

Hamble Regattas

22nd June 2010 - Hamble Memorial Hall



“The pole suddenly broke off, and it, with poor piggy at the end, went into the water”. This was, in 1869, an account of men walking a “greasy pole”, endeavouring to reach their prize, a live pig in a basket! Against the rules two men climbed along the pole, causing it to break!

This was one of many amusing stories, recounted by Ian Underdown in his talk on the history of the Hamble Regattas in the week prior to Hamble Week 2010. In another, Ian told of the live ducks that were cast adrift on the water with young boys swimming after them, causing much amusement for the spectators. Other events included “Duck Hunts”, where the “duck” in a small dinghy was pursued by the “hunters” in larger vessels and “aquatic derbies” in which competitors rode wooden horses made from barrels and propelled them by paddles.

He spoke of the many changes that have occurred through the years, from the very first account found so far of a regatta being held at Hamble in [1868](#). Along with newspaper cuttings and many photographs these articles were brought to life.

Initially the regattas were only open to those living in the villages of Hamble River, and were funded by the wealthier residents of the area. The first regattas were mid-week, in August or September, and were well supported, as evidenced by the closure of the local schools during this time.

Of course details of the sailing, rowing and other aquatic events were related. The local boat builders Luke Brothers and Hamble River Sailing Club contributed much to the regattas' organisation over the years and TS Mercury also supported the regatta in many ways.

In later years the regatta, renamed Hamble Week, became a week-long event in June or July. Although many of the events have been victims of tighter constraints due to Health and Safety regulations, it is good that Hamble Week still supports the exciting Soap Box Derby and the much more tranquil crabbing competitions, and shows that there is still a strong community spirit within the village.

One item seems to have stood the test of time, that being the firework finale, which each year seems bigger and better.

As the evening concluded, there was much discussion amongst those who remembered the regattas of the 1950s and 1960s and it was clear that this was, once again, a successful and well supported talk by Ian.

A booklet has been produced about 'Hamble Regattas'.