

Hamble Schools

9th November 2017 - Roy Underdown Pavilion

It was surprising that there was no written history of Hamble Schools, even the two schools currently serving the village did not have a history of their own establishments. The Society's Chairman, Ian Underdown, spent two years researching this important aspect of village life that enabled him to compile a comprehensive history of Hamble Schools that resulted in this illustrated talk and the publication of a booklet giving their histories.

Hamble's first school for all the village children was opened in 1840 with about 80 pupils attending. It was a National School, which was a Church of England School and the Vicar was its manager. The school teaching staff consisted of schoolmaster and schoolmistress and for many decades they were Henry Merwood and Miss Arabella Pannell. At the end of the 1800s an Inspector's report pointed out that the latrines did not have doors and the managers argued that the closets should be left as at present without doors as it was in the interests of morality. Another report in 1900 described the school as "... in many respects, this is a model village school".

As the village population grew, the school was enlarged. It was re-modelled in 1892 with the vicar offering to advance the costs without the guarantee of repayment. The school took children of the staff at Netley Military Hospital and during the First World War the Headmaster, Mr Cockrill, was called up to serve in France. In the mid-1920s there were only 3 outside earth closets and an outside tap and the school was also struggling to accommodate the children of the increasing village population. It was enlarged in 1928 facilitated by the generosity of an American millionaire, Mr Emmons, who lived in a large house called 'The Copse' next to the school.

By 1937 it could not accommodate all the village children due to the expansion of the aircraft industry so a new Senior School was opened at the end of Satchell Lane, taking pupils aged 11 and over until their school leaving age. In the planning stage it was called Butlocks Heath Senior School but on opening it was named Hamble Senior School. During the Second World War air raid shelters were built at both schools and on the last day of August in 1940 the Senior School suffered bomb damaged.

In the mid-1940s school meals and free milk had to be provided for the pupils and again the village school could not cope with the increase in numbers. Three classes of the older junior pupils were sent to temporary accommodation at the Secondary School and an infant class had lessons at the Vicarage, until the Junior School was built in Hamble Lane and opened in 1953. At this time the building of Pilands estate led to its children attending Hamble schools thus an increase in school numbers.

The Junior School was a unique design with ramps instead of stairs, central heating, plus double-glazed windows and an insulated roof to keep out the noise of the aircraft engines from the neighbouring aircraft factory and the airfield opposite. The old village school became Hamble Infant School.

Ian explained how the schools developed and showed pictures of their activities such as plays, sports and trips, as well as the Parent Teacher Associations raising funds for providing things such as swimming pools.

Over the years the school names changed. Hamble Junior became Hamble Primary School when the old Infant School closed at the end of 1978 and about the same time Satchell Lane was diverted around the now named Comprehensive School. Following this there were many significant curriculum changes, such as the introduction of computers to the classrooms, the National Curriculum, Statutory Tests, league tables and OFSTED Inspections.

The new millennium saw the most impressive Millennium Mural painted on the side of the Primary School ramp and in 2002 the Hamble Community Sports Complex opened in Satchell Lane. The school also gained specialist school status and became Hamble Community Sports College. In 2016 the school was renamed 'The Hamble School' the seventh change of its name during its history.

Ian also talked about and showed pictures of other schools that have served Hamble such as nautical, aviation and play schools. This was another very popular and successful talk by Ian with the full house finding out new interesting things they did not know about Hamble schools.

Those present were talking enthusiastically about what and who they knew with a common comment that the evening brought back many happy memories. It was difficult to get some to leave afterwards as they were still talking about their old school memories. Everyone enjoyed it and it was a very good evening.