

Hamble-Warsash Ferry

20th November 2007 - Roy Underdown Pavilion

On 20th November 2007, at the Roy Underdown Pavilion in Hamble, Ian Underdown gave a talk on the history of the Hamble - Warsash ferry. What started as an argument between two local residents, Bill Hobbs and Nick Robinson, was also the start of a journey into local history for Ian, as he spoke of the record offices he visited and of the various documents to be found there, some of which were categorised as MEC (Mouse Eaten Corner)! The first written evidence of a ferry between Hamble and Warsash is by John Leland in his itinerary of 1535-43, although there were many suggestions, in documents dated much earlier, that a ferry crossing existed prior to this date. Ian spoke of the early fares charged for crossing the Hamble, which included the charge of 1d (one old penny), for a man and a horse, in 1572. How the horse crossed the river is not known, but can you imagine travelling in the ferry with a horse! Until the 1980s the ferry had been associated with the Bugle public house, and Ian showed photographs of the old Ferry House, which was part of the pub. The names of the ferrymen can be traced back to 1881 when Henry Mears ran the ferry, right up to Mike Lindsell, who owns the ferry today. These ferrymen include Alf Dornom, grandfather of Ray Sedgwick, who has been ferryman both full and part time for the last 50 years. Ian also showed photographs of the two ferries used today, Claire and Emily, and of the changes that have occurred to them, and the origin of their names, and the move, in 2002, to paint everything pink! What had started as an exercise to resolve an argument, has resulted in this fascinating and comprehensive history of the Hamble - Warsash ferry.

A booklet has been produced about the 'Hamble - Warsash Ferry'.