

FoSJP Newsletter

Friends of St James' Park

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Park100 and Park History

B&Q help in the park

Park Life – the future

Breathing Places

Summer at the kiosk

Park Oscars

Park100 – Shirley Celebrates Centenary

As the winter nights draw in, the summer sunshine of July 7th may seem like a distant memory, however the people of Shirley turned out in their 1000's to celebrate one hundred years of the history and heritage of St. James' Park, and it many people have said it was a day they will remember for many years to come.

The Mayor of Southampton, Councillor Stephen Barnes-Andrews, officially opened Park100 and he began the day's proceedings by presenting medals to the Shirley Swimming Pool club swimmers.

The stage hosted themed musical performances from the last ten decades, including 1920s Buggy Malone by Bellemoor School & Shirley Junior School, 1930s Cole Porter musical numbers performed by Southampton Operatic Society. The 1960's were represented by Wordsworth Infants singing Beatles' songs, the 1990s by Junk Percussion performed by Bellemoor School, and more recent times were celebrated by a BDK Dance Group, also from Bellemoor School, and a Keep Fit class by local gym LA Fitness. Shirley Junior School Choir sang some well-known ballads from between 1995 and 2005, and we even had some Bollywood dancing!

One of the 'stars' of the day was the replica Spitfire shown by Solent Sky Aviation Museum, it drew a constant queue of admirers of all ages and was the perfect centre piece as the classic Southampton wartime icon. Continuing the theme of the Second World War was a superb re-enactment of an ARP warden (during the war, ARP wardens were based in the specially built 'bomb proof' building that still stands in the park today). Visitors could also dress up in period costume provided by the local Maskers Theatre Company and have their photograph taken as a fitting souvenir.

An army of volunteers from the Friends provided welcome refreshments at one end of the park, whilst at the other end, the Friends group and the park's history was being promoted. In between, local groups and charities provided a varied selection of games, rides, sideshows, tombolas and stalls. As the evening drew in, local bands entertained the crowds for what turned out to be an award-winning day for the park and the people of Shirley.

Many thanks to all those people who helped make Park100 a fabulous day; it really was a one-off joint effort by the community, for the community.



City Park 'Oscars' – FoSJP Win Awards

At the beginning of October, Southampton City Council hosted a celebration of all that has been achieved over the last year in the city's parks and open spaces. The Rosebowl was the venue for people from all over the city to cheer each other on as awards were presented for various aspects of success in the green spaces of Southampton; from nationally awarded Green Flags to lifetime achievement awards for council employees.

FoSJP won the 'Best Park Event' award for Park100, and FoSJP Chair, Nichola Caveney, won an award for 'Outstanding Contribution to a Friends Group by an Individual'. Well done to everyone involved!



The Friends receive their award from City Councillor Phil Williams

Kiosk Thank You

Thanks go to Abi Mockeridge who opened the kiosk in the park every day throughout the summer holidays, and really made a difference to families and other park users who knew they could rely on refreshments and a maintained toilet. Thanks also go to Sophie Carrington, who opened the kiosk over the October half term.

The kiosk can only operate with the volunteers we have; there are no paid staff. So, many thanks to all those who volunteer their time on behalf of the friends group, for the benefit of park users.

The kiosk is open only at weekends during the winter months, between 11:30 am to 3:30 pm Saturday and Sunday, and only when we have the volunteers to help. If you feel you could spare two and half hours of your time, for example once a month, then please call Helen Hazlewood on 8077432.

History Walk

On the 30th of September people of all ages walked around the park and surrounding roads to listen and learn about the area's fascinating history. The walk was led by Mary South and organized by Michaela Lawler-Levene, and finished with tea, cake, and an exhibition in nearby Shirley Parish Hall. Look out for more walks in the future.

Did you know the renowned Victorian artist, William Shayer, is buried in the grounds of St. James Church?



B&Q Help Out

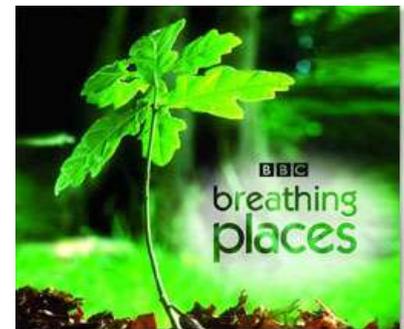


Towards the end of August, a team of nearly sixty volunteers from B&Q merchandise department, based at the B&Q HQ in Chandlers Ford, donned their famous orange aprons to help put up 'art boards' on the building, and assist the council maintenance team clear and tidy the beds in the rose garden. The day of work and fun also included learning circus tricks and playing a game of baseball. It was all organized as part of B&Q's policy of helping community projects.

Breathing Places – help us to help wildlife

We are now into the planning stage of spending nearly £10,000 of grant awarded by the Big Lottery Fund to improve the natural environment of the park as a 'Breathing Space' for wildlife as well as local residents. We hope to launch this development in the spring with planting, making and putting up bird boxes, and then round it all up in the autumn with a special 'Bat' event.

If you are interested in this project and would like to help us in some way, then please call Martin Caveney on 8077 6761.



Park Life and the Future of St. James' Park



You may have already seen proposals for improving the park on the 'art work' boards on the building. London consultants 'Parklife' have been working hard to canvass opinion from park users, FoSJP, and the City Council to help them draw up initial plans for changing the park.

If you want to 'have your say' please feel free to contact us via the friend's web site or write c/o 133 Church Street, and we can pass on your views to Parklife.

The plans are still in the 'design' stage before they will form part of a large bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund next March, but Parklife will need all the responses by mid December before drawing up the final master plan!