



SHIRLEY HERITAGE PROJECT

NEWSLETTER

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FoSJP Remembers D-Day

D-Day 70th Anniversary, 6th June 2014

For many the D-Day landings signify the beginning of an Allied invasion that was to bring about the end of World War II. The overall invasion was codenamed "Operation Overlord". The assault phase was codenamed "Operation Neptune"—the reference to the Roman Sea God was no coincidence, as the Allied troops made history when they transported by sea and landed more troops in a single day, on the beaches of Normandy, than any military operation—ever.

The naval operation was supported by 1300 RAF planes, 1000 American bombers, and paratroopers which attacked key sites behind enemy lines. In addition to the UK, USA, and Canada, the Allied forces were from Australia, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and Poland.

It was a decisive Allied victory; however, D-Day resulted in fatalities on both sides: German casualties are cited at around 1,000 men, while Allied casualties

were at least 10,000, with 4,414 confirmed dead.

As a tribute to local involvement in the D-Day landings, the ParkLife Café ran a World War II menu. Café Manager Paul Salmon commented:

"All the dishes on the special menu were based on authentic WW II rationed food recipes, but I guess rationed food had a bad reputation, as the alternative menu didn't receive a very high take-up: most customers preferred our usual food on offer!"

Talk & Exhibition, Sunday 8th June

The FoSJP History Research Group commemorated the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings with a public talk at Shirley Parish Hall—"Southampton from Blitz to D-Day" by **Jake Simpkin**—accompanied by an exhibition.

Jake's talk highlighted the astounding contribution that Southampton made to the war effort—assembling Spitfire parts all across Southampton, producing naval destroyers at Harland & Wolff, building Mulberry Harbours, and of course as a port of military embarkation—of 156,000 people taking part in D-Day, 44,000 passed through Southampton, and over 3.5 million service personnel had passed through the port by the end of the war. The injured were

shipped back through the port, and treated and stabilised at the Royal South Hants and Southampton General Hospitals before being transported to other medical facilities around the country.

For details of further talks by Jake Simpkins visit his website www.jakesimpkin.org

The exhibition artefacts included: a WW II kit bag, fold-up chair, WW II recipes, Southampton bombing maps, and contributions from elderly FoSJP members, including **Ken Conway, Doreen Couper, Don Smith** and **William (Bill) Smith**.

The lively audience made fascinating contributions of personal memories, including those of World War II Air Raid Wardens, a member of the Home Guard, a map

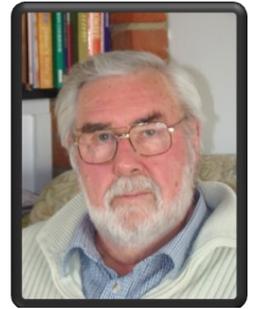
maker, Spitfire assemblers, a Land Girl, and a witness of the activity around Lepe Beach.



Bunting, buns, doughnuts (in honour of the Americans in Southampton during that time), and themed dress completed the occasion and made it feel like a worthwhile celebration and dedicated remembrance of the events of 70 years ago.

Local Memories of D-Day

William (Bill) Smith, born 1936



There was a great deal of activity in the area, especially towards the end of the war, and there were huge amounts of armour and soldiers in the area and I remember D-Day when it eventually came with huge numbers of Americans passing through, in

St. James' Road and the High Street in Shirley. I remember them throwing money and sweets to the children as they went.

Stiftskirche, Stuttgart

Risen Again

In September 2014, a small group from Southampton, including FoSJP History Research Group members, visited Stuttgart in Germany.

One of the many tourist sites in the City Centre is the beautiful "Stiftskirche" church. At first glance, the church appears to reflect the 1609 period, as dated on its clock tower, but a photographic exhibition reveals how the church had been heavily bombed by the Allied forces—Stuttgart experienced 53 air raids during World War II, the heaviest in 1944. Victory to the Allied Forces meant that 4,390 people lost their

lives in Stuttgart. It's often difficult to think of what was happening to people on the other side of WW II, when Hitler and fascism were invading most of Europe and had to be stopped—but these photos evoke such strong emotions.

The scene of devastation is not dissimilar to that of Holyrood Church in central Southampton. Both places had been destroyed. People would have been terrified, on both sides. Both churches are a testimony to, and a reminder of, the loss of life, both military and civilian, as well as the physical loss of buildings on each side of a conflict.

The Stiftskirche has been beautifully restored, using identical stone and as many of the original features as could be reclaimed. There is something very moving about this place, a phoenix that has risen from the ashes. The interior of the Church is dominated by a carved wooden cross and life-sized effigy of Christ. As conflict continues to break out around the world, this place certainly made us pause and reflect.

Michaela Lawler-Levene



▲
Before the war



▲
After the war
▼



After restoration

**Stuttgart
Stiftskirche**

FoSJP Remembers World War I

100 years on...

On 4th August 1914 at 11.00pm, Great Britain declared War on Germany—a conflict that was to last until Armistice Day on 11th November 1918 at 11.00am, the date that we now recognise as Remembrance Day, and observe a two minute silence, whilst we wear a poppy to acknowledge those lost in this and subsequent conflicts.



In honour of those lost and this special date, **Nigel Fayle** from the FoSJP Gardening Team sowed thousands of poppy seeds in St.James' Park, only for them to be defiant and not germinate this year. At the end of July this lone poppy was captured on camera, behind Arthur and Winnie's bench, standing guard like a lone soldier:



St.James' Park wasn't the only local organisation wishing to commemorate World War I with poppies.

The following photos were taken outside the Atherley Bowling Club and in Southampton Old Cemetery:



Lest we forget...

Among the many names recorded on plaques and gravestones in St.James' Church and graveyard are those of four men who died during World War I.



The inscriptions read:

- ◆ BURT Frank William, Lieut of 1st Sherwood Foresters who fell at La Boisselle 5 July 1916 age 20
- ◆ MASON Albert Ernest, Died at Lahana, Salonika 4 September 1916 age 30
- ◆ ORPET Fred, Killed in H.M.S. Broke at Jutland 29 May 1916 age 37
- ◆ THOMAS Cecil, Bombardier R.F.A. Killed in action 11 October 1918

Both Frank Burt and Cecil Thomas have war graves in France.

Fred Orpet is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. His brother William, who died on the S.S. Titanic, is also recorded with him on their parents' gravestone.

Madge Heath

Bourne Avenue Street Party

Saturday 19th July

FoSJP History Research Group members **Madge Heath** and **Lindsay Ford** shared local history materials—their display included bombing maps, an early picture of Bourne Avenue from the Peter Wardall Collection, and street directory entries for the 20th Century

so that residents could trace who had lived in their houses. One resident reported:

"The history stall was a hub of interest from members of the street and made a great contribution to the attractions—I know that you were so much appreciated."

Autumn Apples

Those lucky enough to have a garden in Shirley might be harvesting apples and other fruits at this time of year.

Did you know that the Shirley and Freemantle areas, including St. James' Park, were market gardens and/or flower and vegetable nurseries, some supplying ships in Southampton?

It's reported on the BBC Good Food Guide that:

"There are over 7,000 varieties of apple in existence, many of which are grown in Britain but, despite that, only around 12 varieties are commonly sold in UK supermarkets, of which many are imported".

Apple trees usually have a productive life span of 30-40 years; however, trees of 80-100 years old have been reported.

Janet & Robin Yendell moved into Wilton Road 35 years ago and their fruit trees are still producing. Their fruit was identified by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) as:

- ◆ A "Michaelmas" pear tree
- ◆ Cooking (culinary) apple varieties "Bramleys Seedling", "Royal Jubilee", "Edward VIIth"



- ◆ An eating (dessert) variety "Wealthy"

The "Royal Jubilee" was raised by a John Graham of Hounslow (first listed in 1888). Janet and Robin believe that it might have been planted in commemoration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897! If so, is this a record?

Is it possible that you have a fruit tree in your garden that pre-dates your house? Or even a rare variety?



Autumn 2014 Public History Talks

From Sunday 5th October 2014

World War I Memorial Lecture

FosJP are very fortunate to be able to announce that **Professor Adrian Smith**, of the History Department at the University of Southampton, will be giving a free public talk—featuring the Hampshire Regiment's involvement in World War I—as a memorial lecture to those lost in that war.

"Leaving For France and landing at the Dardanelles—Hampshire and the Great War, 1914-1915"

Sunday 5th October, 3.00pm
Shirley Parish Hall

Oatlands House—Part 1 (redux)

If you missed the first part of **Madge Heath's** talk on Oatlands House, presented at our Autumn 2013 Public History Talks, you can catch it again on **Thursday 2nd October** at the Millbrook History Society, who meet on the first Thursday of each month at the church hall behind Holy Trinity Church, Millbrook Road.

"Oatlands Lodge/House—things it saw and people it met"
Thursday 2nd October, 7.15pm
Church Hall, Holy Trinity Church, Millbrook

Madge will be presenting the second part of her Oatlands House presentation at the Autumn Public History Talks on **Sunday 7th December, 3.00pm** (see below).

All talks take place at **Shirley Parish Hall**, on the corner of Colebrook Avenue and St. James' Road, which has wheelchair access. Talks are FREE and refreshments will be served.

Sunday 5th October 3.00—5.00pm	Leaving for France, Landing at the Dardanelles—Hampshire and the Great War, 1914-1915 <i>Speaker: Professor Adrian Smith, Faculty of Humanities: History, University of Southampton</i>
Sunday 2nd November 3.00—5.00pm	Interpreting Tudor House <i>Speaker: Karen Wardley</i>
Sunday 7th December 3.00—5.00pm	Oatlands House—Its Later Life, Demolition and Rebirth <i>Speaker: Madge Heath</i>