



# SHIRLEY HERITAGE PROJECT

## NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2010

ISSUE 1



Friends of St James' Park



web: [www.fosjp.org.uk/history](http://www.fosjp.org.uk/history)

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## Welcome!

*To the first edition of our History newsletter*

When the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant was announced in October 2009, that also gave us the green light on our **Shirley Heritage Project**, which was inspired by public interest in the history display at FoSJP's "Park100" Centenary Event on 7th July 2007.

Our FoSJP History Co-ordinator Michaela Lawler-Levene said:

*"So many people seemed to really enjoy the history display at Park100, it seemed a shame to just lock all that information away in a cupboard. Also, people had their own stories to share about the Park.*

*We thought it would be really great to record some of these stories and to make both them and the Park history available to as many people as possible - especially to children - through free public talks, history exhibitions, information to go in the new Park and on the FoSJP website, and eventually a book on the Park's history.*

*The HLF said: 'YES do it!' So we've started. It should keep us very busy!"*

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## Your Stories

*Memories of the Park*

Many people have been sharing their memories of the Park, especially when visiting the FoSJP History Display at FoSJP events. Some of your shared memories are now featured in a "Your Stories" section on the FoSJP website. If you don't have a computer at home, but have a library card, you can access this through the library computers.

Thank you to Raymond and Mrs Hancock, Mrs Kitchener, Mrs Davies, Lesley Shotter, and Mr House, who have recently been sharing memories of the Park and donating personal photographs.

## Recording Your Stories

*Can you help us?*

As well as the stories on its website, FoSJP has started to record and archive memories of the Park which are of special significance in local history.

This is a time-consuming exercise and thanks must go to FoSJP member Margaret Osmond, who made a video recording of the last full-time warden in the Park, Norman Burnett, and donated 18 hours of

her time preparing video clips that could be viewed. Two of Margaret's video clips were shown in our public history talk on Sunday 7th March.



If you know of any members with video editing skills who might like to help us with this, please e-mail [history@fosjp.org.uk](mailto:history@fosjp.org.uk) as Margaret would love some help. Thank you!

## Public Talks Series

October 2009 to March 2010

The fifth and final in our current series of public talks on local history took place in Shirley Parish Hall on Sunday 7th March. Our FoSJP History Coordinator, Michaela Lawler-Levene, presented “An Historical Snapshot of Shirley Recreation Ground and St. James’ Park through the Life of a Park Bench” to a packed audience of 72 people.

The talk was dedicated to Arthur House, a former Southampton FC player who celebrated his 90th birthday on 1st March.



Arthur and Winnie on their wedding day

Arthur’s story featured his first date with Winnie Payne on a bench in Shirley Recreation Ground, aged 15. Winnie passed away in 2006 and when Arthur recounts the story of their special bench, now gone, their story is very moving. Thanks go to Arthur for sharing this with us. Arthur would like to

dedicate a bench to Winnie when the Park is renovated; Trudie Smith, FoSJP Membership Secretary, will be looking into a park bench scheme for the new Park.

Video clips and audio recordings of Norman Burnett, the last park warden, and two junior members of FoSJP, Abigail Caveney and Byron Horne, were also featured in this talk.

Earlier speakers in this series included local historians Jake Simpkin, Mary South, and Rosaleen Wilkinson, and University of Southampton lecturers Dr Jane McDermid and Dr Jonathan Conlin. There were also presentations on the Didcot, Newbury and Southampton Railway by FoSJP and on the St. James’ Conservation area by the Southampton City Council Heritage team.

Thank you to everybody who supported this series of talks.

Special thanks must go to Mr AGK Leonard, whose essay “The Genesis of Shirley Recreation Ground” provided valuable information, as did the work on Shirley’s history documented by Rosaleen Wilkinson in “Shirley from Domesday to D-Day” (1997, Guilman J, Kavanagh H eds).

Requests have been made for further talks on the Shirley Trams and local architecture, and although this series is now finished, we intend to run a second series of talks starting in Autumn 2010: these will be on the first Sunday of each month from October to December.

Details of past and future public talks are available on the FoSJP website. Posters for forthcoming talks will again be displayed in local venues such as Shirley Library, the Park notice board, Shirley Parish Office, and local shops and churches. All our members who have left e-mail details will automatically receive information about History Talks and events; if you don’t have access to a computer and would like to be specifically contacted about history talks and events, please contact FoSJP and ask for your name to be added to the “History Events” contact list.



See this newsletter’s final page for your feedback on this series of talks.

## Archive Tours

Find out more about your city’s history

On 7th December 2009 and 26th January 2010, delegations from FoSJP enjoyed private tours of the Local Studies and Maritime Library, and the City Archives, both located within the Civic Centre in Southampton.

If you’d be interested in attending a future tour of these special collections, please e-mail Michaela at [history@fosjp.org.uk](mailto:history@fosjp.org.uk) or leave a message on the FoSJP contact number **023.8077.6761**.

## A Plea for Help - the “Shirley Boys”

*Can you help us with this photo?*

In March, Lesley Stapley (née Shotter) sent us this photo of her father, Sidney Shotter (born 1928), and a group of his friends known as the “Shirley Boys”, sitting on the steps of the former Winchester Road entrance to the Park, between 1952 and 1958.

Lesley’s father, believed to be the first on the left in the second row, has since passed away. She writes:



*“Dad used to play a lot of football in St.James’ Park (or the Rec as it would have been known), and I remember many times watching him from the steps in the picture. His family lived initially in Howard Grove and then in Lumsden Avenue until we moved to Bitterne when I was three years old. I wondered if anyone had any idea who the other chaps might be or any further history (relating to this group)?”*

If you have any information for Lesley, please e-mail Michaela on [history@fosjp.org.uk](mailto:history@fosjp.org.uk), or write to us at the FoSJP address: FoSJP, c/o 133 Church Street, SOUTHAMPTON SO15 5LW. Thank you!

## Diary Dates

*What's happening next?*

### FoSJP Research Group Meeting

**Sunday 25th April**

Shirley Parish Hall, 3.00pm - 5.00pm

For anyone who’d like to be involved in researching the Park’s history. This is our first meeting.

### Shirley Remembers WWII & VE-Day

**Saturday 8th May**

Shirley Parish Hall, 3.00pm - 5.00pm

Come along for tea and cake and share your memories of the Park and Shirley during World War II. If you have any photographs that you’d like to share with us, please bring them along: we’ll have a photo scanner so you don’t need to leave them with us.

### Shirley Recreation Ground in WWII

*University student presentation*

**Sunday 23rd May**

Shirley Parish Hall, 3.00pm - 5.00pm

Come along to see the students present the results of their research into the Park during World War II.

### Public Talk Series #2

*Subjects and presenters to be confirmed*

**Sunday 3rd October,**

**Sunday 7th November,**

**Sunday 5th December**

Shirley Parish Hall, 3.00pm - 5.00pm



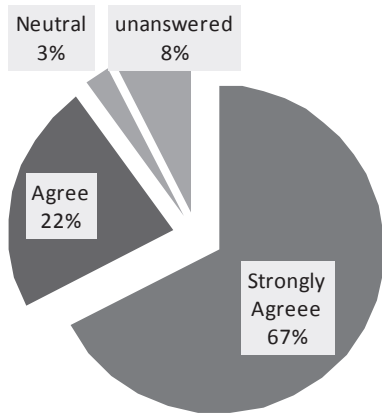
See the FoSJP website for the latest information.

# Public Talks Series - Your Feedback

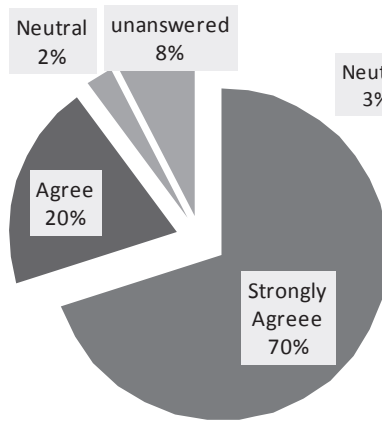
*What you thought of the talks*

Thank you to everyone who completed a feedback form at the last talk of the series. We thought you might be interested in the results, which have encouraged us to organise another series in Autumn 2010.

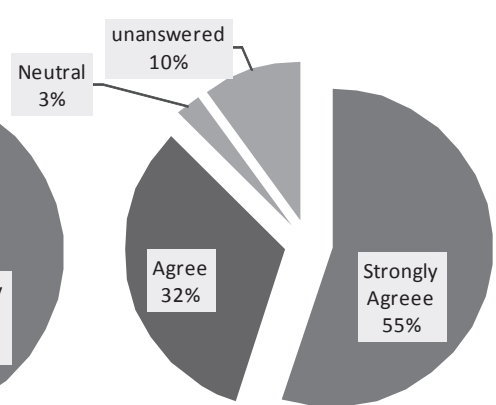
*I enjoyed the talks*



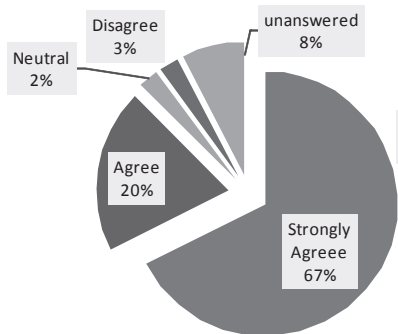
*I learnt something new*



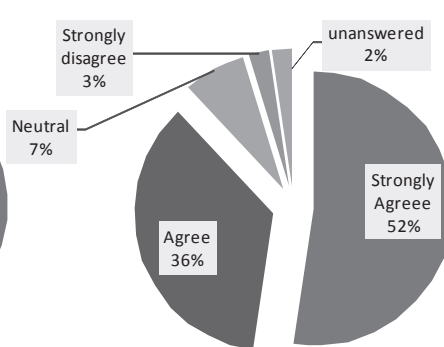
*I enjoyed the displays*



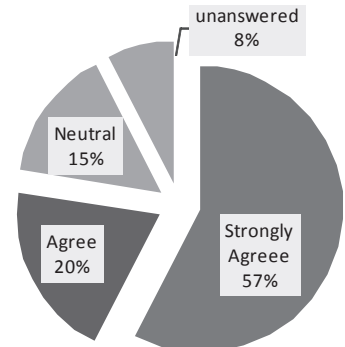
*I'd come along to future talks...*



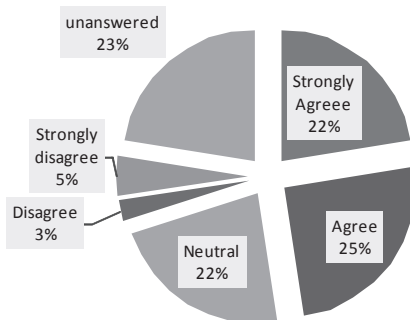
*...even if there were a small charge*



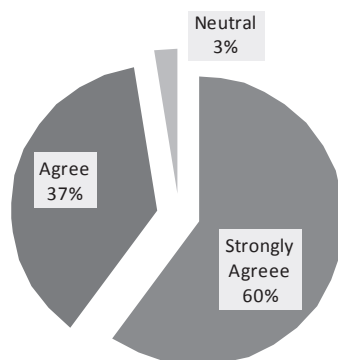
*The refreshments made a difference*



*I've done something new as a result of these talks*



*Learning about history of my local area is important*



*I'm interested in joining FoSJP's research activities*

