

Postcards from Hamble

8th September 2016 - Roy Underdown Pavilion

The Society's Chairman, Ian Underdown, gave a pictorial view of postcards of the village, from the introduction of picture postcards in the early 1900s to the present day. It amazed those present the comprehensive collection of postcards of the village. We would not have so many early pictures of Hamble if it was not for them.

Picture postcards as we know them started in the early 1900s and the first shown by Ian was of the river and Quay in 1903. Most early postcards were black and white, but F G O Stuart produced five postcards of Hamble in colour and they were very popular.

The golden age of postcards was the decade before the First World War and this has given an excellent pictorial record of Hamble during this time. Hamble had more picture postcards compared to other villages, due to the river and during this period different postcards of the village were produced every few months.

At this time a picture postcard cost a penny and a halfpenny to post, but many of the old postcards surviving today are not used, as people just bought them for the pictures because they did not have cameras.

Ian read out some of the very interesting messages on them, which showed they were used for a quick means of communication, usually before sending fuller details by letter. There were the usual visitor messages to those at home, including many from yachtsmen as well as TS Mercury boys contacting parents. They were used for thank you messages and even sports results: *"Just a line to let you know the result Hamble 2 Netley 0. Great excitement in Hamble tonight."* This message was on the back of a card showing the Bugle Inn.

After the First World War postcards never regained their pre-war popularity, one reason was the increasing use of the telephone. Ian gave details of local postcard producers, including Commander Charles Eldred who lived at the Olde House.

Despite not so many post postcards being sent between the wars there is an excellent selection of Hamble which showed the river and village during this period. After the Second World War large companies, such as Frith and Tuck produced many postcards of Hamble that illustrated how things were changing in the village.

By the 1970s local companies were having postcards produced to promote their businesses e.g. the marinas, Compass Point Chandlery, Blue Star Boats, Village Tea Rooms and the television series 'Howards Way' was a theme for further postcards.

In recent years local photographers and artists have produced their own cards, such as Wendy Mason and Shaun Finch, with the pink ferry a very popular subject.

Today emails and mobile phones have reduced the need of postcards but they are still produced and available from the Post Office and Blue Bijou, with Janet Bradley, the owner of the latter and the landlady of the King & Queen, producing her own series of postcards.

Ian explained how he started to collect old postcards and that they can be obtained from postcard fairs. He also mentioned that the prices have significantly changed over the years.

Many comments were made at the end of the meeting, such as that they did not realise the importance of postcards to the history of our village. Another was "A very good speaker and entertaining, with visitors enjoying the talk and there was plenty of laughter." The attendance was not as large as expected and there were several comments that those who missed it had lost the opportunity of seeing a wonderful pictorial view of Hamble over the years.