

Hamble in the 1850s

11th April 2013 - Roy Underdown Pavilion

The Society's Chairman, Ian Underdown, took the packed meeting back to the 1850s to find out what Hamble was like at that time. He used the 1851 census, the first which gave specific details of Hamble residents, as well as pictures and newspaper articles as the basis of his talk about 'Hamble in the 1850s'.

The census showed that there were 397 people living in Hamble on the March evening it was taken and another 46 lived in Satchell, which at this time was not in Hamble but was included in Hound. Many of Hamble's inhabitants jobs were maritime related but some were employed in agriculture or occupations servicing the local community such as shop keepers, blacksmiths, carpenters, dress makers or servants in the larger houses.

Members found out details about the families who lived in Hamble, their ages and occupations, as well as where they were born. Ian took the meeting on a tour of the village, whose residents ranged from the Earl of Hardwicke to paupers and jobs varied from a Master Shipbuilder to domestic servants. Over 75 of these lived in Back Street (now named Rope Walk) which included a Poor House.

Charles Yorke, the 4th Earl of Hardwicke, was a senior officer in the Royal Navy who inherited his title from his uncle, together with Wimpole Hall in Cambridgeshire. He was a Member of Parliament and on becoming an Earl he moved up to the House of Lords. He was an active member of Sir Robert Peel's administration and became Postmaster General in 1952.

Ian used newspaper articles to illustrate neighbour disputes between Hamble residents such as a lad, Thomas Light, putting dirt into a shared washing copper which led to an assault and a court appearance. He showed articles about smugglers being caught on the river, an occupation not declared in the census. Ian also told that the Earl of Hardwicke supposedly fathered an illegitimate child by Charlotte Pratt, a serving girl at Wimpole Hall.

As mentioned previously most of Hamble's occupations were maritime related, such as mariners, fishermen, fish merchants or shipwrights. Hamble had a significant fishing industry and at the beginning of the 1850s the Scovell family built a large pond at Hamble Point to keep shellfish alive until they were required by the London markets. It was said to be able to hold two or three hundred thousand fish and a small house was built near it for a man to reside to feed the fish.

During and at the end of the meeting members identified and discussed many noteworthy features regarding Hamble and its residents. Some of the interesting

comments included the great number of people living in each dwelling, there were three shoemakers in the village and if the census had included the men at sea on the day it was taken Hamble's population would have been shown as much larger.

If you wish to find out more details of Hamble residents in the 1851 census you can look them up on the Society's website