

Hamble Players

4th June 2026 - Memorial Hall

Steve Buckmaster and Kay Baker, who had been a member of Hamble Players for 46 years, gave a fascinating and inspiring presentation about their award-winning theatre group. They shared the rich history Hamble Players, their personal journeys, and cherished memories from their time with the group.

Steve started by showing pictures of famous actors and actresses and asked what they all had in common. They had all started their acting careers in amateur dramatics.

They then told of the history of dramatic performances and their group's past in the village. Hamble Dramatic Club were staging performances in 1920 and a bank account dates back to 1934. After the Second World War the group was officially renamed the Hamble Dramatic Society. Various other theatre groups emerged in Hamble, with the Hamble Players being officially recognised as a new organisation in January 1955.

It made its home at Hamble Memorial Hall with the aim of making theatre enjoyable for everyone and to become an active part of the village's arts scene.

In 1956, they collaborated with the Folland Amateur Dramatic Society to perform at the Folland Aircraft Theatre. For many years, Stuart Jacobs served as the principal director, establishing the high standards that Hamble Players uphold today, such as no prompts. Throughout the 1960s, the Hamble Players regularly showcased performances for the students of TS Mercury.

During a miners' strike in the 1970s, a performance had power cut halfway through the first act and the lights went out. With the assistance of two car's headlights to light the stage, the performance was completed to a great ovation at the end. During this decade Hamble Players performed at the Nuffield Theatre in Southampton and were showcasing their creativity on local BBC television, as well as winning several awards.

In the 1980s its Old Time Music Halls were prominent and these started in the 1960s to support the annual regatta and carnival. Throughout Hamble Players time, pantomimes each year have been its most popular shows. In this decade famous actress Ducie Gray became the group's patron.

Hamble Players celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2005. Steve then went on to talk about its recent wide range of performances and how covid interrupted putting on shows. When the restrictions were lifted, they were able to put on a pantomime for two weeks rather than one.

Next those present were told of the great amount of work that goes into preparing for a production and that it is not just the actors that make a show successful but the backstage and other support roles. This ranges from choosing a production and director to the opening night. This includes

auditions, casting, read through, costumes, set design and build. Followed by rehearsals, marketing and organising the front of house arrangements for the performances.

Finally, they told of their forthcoming performances for this year. A very professional and informative presentation and Hamble Players successfully achieved their aim for everyone attending to go away knowing something they didn't know before about Hamble's very successful theatre group.