

Shirley Spitfire Trail



Investigation Sheet

This sheet is designed to accompany the **Shirley Spitfire Trail Map** which is available to download through the FoSJP Facebook & website pages. Printed copies are available from the ParkLife Café in return for a small donation.

In September 1940, the Supermarine factories on the banks of the River Itchen were bombed and production of the Spitfire was dispersed to different 'secret' locations across Southampton and beyond. These locations included garages, an industrial laundry and even a local hall. Several of these buildings were close to St.James' Park which also played a crucial role in WW2. Although several of the original buildings have disappeared, many clues are left behind.

Can you spot them on the trail?

Please walk the Shirley Spitfire Trail with a responsible adult & cross all roads safely.



A. Before you leave St.James' Park – take a look at the Park Timeline outside the café. Looking at 1940, you can see the Park played an important role during WW2. The building you are standing outside was built as an ARP Command & Control Centre.

What does ARP stand for?

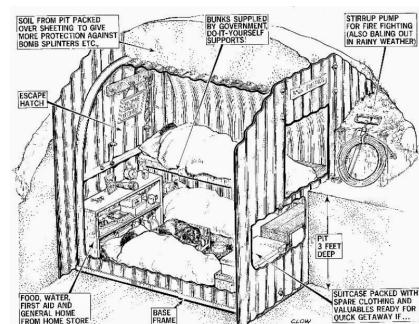
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Which number Southampton ARP Unit was based in St.James' Park?

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B. After crossing the pedestrian crossing, stop outside the Church and have a look at the house on the other side of the road (next door to the Church Office). Can you spot the concrete building behind the fence?

What do you think this building was used for during the war?

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C. At Colebrook Avenue, cross the road carefully and look at the window panes on the Parish Hall. (one of the 'hidden' Spitfire factories).

How many different 'styles' of glass panes can you find?

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Why do you think this might be?

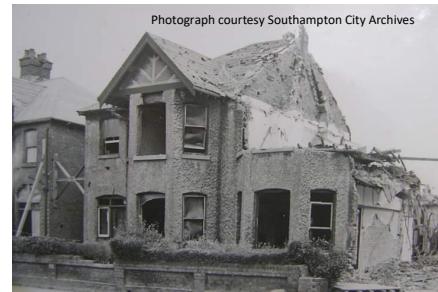
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D. Walk along Colebrook Avenue. The picture shows a house in this road that was bombed during an air raid in 1941.

Can you work out which number it might have been?

[Clue: look at the style of the houses today]



Advert from the Shirley & Freemantle Advocate 1924

Courtesy Local Studies Library

F. You will now go past Shirley Infant & Junior Schools. Like other schools in Southampton, these buildings were 'requisitioned' (taken over) by the Army in 1939.

What do you think happened to the school children?



Photograph courtesy Southampton City Archives

G. When you get to 16 Wilton Road (Stop 2 on the Trail Map) - can you see a plaque on the neighbouring house?

Who is this plaque for and why?

Note for adults: because of the busy nature of Winchester Road, we wouldn't recommend stops 3 - 5 on the **Shirley Spitfire Trail** if you are walking with children. Instead, stop at the end of Wilton Road where the former site of Seward's Garage (Stop 6) will be opposite you. Then head left down Winchester Road until you get to St.James Close (Stop 7).



H. When you turn into St.James Close – on the right hand side was the location of the Light & Law garage. On the other side stood Oatlands House which during WW2 became a First Aid Post and also provided accommodation for the Barrage Balloon operators from the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF).

Where was the Barrage Balloon they were operating located?



Photograph courtesy St-James-by-the-Park

E. As you walk back along to St.James' Church look at the walls around the churchyard. Look very closely at this picture of the Church in the 1930s.

What is missing today? Do you know why?



Answers to the Shirley Spitfire Trail Investigation Sheet will be found shortly on the FoSJP Website. If you have any questions – or have spotted anything else interesting – please drop the team at Shirley Local History Group a line at history@fosjp.org.uk.