

Hooker's Bakery at Hamble

In the mid 20th century the bakery was run by twin brothers Dick and Roy Hooker, with their wives Dorrie and Marge serving in the shop. Roy was the baker who got up early to bake the bread in old fashion ovens and was helped by Bert Jones. When you saw them they were usually hot as they worked in a small confined space with the ovens behind the shop and were often covered in white flour. Dick was responsible for delivering their bread and cakes around the village to their customers using a green van.

The notice board outside of the bakery stated "Hooker's Bakery established 1879. Best Bread. Home made cakes and pastries. Lardy cakes a speciality." Villagers with experience would arrive at the shop about 10am, to buy the sticky buns that had just come out of the oven and still warm. This was after they had produced all the bread necessary to supply the bread round. These freshly baked lardy cakes and sticky buns were a favourite with all who could not resist the temptation as they passed by, as well as the cakes in the shop window.

The Hooker family records show they purchased the Beer House known as 'The White Hart' in April 1877 for £300 pounds from the executors of the previous licensees the Curtis family. Augustus Hooker was the purchaser and the 1881 census describes him as a Baker & Beer retailer, aged 40. He was an interesting person being a member of the Hampshire Artillery Volunteers and was in charge of the gun battery on the Common.

In 1887 he was accused of illegal trading by opening his house during illegal hours. PC Purches had observed some soldiers enter the bar but when he investigated they made their escape over the back wall. Augustus explained they were friends of his, as his bake house worked for Netley Hospital where the soldiers were stationed. He said they had come with reference to supplying some bread but PC Purches had observed the glasses had beer in them recently drawn. He was fined £1 and 9s 6d costs.

He died in 1900 and his wife Sarah was recorded in 1936 as still serving customers on her 91st birthday. Mrs Elsie Marshall, nee Hooker, the wife of a subsequent licensee who later held the licence herself, said that the premises was a shop before it became a tavern in the 19th century.

In 1964 the bakery ceased operation and the premises were taken over and incorporated into the public house.