

Hamble River Collection

7th November 2024 - Memorial Hall

At this meeting Ian Underdown launched a new booklet entitled the 'Hamble River Collection' and he gave a well-illustrated presentation highlighting its interesting contents.

This booklet is a collection of interesting insights into the river's history that were not included in detail in the society's previous booklets 'Hamble River- A glimpse of the Past' and 'Boats of the Hamble River'.

Ian started by talking about some smuggling incidents. The first mentioned was in 1849 when a smugglers lugger from France was driven into the river by bad weather and they were encountered by the coastguards based at Warsash. Shots were fired resulting in the vessel and contraband being seized. One of the smugglers was killed, another drowned and the rest escaped. In another incident in 1714, the owner of the Hamble Point salt works was caught trying to take away bags of salt without paying the salt tax duty.

This was followed by details of local Tudor shipping, a Hamble built naval ship the 'Lively' and the Admiralty Courts that were held at Hamble which gives us more information about the river activities of their time. Next were illustrations of the Bursledon Toll Bridge, the river's coastguards and railways. Ian described the First World War Boom Defence boats based near Badnam creek and then took the audience on a trip up the Hamble River in 1910.

Interesting river characters such as the successful Swanwick big yacht skipper Captain Charles Bevis and the Warsash Fuger fishing family's stories were told, as well as notable boats based on the river such as the 'Clover' and 'Tally Ho' that were subsequently restored in America.

Photographs and a film excerpt were shown of the two important Second World War Combine Operations naval training bases on the river, HMS Tormentor and HMS Cricket, that played a significant role on D-Day. The new booklet includes more comprehensive information and a time line of the boatyards which have served the river over the years that Ian described.

He then explained the history of a Hamble foreshore business, Blue Star Boats, which was the origin of the present-day Beach Hut Café. Notable regattas such as a Royal Regatta, the most remembered Bursledon regatta and details of Hamble Week were then illustrated.

Finally, information was given regarding the top end of the river including the Curbridge Whale, Pink Mead cottage and the river's source along with the non-tidal river activities.

Another good talk from Ian, as well as a successful launch of a new society booklet that adds to the river's written history and makes very interesting reading.