

Lest We Forget - the Silent Soldier



As a memorial to the sacrifice of 1.1 million service members who gave their lives and to those who served and returned home after WW1, the Royal British Legion, with a donation from Southampton City Council, amongst many local authorities, have placed 16 almost life-size figures in all wards of the city and at the Cenotaph. This Silent Soldier campaign is a 'Thank YOU' to that generation who served, rebuilt and changed the nation.

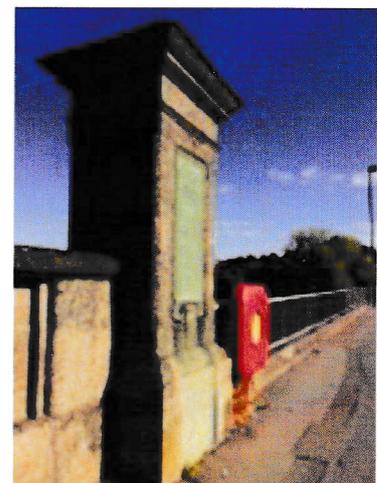
Other figures represent the RAF, the Commonwealth and the Suffragette movement. Other nearby locations are at the War Memorial in Bassett Avenue, outside Bitterne Library, Portswood Recreational Ground and Daisy Dip entrance on Bluebell Road.

Leader of Southampton City Council and Woolston Ward Councillor, Christopher Hammond said: "Having these iconic Royal British Legion silhouettes of World War One service personnel is a city wide visual reminder of the human sacrifice that was made."

A Tommy stands guard at Cobden Meadows.

Cobden Bridge 90 yrs October 1928 - 2018

Reconstructed 1926 - 28 and opened on 25th October 1928 by the then Minister of Transport, Colonel the Right Honourable Wilfred Ashley M.P. We hope our efforts will provide a lovely display of spring and summer bulbs next year on Cobden Meadows to celebrate this. (see the Chairman's notes on p2)



Chairman's Report

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter!

2017/18 was a wonderful year! One year ago the Mayor officially opened our MUGA. After just one year it was vandalised! A 2ft square was cut out of the top coat, so thank you to the vandals - it took us 11 yrs to raise the money to get it built. (Fortunately speedily repaired!)

But let us talk about better things of 2018. Flying from the flag-pole at Woodmill is the GreenFlag awarded to us in July. My thanks to the committee and volunteers for all their help, extra litter picks, cleaning the toilets, washing notice boards and signs from Mansbridge to Cobden Bridge, and reporting back to Southampton City Council when action needs to be taken by them. The visiting team's inspection is very thorough, dealing with maintenance, improvements, cleanliness and whether there is volunteer involvement. We are only one of two parks (the other being St James Park) to receive this accolade.



After 4 years of chasing the Council for improvements to the children's play area by the miniature railway, they have undertaken improvements to the drainage, badly needed especially in winter. The additional new equipment looks very good.

We oversaw the replacement of worn out and provision of additional park seating. Also 2018 saw the re-opening of the Pitch and Putt, so we welcome the Coles family and wish them every success.

To celebrate the opening 90 years ago (25th October 1928) of Cobden Bridge we planted spring and summer bulbs on the bridge bank. We look forward to a splendid show.



In early spring our volunteers planted more hawthorn whips (young plants) to reinforce the original Manor Farm Road hedge. This annual program will continue until the hedge is fully thick and healthy along its length, and providing shelter and food for wildlife.

It was reported in the last issue of our Newsletter that after years of chasing, the footpath through the park from Mansbridge to Cobden Bridge would be repaired. It was scheduled to commence in September, then October, now this month, and we are still waiting. I am chasing it every day!! Another item also required constant nagging. The green container in Woodmill carpark which had become an extensive nest of rats was finally removed by the Council in December. Not before time given its proximity to that children's play area!

We would like to have more members, so please ask your neighbours and family if they would join. £3 per year family membership or £20 for life. We need a website coordinator for friendsofriversidepark.org.uk and if you could help in any way email ann@the-ocean.co.uk

Finally many thanks to the groundsman Darren for all his assistance and also the dog-walkers who litter-pick whilst they exercise with their pets. It all helps to keep the park a pleasant place.

Thank you for all your continued support,
Doug Perry, Chairman FORP

Woodmill: WW2 Memories

I was a baby in the early 1940's, but my mother told me later of the horrendous events that happened. My grandparent's house on the Bevois area was land-mined so the family walked to my parent's house at Woodmill in their night clothes.

In November 1940 they were all sheltering in the house. The Anderson shelter in the garden being flooded as it was high tide and this happened as water was seeping in through the ground.

When the bombs were dropped in the Salmon Pool, the front door was blown in and the house shook.

Apparently German planes were returning from a bombing raid on the Eastleigh railway works and the Saunders Roe aircraft factory in Wide Lane.

The German planes used the reflection of the river on starlit nights and the few bombs left over from the raid were dropped in the Salmon Pool. Rita Ward 2018

Tuesday November 18th 1940

Historic Mill's Charmed Life
Seven Bombs Dropped Round it.

An historic mill with a long history standing near a river in the south coast town must bear a charmed life. Seven high-explosive bombs were dropped around it in a semi-circle. Yet the only damage the mill received consisted of broken tiles, smashed windows and a few displaced chimney pots. Six of the bombs fell on a fishing pool in grounds opposite blasting concrete retaining walls.

A seventh bomb cracked a roadway. One bomb lifted a boat 5 feet into the air to clear the wall and dumped it down, smashed to bits, 20 yards away. The mill manager was in his shelter with his wife and child, his sister and her child. Four bakers were busy at the mill bakery preparing bread for the morning delivery.

"We heard bombs whistling down" said the manager. "The bakers carried on with their job after a minute or two and great credit is due to them" The bombs which fell on the deg of the fishing pond did no substantial damage, although blocks of concrete were hurled into the deepest part of the pond. One cast iron sluice gate disappeared.

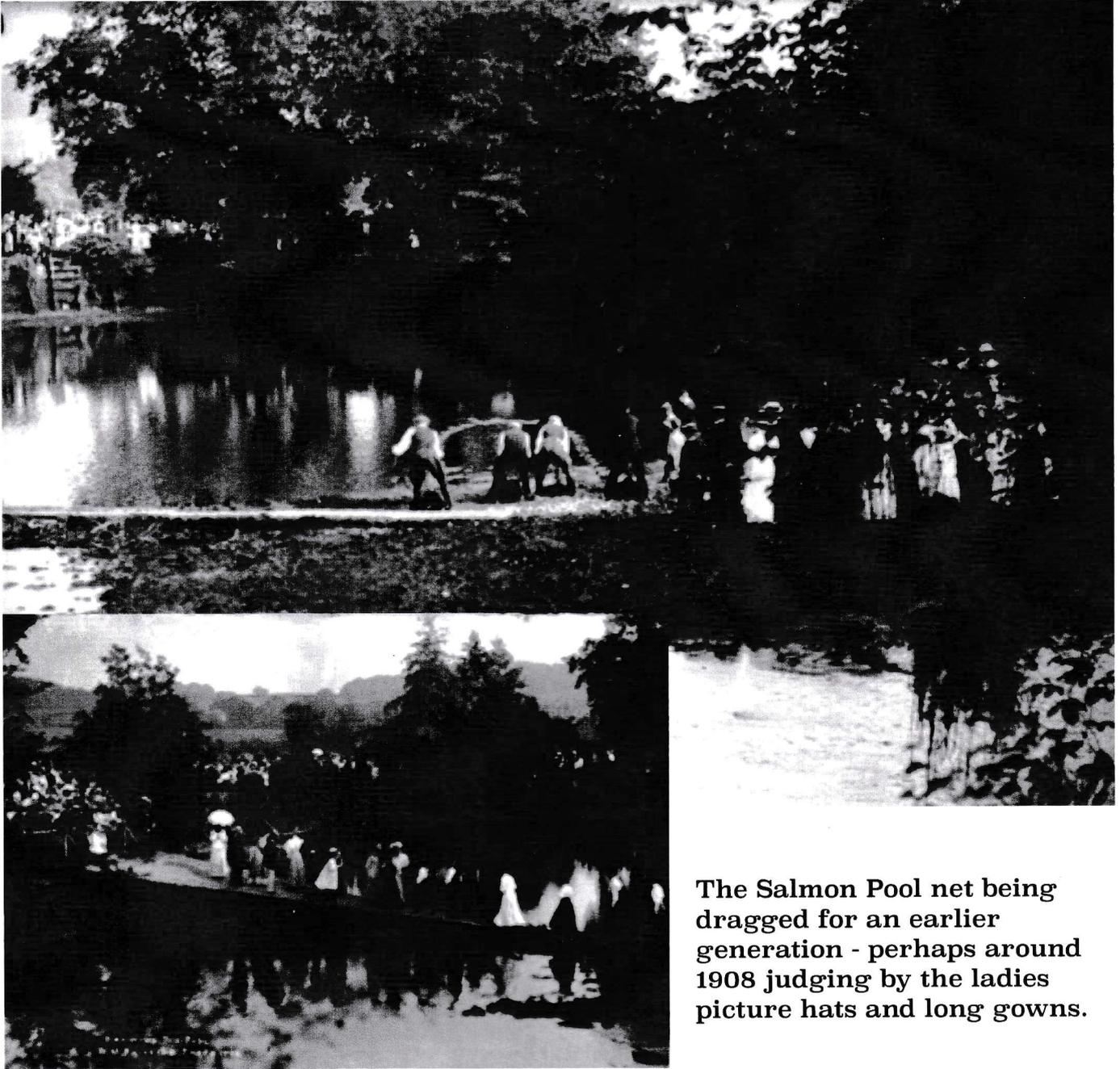
The old mill with its thick oaken beams withstood the shock well. So terrific was the blast that a row of houses some distance away had practically all their front windows smashed. One fragment of bomb cut a curved hole in the wall, flew across the road, hit the mill manager's shelter & disappeared, presumably into the river.

Southern Daily Echo Thurs Oct 19th 1944 - summarised this bombing.

The most severe daylight raids came in September and early November in 1940 and in all there were 15 daylight raids causing 150 deaths. November was Southampton's black month, and the dates November 17th, 23 and 30th will long be remembered as the 'terror week-ends' starting with the first of the parachute mine raids on the 17th and increasing rapidly in weight and destruction until the end of the month....On the night of November 23 there were 860 high explosive bombs (estimated at 50 tons) dropped, together with approximately 4,000 incendiaries.

Woodmill, Life in the 40's and early 50's and 100 years ago:

After the war local children all played together and I was friendly with the children who lived in Woodmill House. At this time the mill was still grinding wheat into flour and also baking bread. I remember being allowed to watch the baking process one night. (Ed. Note: The mill continued till 1954)



The Salmon Pool net being dragged for an earlier generation - perhaps around 1908 judging by the ladies picture hats and long gowns.

We were also allowed to watch the Salmon Pool being dragged for salmon. At low tide a small boat would lay out a net around the pool and pull in the salmon. In the grounds behind the Salmon Pool there was also a large fish lake which was fed by Monks Brook. This was then linked to the Salmon Pool and eventually joined up to the River Itchen. Visiting the Pool was a really special event as this was part of Lord Swaythling's estate.

Rita Ward 2018.