# Recollections of Hamble

## 12th November 2026 - Memorial Hall

At this meeting a new booklet, to add to the society's popular series of local history booklets, was launched entitled 'Recollections of Hamble'. The Society's Chair, Ian Underdown, led the well-illustrated presentation about the fascinating recollections of past and older village residents with a couple of committee members reading out some of them.

The first was about a child living in Hamble in the early 1900s. Her name was Annie Williams and her father was known as Captain Bob Williams a fisherman. She lived in Mercury View Terrace in Satchell Lane and she described her house including the outside toilet that had a wooden seat wall to wall that had a hole in it and a container underneath to catch the droppings. Annie went on to describe her school and its enjoyable Christmas parties all paid for by Admiral Fullerton and the village policeman acted as Father Christmas.

The next was a dispute when a new owner of Sydney Lodge put a gate across Westfield Common. It started with the owner attending a Parish Meeting to introduce and explain his plans and Fred Blessley described the atmosphere. The room was packed, our knees were up to our chins, thick plug-tobacco smoke made visibility bad, I could hardly breathe, and those forms were terribly hard. The Parish Chairman and the vicar were unusually absent from the top table. Subsequently, on one dark and rainy night a gang, women and all, again visited the spot. Joe Lockyer's hacksaw blade went through that chain as though it was butter. The gate a heavy one, was placed in the ditch.

Ian went on to give the recollections of the landlord of the Victory Inn of a shooting in the pub in 1837, Augustus Hooker telling of a gun accident at the gun battery on Hamble Common in 1879, the owner of the Olde House describing yachts winter storage at the beginning of the 1900s and very amusing novelty events put on by the 'Fools Company' at the regattas in the late 1930s.

Several wartime experiences were then recounted including a boy's memories of the Second World War, a school pupil relating his experience of an air raid while at school, an Air Transport Auxiliary woman pilot's exploits delivering aircraft from Spitfires to Wellington bombers and a local resident describing probably one of the largest oil tanker fleets ever seen, known as the 'Hamble Circus'' operating after D-Day from the Hamble oil terminal.

Next the recollections of a TS Mercury boy describing the hardships of a typical winter's day at the training school, including sleeping on the freezing ship and having to walk ashore in bare feet. Then the society's treasurer, Christine Smith, recounted her memories of the shops in the village in the 1950s and a youngster leaving school talked about his work in Hamble garages with limited equipment during the same period.

Then Bob Borrett's time of operating Blue Star Boats with his family in the 1960s and Ray Sedgwick's 60+ years as ferryman were recounted. Ian next

reminisced on how he organised the aquatic events at Hamble Regatta & Carnival including events such as rowing ladies with men blindfolded, pillow fight on a greasy pole, ride the bike along a plank, water derby and a raft race that became known as the ‘Drumaran World Championship’.

This was followed by Ray Smout describing his time as Hamble’s policeman in the 1970s when his claim to fame was he was instrumental in solving a major crime at Hamble Manor Hotel that led to the longest and costliest trail in British history up to that time. Former RAF Vulcan bomber pilot, Phil Nelson, recollected his very enjoyable time teaching at the College of Air Training.

Finally, further back in history a Hamble shipwright recounted a plot to depose King Henry V in 1415, when the plotters met in a house in Hamble. Subsequently, the king was informed of the plot and the conspirators were beheaded in Southampton that enabled Henry V to sail to France to achieve success at the Battle of Agincourt.

Those present found it interesting and enjoyed hearing about how Hamble residents lived and worked in the village over the centuries. A very successful launch of the new booklet and afterwards there were many complimentary and positive comments about it and the evening’s presentation.