

Hamble Oil Terminal

8th June 2017 - BP Oil Terminal

The Society visited the BP Oil Terminal for a very interesting illustrated talk by Justyn Willsmore, who is responsible for Oil Terminal's Community Affairs. Members had to undertake the important security check at the terminal's gate and on the way to the meeting room Justyn pointed out different aspects of its facilities.

Justyn started his talk by emphasizing the highest priority for the company was safety and security. He then went on to explain what was oil and how it is produced. Following this he gave the history of the oil industry around the world and the BP company's history.

BP's association with Hamble started on the 6th June 1922, when one of its ships the 'British Maple' was moored off Hamble to store oil products which were transported by lighters to Southampton Docks for distribution mostly by road tankers.

The origins of the terminal's site was an uncompleted First World War seaplane acceptance depot that was purchased in 1919 by the Anglo Mexican Petroleum Co which later became Shell Mex. Work started to construct the oil terminal in the early 1920s using 900 local men and it opened in 1924. Justyn illustrated the construction work using pictures of paintings by Hamble artist Gregory Robinson. This included a jetty that had to be built with a hump in it, so as to preserve parishioners' rights over tithes 150, which required that a laden horse and cart could pass under it. You can still see this today.

Hamble was an ideal location for an oil terminal as it had the great advantage of being able to transport fuel by sea, road and rail, as the seaplane depot already had a railway line to it. In 1932 Shell Mex and BP combined to form the largest marketing company in Britain and shared Hamble's oil facilities, therefore the 'British Maple' was no longer required and left. Justyn used plans to show how the site developed and became bigger over the years.

For the Second World War the government built a pipeline linking the terminal to the UK pipeline network. At this time four underground storage tanks were built on the site and six off Satchell Lane near Badnam Creek which were connected to the government's pipeline. During the Second World War the terminal supplied fuel for the D-Day landings and the 'Pluto' pipeline, which was laid under the English Channel, passed through the Hamble terminal.

In 1976 BP and Shell Mex separated and BP retained the Hamble Oil Terminal. An oilfield was developed at Wytch Farm in Dorset and it was acquired by BP in 1984. Hamble was chosen to store and distribute the crude oil. An investigation and consultation were undertaken how to get the oil to Hamble and it was decided to construct an underground pipeline and the first crude oil arrived at Hamble in 1990. As a result of this, it was decided to

discontinue the rail link to Hamble in 1985, although the track was retained in case it would be needed in the future.

Over the years the number of people the company employed at Hamble has altered with much of the work now undertaken by sub-contractors. As a development of this, BP is now selling the Hamble Terminal but it is expected to continue to use it in the future.

A very comprehensive talk with new research which will add to the oil terminal's history.