

Hamble Past and Present

6th November 2025 - Memorial Hall

At this meeting the hall was full with not a spare seat when Society Chairman, Ian Underdown, gave a very well illustrated talk and launched a new booklet that showed how Hamble was years ago compared to present-day.

Ian started by explaining the picture on the cover of the booklet was Riverside House in the 1870s. It was the residence of Hamble's shellfish merchants the Scovell family who developed one of the biggest shellfish companies in the country. He next explained how the current owners, the Royal Air Force Yacht Club took it over and today it has 750 members and is open to non-service personnel.

Next, he provided pictures and details of some of the old houses in Hamble such as the Olde House, Manor House, Portland House and Hamble Cliff House. Surprisingly for some, Portland House is older than the Olde House and is believed to be the second oldest building in the parish after the church. One of the original Portland Cottages was the village's Sub-Post Office at the end of the 1800s run by the Cooper family.

The various means of transport that have served Hamble i.e. the ferry, trains, buses and aircraft were then illustrated. Regarding the buses, the first motor bus service was after the First World War when Phipps of Netley ran between Hamble and Woolston via Netley. The service was half hourly but with no regular stops and the passengers just waved down the bus. The buses had wooden bodies, canvas curtains to keep the rain out and rear loading. Some passengers for fun would crowd at the back to try to lift the front wheels off the road.

Some of the village shops were then shown and described such as Lankester & Crook and Bevis newsagents. Lankester & Crook came to Hamble in 1924 and it was the village's main store and a popular meeting place for Hamble's residents who called it 'Lankys'. Ian explained how food was sold until the 1950s with customers being served by the shopkeeper who picked the produce for them and most of the food products were loose or stored in tins. By the 1960s it had become self-service and after several other owners how it became today's Co-op convenience store.

Of much interest to those attending, the important service providers to the village were illustrated. When the first motorised fire engine came to Hamble it was kept in a barn at Manor Farm until a new fire station could be provided. The new station did not have a telephone so it still had to rely on Manor Farm to inform the fire brigade of a call out. Of similar interest after the Second World War the doctor's surgery was previously the wartime mortuary. As this surgery had thin walls, music had to be played in the waiting room so those waiting could not hear the doctor talking to the patient.

Other places in Hamble were also shown how they were years ago compared to present-day. These included the Coronation Arms that is today Folland Court retirement homes, the caravan site, Secondary School, Lukes' North Yard which is the present-day Hamble Yacht Services, Hamble Point and finally the foreshore that was purchased by the Parish Council in 1939. As most people know it is one of Hamble's best assets that is very much enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

Lastly, there were two aerial photographs of Hamble. One showing the village in the 1920s and the other today displaying how it and the number of boats on the river have astoundingly grown during the last century. Many of those present found out facts about the present-day village they did not know for example Hamble Station was used 76,500 times last year.

If you want to find out more about Hamble of yesteryear and today, why not buy the new booklet that was successfully launched at this meeting which adds to the popular series of the Society's local history booklets. Straight after the meeting the first response on social media was "Picked up a copy and a couple of earlier ones, a great read and stirred memories".