!



FoSJP History Research Group Events

Shirley Timeline—History Unveiled, May 2015

On Spring Bank Holiday Monday, 4th May, the Right Worshipful Mayor of Southampton, Councillor Sue Blatchford, unveiled the FoSJP History Research Group's Shirley Timeline in St. James' Park.

To coincide with the unveiling of the timeline, FoSJP held a celebration afternoon in the Park, with musical entertainment from local band The Guvna's, children's activities, and history information.



Harland Crescent and Pirrie Close Street Party, July 2015

In July 2015, we were invited to take the FoSJP history stand to the Harland Crescent and Pirrie Close street party.



We had some maps of before and after the area was built and also an aerial photograph and excerpts from street directories to share with the residents. The before map and aerial photograph showed Pirrie Park when it was the sports ground for Harland and Wolff (the shipbuilders who built RMS Titanic).

The residents in turn shared memories with us. One lady told us that her grandfather's firm had built the houses in that area—this was confirmed by house deeds that some residents were able to show us. In one of the deeds the plan showed that there was also to be a Wolff Road and the area which is still a bowling green was also to be built on—we'd like to find out why that area remained for recreation.

To end our afternoon, we were invited to judge the Victoria Cake competition—Liz and Lindsay had an enjoyable time tasting cakes and making the difficult decision as to which won the prize!

Madge Heath



Southampton City Archives Visit, July 2015

In July, the History Research Group visited the Southampton City Archives where they were given a private tour and presentation on "How to use the city's archives". Vicki Stacey, who organised the visit, commented...

"We were given an overview of the collections held in the Archives by Jo Smith, Archivist and were fortunate enough to view some of the material relating to the Shirley area which is held in the strong rooms. There was a lot of excitement looking at a range of

documents including the Shirley Girls School logbook, photos of the houses that were cleared in Church Street and the surrounding area, the Atherley papers, and other collections relating to the Enclosure of Shirley Common. One of our members was able

to find her grandparents in the Kelly's Street Directory, another was looking for references to her Great Aunts who were at Shirley School, and our architectural expert got very excited at the mention of building control plans! The Group also looked at maps of the area from 1778 and 1830. Our thanks to Jo Smith for a very productive few hours."

Currently the opening hours for public visiting of the Archives are Tuesday and Wednesday from 10am until 4pm—please check with Southampton City Council before visiting, as times may vary.

The next planned group tour is an early evening visit to the Local Studies and Maritime Collections at Southampton Central Library later this Autumn.

If you'd be interested in joining us for this tour, please contact Vicki Stacey via our [history email](mailto:history@fosjp.org.uk) or drop her a line via the Shirley Parish Office, 133 Church Street, Southampton SO15 5LW.



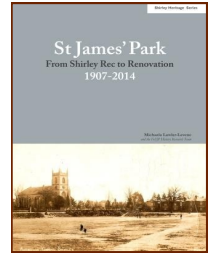
Book Sales Progress

In March 2015, FoSJP launched the first of our history books, entitled “St James’ Park, From Shirley Rec to Renovation, 1907-2014”.

The book represents five years’ historical research, with over 60 people having contributed to its content. Included in the publication are: a brief history of the Park; people’s memories of the Park; shared photos and postcards; images from local museums, the Southampton City Art Gallery and archives; the Park’s role in WW2 with local bombing maps, the establishment of FoSJP, and the documenting of the changes that took place as a result of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

On Saturday 18th April the book was featured in a double spread in the Southern Daily Echo Heritage pages, where it was reviewed by Keith Hamilton who he wrote: *“It is simply one of the best local history books about Southampton...”*!

A copy of the book is available for viewing at the Shirley Parish Office (133 Church Street, Shirley) during its normal opening hours. Seven copies have also been donated to local libraries.



The book can be ordered from Waterstone’s at West Quay, Southampton, and can be purchased online at **£19.99 + p&p** from Lulu Press. A limited number of copies are still available at the Shirley Parish Office (saving postage costs).

The cost of producing the book was heavily subsidized by the Heritage Lottery Fund grant, thanks to which we were able to pay research expenses and for an artist to produce the cover design and undertake the layout and artwork. These full costs are not reflected in the sales price—without the grant, the book would have cost about £35 per copy to produce.

The History Research Group are hoping to use the money from book sales as “match funding” towards another book publishing grant, as there are several more local history book possibilities in the wings. The more we can raise, the more we can apply for.

As of September 2015 the book sales totalled **£1,924.41**. Thank you to all who have bought the book so far!

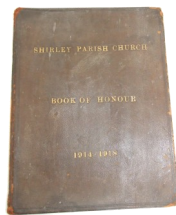
Book of Honour

When we started to research those who gave their lives in World War 1, and as there are no names on the WW1 memorial in St.James’ Church Yard, we asked at the Shirley Parish Office if they held a record of those who fell.

It seemed at first that no record was held by the church, but Theresa asked around. Some months later whilst attending a school performance, Theresa caught me and said that they had found a record book of names “Book of Honour”. I went to have a look—it’s a beautifully-bound book in brown card with a mottled blue and gold paper to the end papers.

The cover states that it is a Book of Honour for 1914–1918, although a section has been added for “The World War” (WW2). We hope to be able to have it available to view at this Autumn’s history talk in October.

Liz Webb



An Appeal for Help



The FoSJP History Group are looking for help in several areas:

- ◆ If you’d like to interview people and capture their memories of the local area, do get in touch as we’re considering running another Oral History project in 2016.
- ◆ Do you have skills at reading old documents, perhaps from personal family history research? We might be able to benefit from your help.
- ◆ Do you have an understanding of legal documents, particularly legal land documents? FoSJP is currently investigating early land purchases in Shirley, from the 1830s onwards and your help would be appreciated.
- ◆ Would you like to be an occasional reserve cake baker for our Autumn talk series? Cake baking help and washer uppers always welcome!
- ◆ Storage—as the FoSJP local history collection grows, so too does the need for accessible and secure storage close to St.James’ Park. If you have any ideas or suggestions that might solve our dilemma, do get in touch.

If you might be able to help us with any of these areas, please contact us on history@fosjp.org.uk.

IN MEMORIAM

Gwendoline Kitchener

We're very sad to report that one of the interviewees who featured in our book, **Mrs Gwendoline Kitchener**, recently passed away. We are, however, also able to report that she first made it to the grand age of 100—an amazing achievement for an amazing lady. Our condolences go to all of Gwen's family. Her nephew Ray Hancock writes...

Gwendoline (Gwen) was born at 39 Wilton Road, the daughter of George Robert Hancock and Florence Clara née Haskins. She was the ninth of eleven children and had six older sisters (one of whom died aged one week), and three older and two younger brothers. She was the last surviving member.

She attended Shirley School between the ages of five and fourteen. After school, she worked at the tobacco factory. She met her husband to be, Raymond Kitchener, at an airmen's dance at Calshot and they were married at St. James' Church on 22nd June 1940. Her husband was posted overseas and during the War she worked for Vickers on aircraft production, initially at Winchester Road and then at Hursley Park.

After the War, her husband was posted to many places both in the UK and abroad, such as Singapore and Aden. When he retired from the RAF, he was employed as chief catering officer at IBM at Hursley. They lived at many addresses since then—she reckoned that since her marriage she had lived at over thirty addresses.

Her last address was at Boyatt Wood where she continued to live after her husband died in June 1999. Due to failing health, she went to live with her son at Fareham, and she died following a short illness in a nursing home at Porchester.

Gwendoline Muriel Kitchener (née Hancock)
29th April 1915–7th July 2015



Gwendoline in the 1940s

Autumn 2015 Public History Talks

Starting Sunday 4th October

We're delighted to present our **seventh** series of **FREE** public history talks this Autumn. As usual, the venue is **Shirley Parish Hall**, situated on the corner of St. James' Road and Colebrook Avenue, a short walk from St. James' Park.

Talks are free to attend and open to both members and non-members of FoSJP; refreshments are available for a small donation. The venue is wheelchair accessible.

Sunday 4th October "John Claudius Loudon"

3.00pm–5.00pm Speaker: John Avery

JC Loudon was a famous botanist, magazine editor, garden designer and cemetery designer, who visited Southampton and Shirley in the 19th Century.

Sunday 1st November "One Movement or Several? The Impact of 18th and 19th Century Enclosures"

3.00pm–5.00pm Speaker: Dr John Chapman

Dr Chapman will give a talk on the movement which saw large scale changes to land ownership in the 18th and 19th centuries with the enclosure of common land.

Sunday 6th December Unconfirmed at time of going to press

3.00pm–5.00pm Please visit [FoSJP website](http://fosjp.org.uk) for details nearer the time