

# Hamble-Warsash Ferry

## 7th April 2022 - Memorial Hall

When on the foreshore at Hamble or Warsash you can hear people talking about the Pink Ferries but some of the stories told are often incorrect. The Society's Chairman, Ian Underdown, gave a talk about the history of the Hamble-Warsash Ferry to tell the true fascinating story of the ferry. Ian started by explaining that it was an argument by two local people about when the ferry started that got him into local history and writing the ferry's history.

As there has been a need to cross the river since early times and there was always someone willing to take people across for a fee, there must have been a ferry across the river at Hamble for as long as people have lived nearby. The first evidence of a Hamble-Warsash Ferry was once said to be as the manorial rights of both Hamble Priory & Titchfield Abbey during the 12th & 13th centuries but no documentary evidence has been found to substantiate it.

Ian gave information from documents of that time that indicated that local people ferried people across the river but the first written evidence of a ferry between Hamble and Warsash was by John Leland in his itinerary of 1535-43. An Admiralty Court in 1572 recorded that the ferry charges should be a penny for a crossing of a man with a horse, and just a halfpenny for a man without a horse.

Winchester College was Hamble's Lord of the Manor and its records of 1681 is the first mention who was in possession of the ferry. Wealthy Hamble resident, Daniel Wheeler, took the copyhold of the ferry and he also held the Bugle Inn's copyhold. In recent history the ferry has always been associated with the Bugle Inn and this is the first documented connection between them. On his death and through marriage the prominent Brady family took control of the ferry and "the privilege of keeping a common boat to waft passengers over by ferry" for the next 150 years.

On a Sunday afternoon in January 1793, two people drowned on the ferry. The Hamble ferryman rowed a ferry boat with three passengers and a horse across the river. Instead of rowing the horse over in the separate horse boat he took it with the passengers. About half way across the horse put its foot through the bottom of the ferry, which resulted in water coming into the boat, so they called for help. Immediately, eighteen-year-old Richard Coombes took another ferry boat to their assistance, into which they all transferred, but being too small it filled with water resulting in the drowning of Richard and a passenger, Henry Bath.

Ian gave interesting details of the ferry over the subsequent years such as in 1889 the lease was more annually for the ferry (£16) than for the Bugle (£14), workmen commuted across the river and the ferry took telegrams across the river to Warsash. By the 1950s the importance of the ferry was declining due to the use of cars and buses and its customers were using it more for leisure such as walkers, cyclists, casual holiday visitors and yachtsmen. Ray Sedgwick took over the ferry in 1958 and devoted his life to it. He was

ferryman until he reached the age of 83 and had completed 62 years of service in 2020.

Why are the ferries pink? Before 2002 they were various colours, although mostly white. In 2002 the current ferry owner Mike Lindsell took over the ferry and introduced a new corporate image to raise its profile and everything was coloured pink such as the boats, ferry shelter and notices. Mike and the current ferryman, Sam Phillips, were at the talk that was very well received and enjoyed by those who attended.

A booklet about the ferry's history is available from the Hamble-Warsash Ferry and for more details see the 'Publications' section.