

Moody's Boatyard

7th February 2013 - Roy Underdown Pavilion

David Moody gave the Society an illustrated talk about the history of Moody's boatyard, a family business, which spanned three centuries and seven generations of the family.

The boat business started when John Moody moved to Swanwick in 1827 and acquired a piece of land adjacent to the river. Over the years the family acquired further parcels of land as the business expanded. Some examples of the early work undertaken was maintaining fishing boats including work on the crabbers at Warsash, extending the coal barges which went up to Botley and a contract to maintain the wooden Bursledon Toll Bridge. Boat maintenance and storage, as well as building small dinghies formed the basis of the business in those early years.

Moody started yacht building in 1935 and built a number of wooden yachts, with the first being for Dr Harrison Butler a famous designer of small yachts. This continued until the Second World War when the company undertook Admiralty work. It built small launches, landing craft and Harbour Defence Motor Launches up to 72ft. At this time the number of employees increased from 150 to 200. During the war Moody repaired or refitted over 2000 vessels.

After the war Moody continued to build wooden boats including designs by Laurent Giles and in 1970 built its last wooden yacht designed by Fred Parker. In 1965 Moody won the Best Boat at the London Boat Show. This was one of many industry awards over the years.

Moody had started to build GRP boats in 1965 and continued until 1989. These were designed by internationally renowned yacht designers, such as Laurent Giles, Angus Primrose and Bill Dixon. Moody did not mould the hulls itself but assembled and fitted out its Moody range of boats at Swanwick.

Moody built its marina in phases and the first phase was completed and opened in 1968. In the mid 1960s Moody owned the former Woodnutt boatyard at Warsash but sold it to help fund the construction of the marina.

In 1973 Moody and Marine Projects entered into an agreement to jointly develop a range of GRP sailing yachts. These yachts were marketed under the name Moody and completely built by Marine Projects, Plymouth.

In 1978 Moody won the Queen's Award for Export Achievement. David described and showed examples from the range of over 5000 yachts built by Moody or bearing its name.

The Moody family sold the company in 2005 to Premier Marinas, who subsequently sold the Moody brand name to Hanse Yachts of Germany.

David has written a book entitled 'The Moody Legacy' with the first part describing the business' history from 1827 to 2005 and the last section gives details of the boats the company produced or which bore the Moody name. The meeting was very well attended and included members of the Moody Owners Association who very much enjoyed his talk.