

Hamble Cliff House

Hamble Cliff House was built in 1809 by Sir Arthur Paget, son of the Earl of Uxbridge. He was a wealthy diplomat, who retired after a scandal and was interested in sailing and horticulture. Its location in a delightful picturesque wooded setting overlooking Southampton Water has always been a very sought after position.

It is believed that much of the materials used in its construction, such as some of its stone and the mullion windows with tracery which are of an earlier date, came from other redundant buildings in the locality. It has been suggested they most probably came from Southampton Castle although it has also been said that Netley Abbey is another possibility.

In 1838 it was sold to William Webber, whose mother lived at Hamble Green House, now known as the Manor House. Unfortunately, he died a year later and his wife Grace continued to live there until her death in 1858. Then Frederick Freman lived there.

A newspaper report in 1840 tells of a body of a new born female infant being found in a clothes box of a Hamble Cliff servant. After investigation it was concluded the child was born alive but after its birth it was accidentally strangled without intentional violence. The concealment was reported to the County Magistrates. Similar to other large houses Hamble Cliff House had several servants, gardeners and a coachman.

About 1870, it was purchased by the Earl of Hardwicke, father-in-law of the Hon Mrs Eliot Yorke who resided there from 1881. Hon Mrs Eliot Yorke was the second daughter of Sir Anthony de Rothschild and she supported many aspects of Hamble's community life. Her main recreation was yachting. She was on the County Education Committee and Southampton University Governing Board, as well as President of the UK Band of Hope Union and the Women's Total Abstinence Union.

During her time at Hamble Cliff House she had several royal visitors such as Her Royal Highness Princess Louise, Princess of Battenberg and Her Majesty the Empress Frederick of Germany. It is reputed that Prince Leopold and maybe his mother Queen Victoria could have visited.

In 1927 the Hon Mrs Eliot Yorke died and it appears the Countess of Hardwicke took over the residence. When setting up its aircraft factory in 1936 British Marine Aircraft bought Hamble Cliff House and grounds to ensure access to Southampton Water via a new slipway. During the Second World War the house was occupied by the US Marines but was in the ownership of Folland Aircraft.

Follands used the house as its Sports and Social Club but it later became the Apprentice Training School. The ownership changed as Follands became a member of Hawker Siddeley Aviation Group and later British Aerospace. During this time the wartime blockhouse in the garden was converted to an astronomical observatory. The aircraft factory is now known as GE Aviation.

In the late 1980s the house was sold for private development into high quality flats. The stables were also converted into four separate homes and Hamble Cliff Lodge is a private residence today.