

Festival of British Archaeology 2021

Self Guided Tour of Southampton Common (c. 6km, 2 hours, level ground, grass and paths)

How to Proceed

Starting at the University of Southampton's Avenue Campus (SO17 1BF) the itinerary includes 10 waypoints which are described in the summary text. If you would like to, there are 20 questions to answer, located in the document at the relevant points. The itinerary moves around a route across the Common, and therefore the information provided does not follow a set chronological order, but rather the different waypoints from 1 to 10.

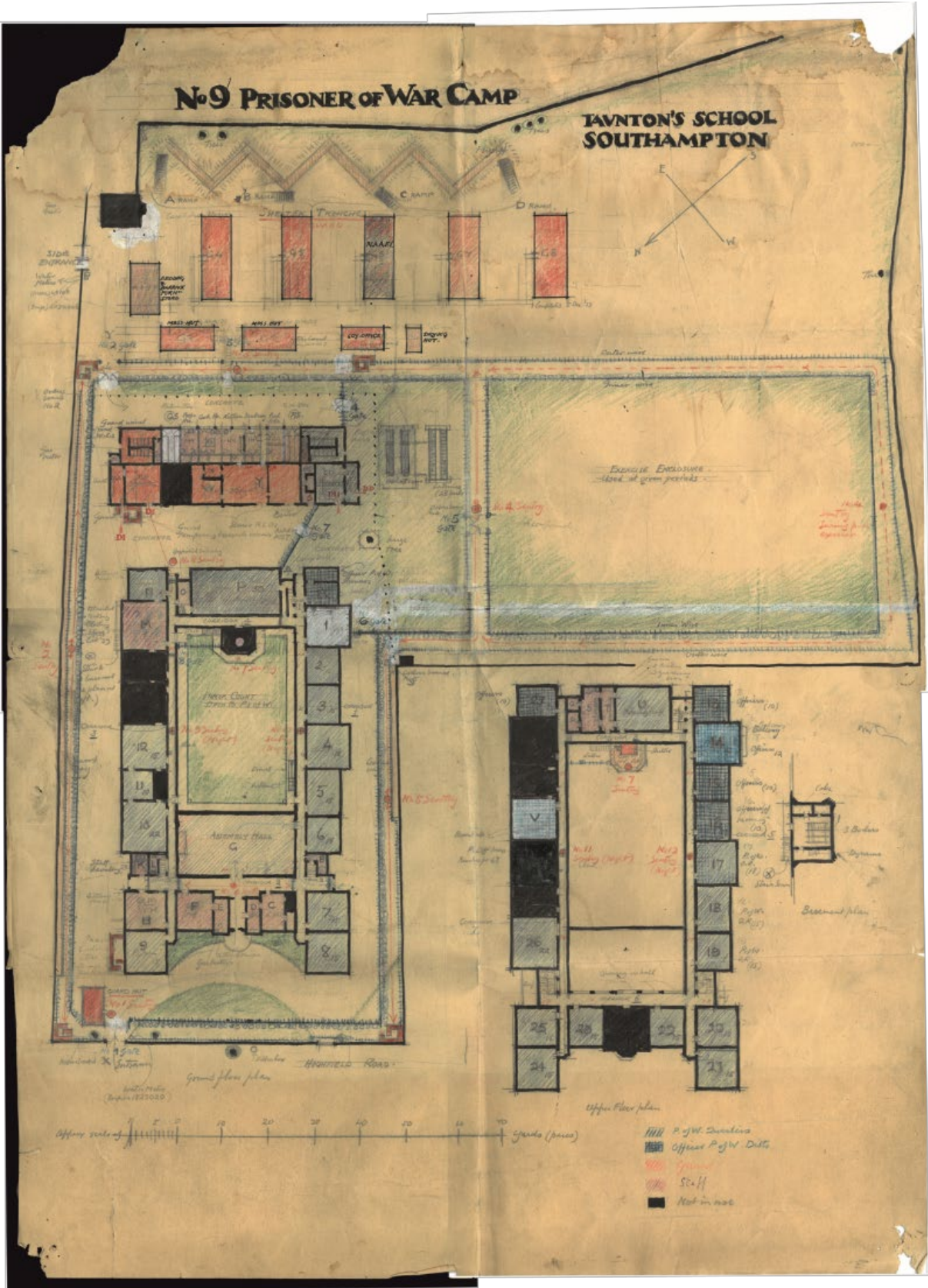
The Itinerary

From the starting point (1) take a look around you and find your location on Map 1. You are standing within the Avenue Campus in the area of Southampton known as Highfield.



Map 1 The Avenue Campus

- 1) The Avenue Campus was used as a Prisoner of War camp (No. 9) in WWII (Map 2). Ground penetrating radar survey by staff and students in the department located the buried remains of air raid shelters to the south-east of the tennis courts.



Map 2 PoW camp 9 on what is now Avenue Campus

From waymarker 1 walk past the tennis courts alongside Building 65 and come round into the green space between the buildings, waypoint 2.

- 2) The building that was used as camp 9 was originally Taunton's School, built in 1926 by Gutteridge and Gutteridge. On 16 April 1927 the school at Highfield Road was officially opened. In 1969 the then still boy's secondary school was reorganised as a sixth form college named Richard Taunton College and from 1978 also girls were admitted. In 1989 the college merged with Hill College and in 1993 moved to the site of former Hill College. (see <http://sotonopedia.wikidot.com/page-browse:taunton-s-school>).

[Question 1: Near the glass entrance to Building 65, on the corner of the brickwork to the left and 15 bricks up from ground level, there is a piece of graffiti from the days when the building was Taunton's School. What date is shown?]

From waypoint 2 walk back out towards the parking area and turn right, walking to the green area on the edge of the campus on the left side of the road exit, waypoint 3.

- 3) The Tramsheds. The Southampton Tramways Company, which was later subsumed into the Southampton Corporation transport department, purchased Highfield Stables in 1888. The company had been stabling their horses (for horse-drawn trams) there for some time previously. The stables could house 31 horses. Several additional buildings were erected to accommodate omnibuses and trams. Electric trams arrived at the depot in 1904. The derelict depot was eventually demolished in 1969.

Exit the campus turning right onto Highfield Road. Continue on to the main entrance of Building 65/Taunton's School.

[Question 2: Who laid the foundation stone on the right of the main entrance to Taunton's School/Building 65?]



Map 3 Southampton Common, the Little Common and Avenue Campus

From waypoint 3 turn right into Highfield Road and follow the route on Map 3. As you head north you will see a green area opening out, and a path heading west towards the underpass that traverses the Avenue. Walk into this area, waypoint 4.

- 4) The Little Common. Southampton Little Common is part of Southampton Common, the historic communal grazing area used by the citizens of Southampton from at least as far back as the 10th century up until WWII. The Little Common is separated from the larger, western, part by the A33 trunk road – “The Avenue”- which is the historic route in and out of the city. (see <http://southamptoncommon.org/>).

From waypoint 4, head west and under the Avenue via the underpass. Walk past the conifers on the main part of the Common. You will see a concrete plinth to the left marking an old artesian well. Continue and you will arrive at a crossroads, where you turn left. Head down and past the 'model yachting pond'. You can stop anywhere around here for waypoint 5.

[Question 3: How many conifers are there immediately to the left of the path after the underpass?]

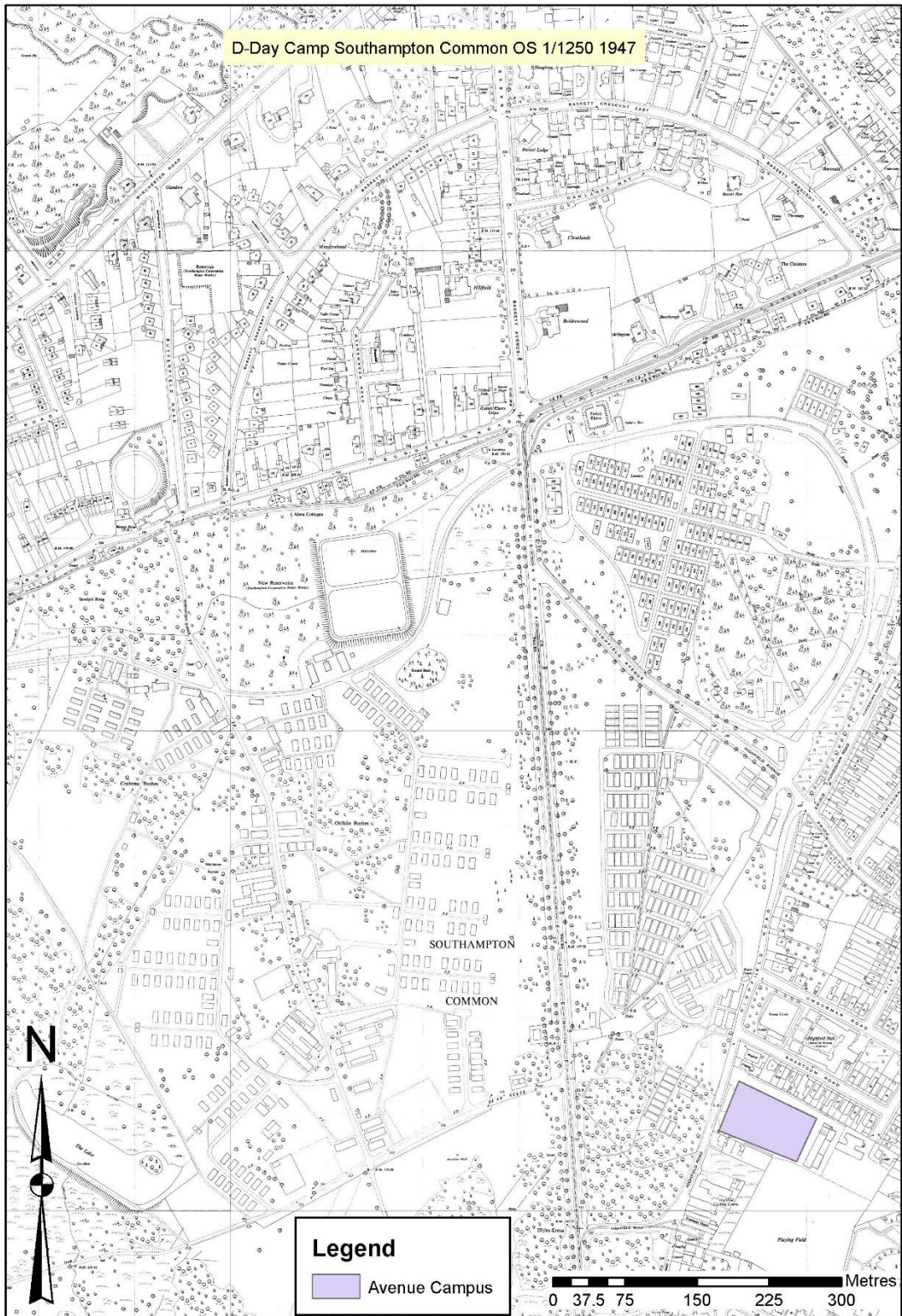
[Question 4: To what depth did the borehole for the Artesian Well reach?]

[Question 5: According to the sign on the tarmac at the model yachting pond, what isn't allowed?]

- 5) Palaeolithic implements including Acheulian handaxes and ovates were found in gravel digging along the stream which runs from Bassett to the north of Highfield Church. As many as 100 palaeoliths may have been found in this area. 62 Lower Palaeolithic handaxes, 1 retouched flake, 1 flake and 1 Levallois flake were found near the church in Highfield in an area of possibly Terrace 8 geology. Probable hoard of socketed axes found on Southampton Common around 1804.

D-Day camps (Map 4) - Four camps on Southampton Common had a total capacity of 8,500 men and 1,000 vehicles. The camps of Marshalling Area C were mainly located to the north of Southampton. Many of the Allied troops who camped in this area embarked for Normandy from that city's docks. At the end of May, the camps were sealed, meaning that the troops inside were not allowed to leave. This was a step to minimise the risk that enemy spies – or the British public – might realise that D-Day was drawing very near. From 31 May onwards, and according to a highly detailed timetable, troops began to make their way down to the coast and embark onto the ships and landing craft that would take them to Normandy. Vehicles were often loaded earlier, and troops on foot embarked only just before D-Day. Once the troops landing on D-Day itself had left the camps, forces who would be landing on subsequent days took their place, forming a steady stream moving down towards the south coast that in many places continued for months. Later on, some of the camps were reused for other purposes, such as for holding enemy prisoners of war.

The site of a Second World War prisoner of war camp on Southampton Common, known as Camp 402a. It could have been in use up until 1948. The camp has since been removed, but a footprint of the site could remain.



Map 4 Plan of D-Day Camps on Southampton Common

From the pond, keep walking south until the path brings you out at the Cowherds pub, waypoint 6.

[Question 6: According to the second bench on the left after the pond, whose place is this?]

- 6) The Cowherds – residence of the cowherd for Southampton Common., employed by the town council to look after grazing animals, with drivers employed to drive beasts to and from the common. From the late 18th to early 19th centuries. The building comprises two storeys of stuccoed brickwork with a modern tiled roof. There are seven sashes with glazing bars, the 3 northernmost window bays being recessed. The ground floor is built out with two 5-light canted bays.

[Question 7: As you face the Cowherds, to the left along the path there is a yellow warning signpost. What is it warning you about?]

From the Cowherds walk south until you meet the green gates, then turn right onto the road, not the path.

[Question 8: What is the name of the road?]

Continue along this road past the roadside parking spaces. After c.300m turn right off the road along the tarmac footpath marked by metal bollards, that skirts Southampton Cemetery (you can see the cemetery wall on your left).

[Question 9: Which authority does the white sign belong to?]

Continue until you come to the cemetery entrance facing onto the Common.

- 7) Southampton Cemetery – Established in 1843 (Southampton Cemetery Act 1843) The first burial in the cemetery dates to 1846. An example of one of England's earliest municipal cemeteries. The Cemetery was originally to be provided with two chapels - Church of England and Nonconformist, and a Lodge for the curator. Later a Jewish chapel was added, to adjoin the Lodge. These all still exist, with the difference that the C of E chapel is now used by an artwork design studio, the Nonconformist chapel for a charity's storage area, and the Lodge together with the Jewish Chapel is now a privately owned house.

[Question 10: When entering the cemetery, within several metres you will see the first upright headstone, for Eliza Jane. What year did she die?]

[Question 11: Who made the bricks for the top of the culvert outside the cemetery on the righthand side of the cemetery entrance?]

You may wish to explore the cemetery, its Commonwealth graves and Titanic graves another time. Continue along the path heading west then north past the cemetery lake (on your right) and up to the edge of the Common at waypoint 8.

- 8) Taunton's College. See waypoint 2. This is the location of the college that started life as Taunton's School and was, from 1926 until 1993, located in the buildings that became Avenue Campus.

[Question 12: What is the name of the pub on the corner opposite Richard Taunton College?]

From waypoint 8 head along the northmost path, as we head into the deeper and darker recesses of the Common and find one of its earliest monuments.

[Question 13: What is the name of the lake that you pass?]

Continue along the narrow footpath, crossing other footpaths, until you come to a broad triangular junction of paths close to waypoint 9.

[Question 14: Which name is displayed on the green bench on the east side of the footpath junction alongside the path we need to take?]

Continue along the footpath. As you near the northern extent of the Common look out for the embankment of waypoint 9.

- 9) The Common reservoir is situated 200 yards immediately west of the junction of the Avenue, Burgess Road and Bassett Avenue. It was constructed in 1851 to hold water pumped from Mansbridge and originally consisted of two separate reservoirs. It was covered over in 1895, and converted into a single reservoir with two compartments in 1952.

Continue to the edge of the main Common. You now need to cross the Avenue, a busy road, so **please use the pedestrian crossings** to get to the Little Common to the east of the Avenue.

[Question 15: What is the name of the university building on the corner of the junction?]

Walk east along the right side of Burgess Road following the edge of the Little Common for 20-30m. You will see a break in the small grass bank and turn into it and down into the wood. Look for the earthworks of waypoint 10.

- 10) One of the town's traditional boundary crosses situated to the north of the Common, and immediately adjacent to the Cut-thorn mound. This cross no longer survives, and only the site is marked on the 1846 Town Map. It has not been found on earlier maps, although it is referred to in the Town's Charters. The Cut-thorn Mound is along the north side of the Common, and was a traditional meeting place for the **Court Leet** (criminal court) until 1616. Possibly of Iron Age origin, and possibly related to the Shire-moot, which is where the area

of Shirley gets its name, also the Thunres-leg represented in the Millbrook land charters of 956 and 1045.

[Question 16: When and where does the Court Leet still meet?]

From waypoint 10 walk east along the beaten track, which curves eventually south, and joins the tarmac path that runs back towards the Avenue Campus

[Question 17: On the red postbox at the corner of Oakhurst and Furzedown roads, what is the Saturday collection time?]

Keep south until you come to the lights and crossing on Highfield Lane. Cross over and continue south and back to the Avenue Campus and your starting point.

[Question 18: What is the postcode of Kingfisher Court on your left?]

[Question 19: What is the name of the road on your left, that begins with an 'O', leading away from the Common?]

[Question 20: The initials of which monarch are visible on the red post box on Khartoum Road?]

For those of you who enjoyed exploring the Common, Map 5 is the City Council map for the orienteering course on the Common, and it provides a very detailed map of vegetation and ground conditions.

Southampton Common Permanent Orienteering Course



The short course is easy. The other two are more challenging.
 They all start ▼ and finish outside the Hawthorns Wildlife Centre.
 Each control point ○ has a red and white marker on it showing its number and a code letter which you can write in the right numbered box at the side of the map.

Grid reference (centre top of map) SU417 154. © Crown copyright. Licence No 100015287.

Map 5 Orienteering map from https://www.southampton.gov.uk/images/orienteering190919_tcm63-418242.pdf