

# Warsash and the River

## 7th February 2019 - Roy Underdown Pavilion

Warsash local historian and author, Bryan Woodford, gave an interesting illustrated talk about 'Warsash and the River', which gave an insight into the village's riverside activities over the past centuries.

Bryan's grandparents lived at Hamble in Back Street, now known as Rope Walk, and they moved to Warsash in 1908. He showed the ferry that they would have taken, as it was at that time, as well as a notice board that now hangs in the Rising Sun pub. He then displayed other pictures of the ferry in the later years including well-known ferryman, Ray Sedgwick, when young in the 1960s. He also gave other interesting information that the two current ferries were built in Warsash and Hook village.

He had been previously asked on a number of occasions what were the square concrete blocks on the shore as you walk from the ferry to Warsash and he explained to the meeting that they were used during and after the Second World War to moor landing craft and other boats.

James Lock who set up a crab & lobster business at Warsash was an uncle of Bryan's father. He imported the shellfish from other parts of the country in boats that had wet holds that allowed water to circulate which kept them alive. When visitors saw the boats on Warsash Hard they were amazed to see holes in the bottom and wondered why they did not sink. To keep the shellfish alive at Warsash until the customers needed them, they were kept in wooden boxes known as 'carbs' or in a lobster pond. James Lock also had tearooms on the shore that served crab and lobster meals and for a while had a former coastguard boat which he called 'Gypsy Queen' that he used as a restaurant beached on the foreshore.

Bryan explained that the lobster pond was eventually filled in to become the site of Warsash Sailing Club which was formed in 1957 and he gave additional information about the club. In the early 1800s, where the Shore Road clubhouse is situated today, five Royal Navy ships were built and remains of the slipways can still be seen on the shore. Bryan brought some shipbuilding tools such as a draw knife, adze and caulking tools to show the meeting how they were used, including a photo of how Prince Charles used an adze in an opening ceremony.

HMS Tormentor was established at Warsash during the Second World War and it was a Combined Operations Base for training in the use of landing craft and small boat raiding parties. Bryan showed a series of fascinating pictures of its activities such as the failed Dieppe raid and successful D-Day departure from Warsash and landings in France.

Next, he spoke about the coastguard at Warsash. The Coastguard used watch vessels as a base to undertake its duties locally and during the 19th century the one for the Hamble River was moored at Hook Point in which four coastguard families lived. In

1881 a permanent red brick coastguard station with a watchtower was built at the end of Newtown Road and was eventually used by the School of Navigation.

Bryan had previously given the Society a talk about the School of Navigation so this time just highlighted some of its features and training boats. He spoke about Warsash House that had its own hard running down to the river. A number of important families lived there such as the Sartoris whose son married the daughter of American President Grant and the Shenley family that had a large steam yacht built and moored off the house.

Bryan concluded by showing pictures of a small sailing boat built in 1858 named 'Sorella' that was subsequently used by the Warsash Fuger fishing family and now has been restored and being sailed in the Mediterranean. You could see at the end of the talk how much those present appreciated it by the number of people who wanted to speak to him afterwards.