

Shops in Hamble

20th April 2010 - Roy Underdown Pavilion

Ian Underdown, Chairman of the Hamble Local History Society, gave an amusing and very enlightening talk on the shops that existed in Hamble, with particular reference to memories of the shops in the 1950s.

With research and contributions from fellow committee members, Christine Smith, Mary Austin, and Dave Wilde, Ian outlined over fifty or so firms that have owned businesses or run shops in Hamble, using many old and recent photographs of the village.

The talk started with details of shops in Hamble around 1840 and 1900. Then the meeting focused on the shops during the late 1950s. There was much audience participation with some contributors being rebuked by others for incorrect memories.

Starting at the bottom of the High Street, Ian took the meeting up through the village to the upper end sharing memories with the audience. There was much discussion regarding "Fearless" Fred's shops, and it was decided that he ran a greengrocer for Joe Upcott at the present day Compass Point premises and most agreed at what is now Nat West Bank, Fred sold material such as crimplene. Fred's nickname was due to his "fearless" nature, an example being when he took a boat across Southampton Water, only to be in near collision with a tanker!

"Ye Olde Welcome Cafe", now Capstan House was in the late 1950s renowned for its "crab teas and sandwiches" and there was a section called "The Cave" where Hamble's youth would gather round a jukebox. Bevis' newsagent shop, located at today's "The River Rat", was fondly remembered, as it sold ice-creams and sweets, and was run by Claude, his wife Daisy and Tony, his son.

There were also fond memories of Hooker's Bakery shop, next to the Whyte Harte, where the freshly baked lardy cakes and sticky buns, a favourite with all who could not resist the temptation as they passed by.

The meeting moved on to the other shopping areas at St Andrew Buildings and Coronation Parade, as well as shops that served specific areas such as Prentices on the corner of Sydney Avenue and Satchell Stores.

In addition to the shops run from buildings there was a variety of mobile shops. About ten were recalled, including Brown & Harrison's horse drawn milk delivery cart, to which keen gardeners would rush out when the horse left its business behind.

Sadly, as more people had cars, Southampton became more accessible for shopping, and the growth of the large super stores such as Tesco have forced many smaller businesses to close. In all there were over 25 shops in Hamble selling products in the 1950s compared to just six today!