

Living in Hamble in the early 1900s

Our house was number six, a centre one of ten in a terrace called 'Mercury Terrace'. For those days, these houses were very good. Long gardens back and front, bay windows at the front rooms, sash windows to all others. Downstairs was the front room which opened onto the passage inside the front door. The staircase to the bedrooms occupied half of the passage and further along you came to a door into the kitchen. The front room was quite large and long with an open fireplace where coal and logs burnt. Leather armchairs and stools, lino on the floor with homemade rag and rope rugs, paper on the walls and whitewashed ceilings.

The kitchen, I remember, was a square room with a cooking range which had an open or shut fireplace, a big oven and flat hob for saucepans with two or three 'rounds' on the hob which could be lifted off for quicker cooking. A big iron kettle was always over the fire or pulled on one side. Fish kettles were mostly used, iron of course, with strong loop-over handles like a bucket. All pans were made of iron in those days.

Then up a step into the scullery with its old wooden lidded copper and copper stick for boiling dirty washing and the old time sink of bricks and cement, very shallow, but of course earthenware bowls were used for washing up and veggie peeling. Washing was done in the usual size galvanised baths and wooden tubs. We were lucky having a pump which poured out cold spring water, beautiful to drink.

Out the back door was first the coalhouse, with a latch door, then the lavatory, wooden seat from wall to wall, small windows and again latch door. A container under the seat caught all droppings, can't remember where this was taken, up the long back garden I guess as there were no Council carts to collect in those days and folk needed to feed the garden plants.

Now let's climb the 'wooden hill' and see where we slept. No bathroom, front, middle, back bedrooms, nice size rooms, brass and iron bedsteads, feather beds, sheets and pillow-cases of white cotton, hand knitted blankets and Marcella bedspreads. Lace curtains, of course, with thick chenille curtains and they were so beautiful. Washstands with marble tops, jug and basin, soap dish and tooth pot. Towel stands of wood. Must not forget the chamber pots, usually two, under the bed. Covers were always long to reach the floor so these were out of sight. Rugs in wool, rag and rope for stepping out of bed.

Extract from Annie Williams memoir. She was born in 1898 and was the daughter of well known Hamble character 'Uncle Bob' Williams. They lived at 6 Mercury View and then 'Oakdene' in Satchell Lane.