



FOUNDED IN 1924

View from Poole

The Society for Poole: promoting Poole; its history, culture and people



SPRING 2025

www.societyforpoole.org



The Society for Poole



@SocietyforPoole



SocietyforPoole

TAPPER FUNERAL SERVICE

A fresh approach to funerals



Our independent family business was established in Poole in 1904. We now have funeral homes throughout East Dorset and West Hampshire.

We provide traditional and woodland burial or cremation and are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In 2017, we were proud to open a spectacular new crematorium, based at Harbour View, our woodland burial ground overlooking Poole Harbour and the Purbeck Hills.

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TAPPER FUNERAL SERVICE

32-34 Parkstone Road, Poole BH15 2PG

Chairman's Note



Welcome to the Spring 2025 edition of our magazine.

We are coming round to our next AGM and I need to be honest with all our members in that we are at a seminal moment for the Society. At the last AGM I made an impassioned plea for support for the Executive team. As a Society we organised the Beating of the Sea Bounds in the summer however we had little or no support to help organise or run the event and have had little or no support to run the Society throughout the year.

This was not the first time that support was requested and so we are at the point that the Society cannot progress as it is. Andrew Hawkes, our President, has had a desire to step back/down for a while and indeed I propose to step back at the end of 2025 after being Chairman for 8 years.

We have been an active Society, talks, a quarterly newsletter as well as being a spokesperson for the heritage and culture of the town. We have organised the 75th anniversary commemorations of VE/VJ day when we closed the Quay and had original historic Dunkirk boats and old military equipment as well as 40's music, stalls and importantly Poole's history and details of the town's contributions during the war. We have also resurrected the Beating of the Bounds during this summer. In total about 17,000 people attended these 2 events and we raised £34,000 to do so. However these events and projects such as the Shore Road heritage lights were organised by a tiny team and this is not sustainable.

I passionately believe that Poole needs a civic heritage organisation and, as we have publicised within this magazine and at meetings, we have been working closely with Poole Maritime Trust (PMT). The proposal is therefore, if the Society cannot stand on its own, it formally joins with the PMT providing a land based element to their marine based perspective of Poole.

We have achieved 100 years of existence so perhaps it is time to rest, reset and join like minded people in a wider organisation. I welcome your thoughts directly or at the AGM but for sure there needs to be change.

Mike Pearce
Chairman
chairman@societyforpoole.org
February 2025

The Society for Poole

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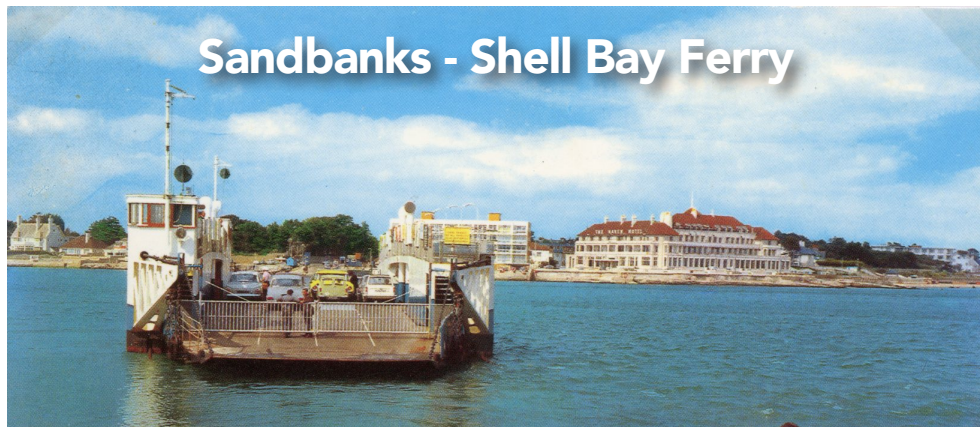
REGISTRAR
Vacant

SOCIAL SECRETARY
Vacant

VIEW FROM POOLE DISTRIBUTION
Jan Marsh
Janette.marsh97@gmail.com

Executive meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at The Oakdale Club, 92 Darbys Lane, Poole BH15 3EU

Sandbanks - Shell Bay Ferry



As far back as 1580 there were disputes over the ferry rights between North and South Haven. A ferry service had operated for centuries, long before the chain ferry. The first passengers were carried by rowing boat and later by motorboat. In 1905 suggestions were made that a transporter bridge should be constructed. This never happened. Further proposals were made by Frank Amman for a bridge in 1929, but this was opposed by Poole Borough Council and did not happen. Around 1923 the Bournemouth – Swanage Motor Road and Ferry Company was set up by Frank Amman and his sons Gerard and Arthur. The first ferry came into service in July 1926. It was a small coal fired steam driven ferry built by J Samuel White of Cowes, Isle of Wight at a cost of £12,000. The stone for the slipways and road foundations came from the Isle of Purbeck. The ferry carried 15 cars and in that first summer carried 100,000 passengers and 12,000 cars.

FERRY TOLLS

charabanc / omnibus	3s 0d
motor lorry (under 2 tons)	3s 0d
traction engine (under 5 tons)	50s
steam wagon (under 2 tons)	3s 0d
motorcycle with operator	1s 6d
motor tricar or cycle with sidecar	2s
motor lorry traction engine,	2s
steam wagon hauling a trailer (under 2 ton)	

Hants and Dorset Bus Company began to use the ferry services on their Bournemouth to Swanage route in 1927. The first ferry was in service until 1952.

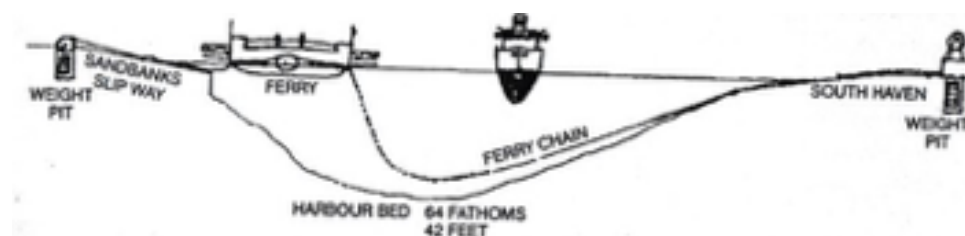
During the Second World War the whole area was taken over by the military and the ferry service was suspended. The road had to be rebuilt after war because of tanks and shells. The ferry service restarted on 31st January 1946.



The second ferry (see photo bottom page 4) in 1952 was also steam driven but only held 8 cars which was too small and it was only in service until 1958.



Ferry No3 awaiting sale



Ferry number three (2 photos top right) came into service in 1958 and was a diesel electric powered ferry which took 28 cars. It cost £100,000 and carried 650,000 vehicles a year and a million passengers. In 1961 the Raglan Property Company took over the ferry service from the Amman family. In 1983 Silvermist Properties (Kean Family) took over. During this time the slipways were reconstructed and a new toll booth constructed. The fourth ferry (the current ferry) came into service in 1994. It was named Bramble Bush Bay after a small bay located on the Shell Bay side where the houseboats are situated. The ferry was built by Richard Dunster, Hull. This ferry takes 48 cars (though 52 are possible). It cost £2.1 million. The chains are 1,235 feet long, they cost £17,000 and are replaced every fifteen to eighteen months. The old chains are sold off as weights for lobster pots or boat moorings.

Schematic view of the chain path

The crossing takes 3 ½ minutes and saves a 25-mile trip around Poole Harbour. In the past fares were collected on the ferry but nowadays they are collected at the purpose-built toll booth.

By Jan Marsh

References: G G Lambert - Gateway to the Purbecks: the history of Sandbanks Ferry from 1500 to the Present Day

Material in the Poole Maritime Trust Archive
www.poolemaritimetrust.org

Photos from Andrew Hawkes Collection and Poole Maritime Trust Archive

The Pitwines Project

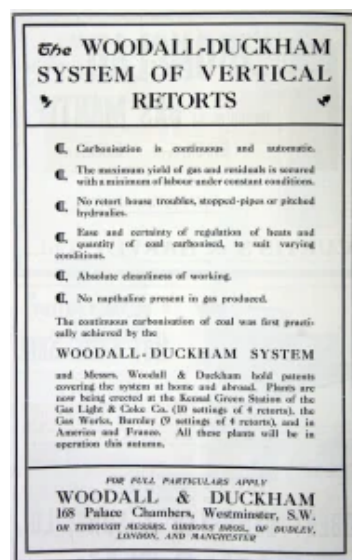


The Pitwines Site

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Bournemouth Gas and Water Company was expanding its operations rapidly to meet the increasing demand for gas from a growing population. The Poole gasworks was at East Quay, where all the available space had been utilised and there was no further room for expansion. Other departments were housed at Beech Hurst, former home of Philip Budge, solicitor and three times mayor of Poole. This fine Georgian mansion provided a rather grand location for the company's district offices and showrooms. Behind Beech Hurst was a wide stretch of marshy land bordered on the north by the Poole to Bournemouth railway line. This area, known as Pitwines, was once bisected by the medieval town wall and ditch on its way to Parkstone Bay, and was used as a dump for the town's waste in Tudor and Stuart times. In the 1920s it was already the site of a gasholder and was large enough for the needs of company's development for many years to come.

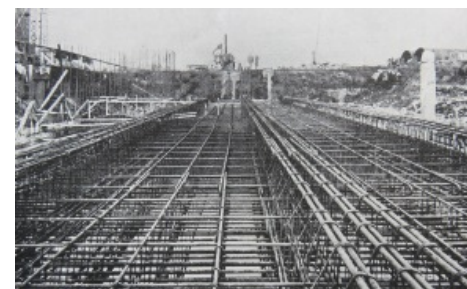
The outbreak of the First World War put all plans on hold. Men hurried to enlist, including many from the Gas and Water Company. The town had to adjust to women working in various unfamiliar roles, and female gas fitters repairing gas fires, cookers and water heaters.

In the difficult post-war world, development plans could at last be revived. The company proposed to increase their capacity by building what was virtually a complete new works at Pitwines. In 1923 the Co-Partner, the company's works magazine, announced that 'the ensuing six months will see Pitwines a veritable hive of activity' and admitted that it was only just in time as a hard winter would 'very severely tax our existing gas manufacturing resources'.



By the following year, the company were able to list the major contracts that had been awarded. Most important was the retort house itself which was to be supplied by the Woodall Duckham Company. Harold W. Woodall had been the Engineer and General Manager of the Bournemouth Gas and Water Company in the early years of the century with Arthur Duckham as his assistant engineer. The two men formed a partnership to develop systems for the continuous carbonization of coal using vertical retorts. During the war, Harold

Woodall joined the Dorsetshire Regiment and later became a Lieutenant-Colonel in the King's Liverpool Regiment. Arthur Duckham chaired an advisory committee to the Ministry of Munitions and was granted a knighthood at the end of the war. In 1920, they set up a private company which was to become a leading supplier of vertical retorts. Another important contractor was the Mitchell Conveyor Company which would supply the coal handling cableway bringing coal from the Poole works at East Quay to Pitwines and capable of handling 100 tons per hour. They were also contracted to provide the handling system for coke, ash and breeze (fine coke), a 'telpher' or automatic aerial conveyor using a trolleys.



The retort house foundations

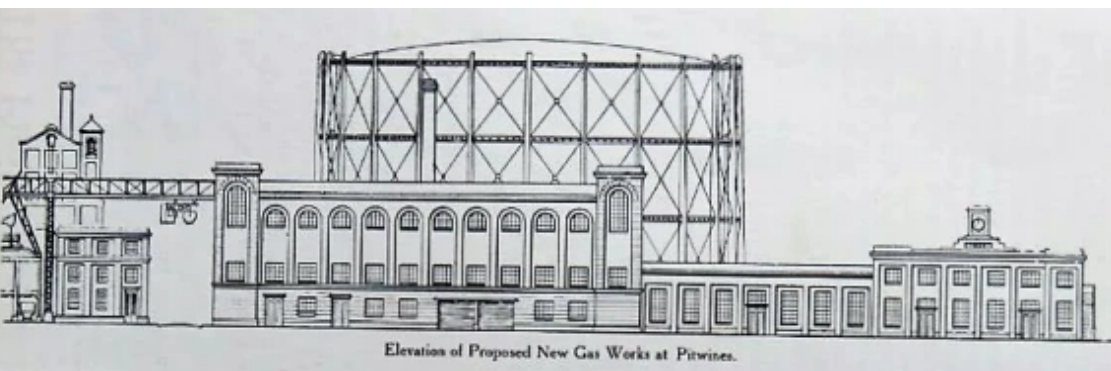
The reinforced concrete structures such as the main block of buildings and the coal store and coke hoppers were to be built by T. Vale and Son and the plant for producing water gas by Humphreys and Glasgow, an international firm. There were also contractors for boilers, exhausters, condensers, scrubbers and washers, the relief holder for the water gas, storage tanks, railway sidings and a railway weighbridge. Such a complex site needed detailed planning and drawing but by June 1924, the bulk of this work had been done. The raft foundation of the retort house had been laid, starting with a framework of 42 tons of steel rods to reinforce the 5,000 tons of concrete cement. The reinforced concrete stanchions supporting the retort house (some weighing 168 tons each) would interlock with the steel framework and the finished house

would measure 116 ft. x 51 ft.

By the end of 1924, some of the buildings were taking shape including the coal store, water gas relief holder, coke bunkers and retort house. The unstable ground of the site posed problems and meant that the foundations for many of the buildings had to be supported by 14 in. square piles 30 ft. long. It had also proved difficult to recruit the number of scaffolders, carpenters and other skilled workmen needed. Nevertheless the company had made progress, levelling and laying roads and building the supports for the cableway and telpher systems. The completion of the railway sidings meant that construction materials could be brought on site more easily and the company had acquired a 5 ton locomotive hand crane to work with their existing petrol driven 45 h.p. Caledon shunting locomotive. The main block of buildings was also rising from its foundations. Here would be housed the boilers, water gas plant, producers and gas engines for producing electricity as well as the fitting shop and messroom. As it would be the main aspect of the works visible from the railway, it was designed in a plain but legantly imposing style.

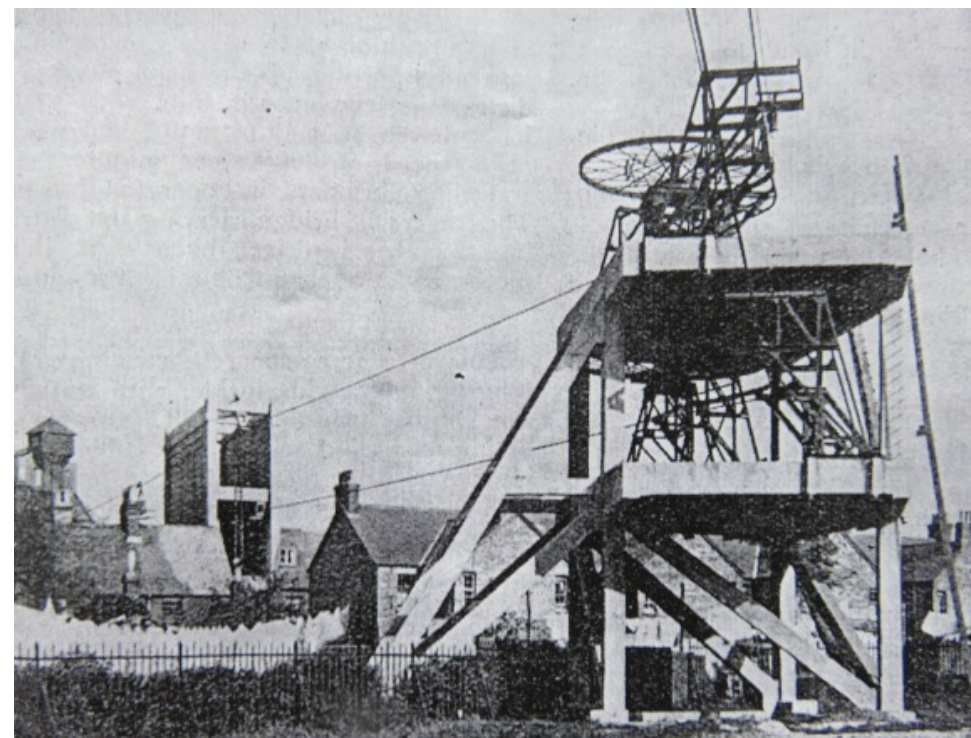
That winter there were south easterly gales and serious floods. At Christchurch a gas holder under construction, estimated to weigh 300 tons, was 'floated off the foundations and moved a considerable distance.' At Pitwines some parts of the site were flooded but the ground which had been raised to 7 ft. above Ordnance datum was still 6 in. above the water. The company described this as 'very satisfactory' while sincerely hoping that such exceptional weather conditions would not occur again in the near future.

On 5th June 1925 a distinguished party consisting of the directors and officers of the Bournemouth Gas and Water Company, including General Manager Mr. Philip G. G. Moon, the mayors of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and other civic dignitaries and members of the Southern Association of Gas Engineers and Managers



(of which Mr. Moon was President) toured the Pitwines works. The party then went to the Branksome Tower Hotel for lunch where they were entertained with a selection of music played by the Gasworks Band, followed by speeches. In a toast to the Bournemouth Gas and Water Company, with which he had previously been associated, Sir Arthur Duckham called it 'one of the most progressive in the whole country'. Gas manufacture finally commenced at the new Pitwines Gasworks on the 4th December 1925. It was only just in time to maintain gas supply in the severe wintry weather. The start of the generating process was the cableway, 1230 ft. long, bringing coal in skips from East Quay via two-storey 'protection' bridges over South Road and Green Road to Pitwines. The design of having the out-going skips travelling above incoming ones rather than side by side was to 'reduce the width required for the cableway, and therefore the number of cottages which had to be demolished'. To have open 9 cwt. skips of coal passing over at chimney level every 32 seconds cannot have been very pleasant for nearby householders, especially on washing days. At the new works the coal was delivered either to the hoist of the retort house or to the coal store. The cableway was also used to transport coke, ash and breeze between the two works.

The heart of the works was the 87 ft. high retort house containing 24 Woodall Duckham vertical retorts each of which could carbonize 7 tons of coal in 24 hours in a continuous process. Coal was fed into the retorts from bunkers and supply hoppers on the top of the building and then heated by 4 producers (furnaces) in an oxygen free environment to release its volatile components, leaving coke as a residue. Gases, ash and coke were continually removed while coke to fuel the producers was fed in through chutes. The carburetted water gas plant was located in the main block of buildings. The process involved passing steam (produced in the plant's water cooling system) through hot coke to produce water gas, a mixture of hydrogen, carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide. Oil was added in the carburetting process to enrich the gas. The water gas was valuable to the supply because it could be produced more quickly and flexibly than coal gas. The output of the plant was 2,000,000 cu ft. of gas per day or nearly as much as the retort house. Both the coal and the water gas then had to undergo further processing in the condensers and scrubbers to remove unwanted elements such as tar, ammonia and sulphides. The three exhausters, supplied by George Waller and Sons of Stroud, were used to increase the gas pressure usually before scrubbing



The cableway with protection bridge and angle station

or at another part of the process. They were designed to be used on any gas main by operation of the appropriate valves and were powered by two vertical 43 h. p. steam engines.

The water gas plant and the exhausters were located in the main block of buildings which also housed the boilers producing steam and two gas producers supplying the gas engine dynamo plants to generate electricity for the whole works. Other areas of the buildings were used for a fitting room, messroom and stores. The massive reinforced concrete coal store measured 315 ft. x 100 ft. and when full it could store 14,750 tons of coal loaded to a depth of 20 ft. It was serviced by a 3 ton revolving jib crane which ran along a central gantry. The telpher which transported coke, breeze and ash around the works consisted

of a track 1,448 ft. long, supported at a height of 56 ft. above the ground. The whole site was incredibly complex but processes were integrated as much as possible to save and recycle energy and produce saleable end products. Many different forms of power were in use, gas, electricity, steam, petrol, gravity and compressed air. End products included coal gas, water gas, coke, breeze, ash, steam, electricity, tar, gas oil, asphalt, ammonia and sulphate.

In 1928, the company built a new gas showroom (see over page), specially designed to compliment and not to obscure the Georgian splendour of Beech Hurst. The Pitwines works operated for 50 years until the coming of natural gas made coal gas redundant. When the plant came to be demolished in the 1970s, the buildings



resisted the efforts of the demolition crew to take them down. After learning something about the works' construction, this does not surprise me, and it can be regarded as a tribute to the expertise of the 1920s engineers. Beech Hurst survived its noisy neighbour and still graces the upper end of High Street.

Jenny Oliver - The Poole Museum Society
Main sources: Co-Partner / Grace's Guide / Poole

The Pitwines site with the coal store in the left foreground, the retort house to its right and the water gas holder and larger existing gas holder behind. The main block of buildings is to the right facing the railway. The telfer supports are visible in the right foreground.

*Below:
The Gas Showrooms in the High Street*



Society for Poole Centenary Tree

A tree has been planted in Poole Park in celebration of the Society's centenary in 2024. It is located by the cricket pitch along the Sandbanks Road edge. The tree is a pin oak (*quercus palustris*) which is deciduous and has reddish-brown or bright crimson leaves in the autumn. (*not Pink as the sign says*)



17th Century Upton

Stored among the archives of the Dorset History Centre are three 400-year-old documents which give us a glimpse of the district of Upton in the decades before the Civil War.

The first document, dating from 1616, was drawn up after the death of Edward Rogers, Gentleman, the owner of *'the capitall messuage, tenement and farme of Upton otherwise knowne as Upton farme in the parish of Great Canford'*. Since the heir to the estate (also called Edward) was not yet of age, he had been made a ward of court, which meant that his official guardian was no less a person than King James I. Under the King and the Court of Wards and Liveries, a third part of the farm was now let to Henry Alye of Gussage St. Andrew and his son in law, Gawen Mallet for the use of Dorothy Rogers, Edward junior's mother, during his minority. The rent was £10 a year. Also included was a third part of *'a little Isle commonly called the Isle of Rookey in the County of Dorset containing by estimation ten acres of land worth by yeare tenn pound two shillings'*. This must be the island in Holes Bay now known as Pergins Island.



The grant specifically excluded *'all woods, underwood other than coppice wood'* growing on the estate as this was valuable property to landowners who wanted their trees to reach maturity. The tenants were allowed to coppice some of the trees for firewood and to repair their farm buildings, equipment and hedges, according to the ancient rights known as *'fierboote, hedgeboote, ploughboote and cartboote'*, but not to take more than the court allowed. The lease also gave Alye and Mallett rights on the common lands including turbarry (the taking of turf for fuel) on the heath at Canford.

The second document was dated nearly twenty years later in 1635. Under this agreement, John Webb the current lord of Canford agreed to lease *'two closes of arable or pasture ground with a lime kell or a tyle kell in the said closes'* at Upton to carpenter Thomas Shetler, the present tenant of the premises. The lease was for 99 years or the lives of Thomas, his son, William and his daughters Margaret and Elizabeth. (It was the custom for country leases to have two or three named individuals to whom the lease would be transferred if the first lease-holder died.) The rent of the property was 4s a year and

Shetler agreed to maintain the land and provide a hedge, ditch or fence as need be. If he built a house on the land, he agreed to grind his corn at the lord's mill and attend the manorial court.

Map showing Upton with Poole to the east. The third document is a map of the Canford estate belonging to the Bankes family archive. Its date is unknown but it is likely to have been drawn up around the 1630s. One clue is an entry or title on the map *'CANFORD LAUNNES. MR WEEB HIS LANDE'*. Sir John Webb of Odstock bought the Canford estate in 1611 and died in 1626. As he was a knight, his heir John did not inherit the title and was 'Mr. John Webb' until 1644 when he was made a baronet by Charles I. All subsequent

John Webbs of Canford did have a title and therefore the map must date between 1626 and 1644. There is also the question as to why the map is in the Bankes collection when it shows the Canford estate. Sir John Bankes bought the Corfe Castle estate in the mid-1630s and with it acquired certain rights in Canford. He negotiated with John Webb and came to an agreement with him that each of them would enclose part of the heath for their own use. It is possible that the map was drawn at the time of the agreement.

The map (below) shows the whole estate from the River Stour in the north to Poole and the harbour in the south. The heathland is shown in brown shading and

Map showing Upton with Poole to the east.





the farmland and enclosures in green. Many details are included such as roads, rivers and bridges, villages, houses and mills, names of landowners and some tenants. At Upton, the main feature on the landscape is the road from Sturminster to Poole crossing the area. The farm is shown with

its buildings and fields close to the harbour shore. The map maker usually depicted houses in a standard way but the farmhouse at Upton looks rather grander than most with its ornamental facade and square enclosure. Nearby are several cottages for smallholders or farm workers.



Thomas Shetler's name is written on the map close to an area labelled 'Brick kyll' and next to several enclosures of trees which could be used for firing the kiln. Brick making was a seasonal activity. The clay was dug in the autumn and left out through the winter to weather in the rain

and frost and become more malleable. Brushwood for firing was also harvested in the autumn and winter. In late spring the bricks were formed in moulds and left out to dry before firing in the summer. A square structure shown on the map may be the kiln or clamp (a temporary kiln



Hamworthy Manor

constructed of piles of unfired bricks.) The bricks were stacked with spaces between them for the heat to circulate and then the top of the kiln was sealed up with clay and fires of brushwood were lit in holes at the base until the full firing temperature was reached. The seasonal nature of the trade meant that Thomas Shetler could combine brick making with tile making and carpentry. It is also interesting to speculate whether Shetler provided the bricks for the construction of nearby Hamworthy manor house, probably built around this time. Old Kiln Road in modern Upton is a reminder of his trade.

This is just a quick glimpse of Upton at a particular time in the past and there is a lot more to discover about the area and scope for lots of research projects.

Jenny Oliver

Main sources:

Grant of Farm at Upton to Aley and Mallett
1616 D-RGB/KF/114

Indenture, John Webb of Canford to
Thomas Shetler 1635 D-WIM/JO-47

Map of Canford showing Poole
and the bay D-BKL/N/A.2/44

The future of the Society-a seminal moment

As with every Society, it can only exist with the support and ongoing participation of members prepared to join the committees. Over the past few years the Society for Poole has been run by a very small executive committee and a committee of one on the planning side.

At the last AGM I asked for volunteers to step up to take senior roles in managing and organising our Society, unfortunately there was no response. A year on, after 8 years as Chairman and a very successful but exhausting Beating of the Bounds ceremony on the quay, I have taken the decision to step back from being Chairman of the Society at the end of 2025.

I do not consider that I can ask the existing executive team members to do more, they have all dedicated years to the Society and have been the bedrock of what we have achieved since I have been Chairman and way before I even joined the Society. The Society's debt to them is large as we would not have got to this date and reached our centenary without them and their hard work. However the past 12 months has been challenging for the Executive and it is evident that the present situation is not sustainable.

Nevertheless for the past couple of years the Society has had a liaison with Poole Maritime Trust (PMT) and indeed many members are in fact members of both organisations. The intention, subject to their and our approval, is to merge so that the Society can operate to improve the heritage of the land side of Poole whilst sitting within the existing PMT structure. The heart of what we do can continue but our talks, newsletter and events is proposed to be combined with theirs.

Without a merger or a new Executive team then the Society's work will not continue. The resolution proposed are therefore to :-
Transfer assets to the Poole Maritime Trust as a merger thereby dissolving The Society for Poole Limited (as PMT is a charity)



AGM - Agenda

**Agenda -Tuesday 15th April 2025
7.30pm The Con Club, Darbys Lane
Poole BH15 3EU**

We will be serving tea/coffee, some nibbles as well as having a talk

1. Welcome by the President
2. In Piam Memoriam
3. Apologies for Absence
4. To receive the minutes of the last annual general meeting
5. Matters Arising
6. To receive the financial report for 2024
 - a. To adopt the annual accounts and balance sheet
7. Summary of 2024 activities
8. To confirm the proposal
 - a. To confirm the Directors of Society for Poole Limited
 - b. To elect the Executive Committee members who will support the Directors
9. To appoint
 - a. Independent inspectors of the accounts
10. To invite new members present to collect their certificates and sign the register
11. The future of the Society for Poole
 - a. The issues facing the Society

Resolution

To allow the Board to transfer assets to the Poole Maritime Trust as a merger thereby dissolving The Society for Poole Limited at the end of 2025 (31st December 2025)

12. Any other business
13. Closing remarks
14. Talk – An update of the state of Poole Hospital

Please note that nominations for positions as a Director or members of the Executive Committee should be forwarded to Mike Pearce at Chairman@societyforpoole.org by 15th March 2025



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Society talks

All Society for Poole talks take place at the Con Club, Darby's Lane (opposite Oakdale Church) BH15 3EU at 7pm for 7:30pm start (SfP members & Maritime Trust £3, guests £4)



18th March – Talk
The Mortar Wreck
Tom Cousins

15th April AGM – the future of our Society
Talk – an update on Poole Hospital

20th May – Talk
Fred Sturgeon's Poole War Diary – Ed Perkins

TBC 17th June, 15th July, 16th September



21st October – Talk
Poole Beaches 1920's –
1930's – Ken Standing

18th November – Talk
Poole Museum Project
– Kit Easton



POOLE MARITIME TRUST PROGRAMME

All Poole Maritime Trust talks take place at the Royal Motor Yacht Club. Talks start at 8pm. Bar will be open from 7:30 pm

13th March John Smith
A talk about the 'BATTLE OF BRITAIN over POOLE'.
8pm

Useful Phone Numbers

Adult Education
01202 262300
Adult Social Care
01202 633902
Bin & Street Cleaning
01202 261700
Birth, Marriages
& Deaths 01202 633744
Blue Badges
01202 633605
Bus Passes
01202 634249
Children's Social
Services 01202 735046
Council Tax payment
line 01202 672932
Family Information
Services
01202 261999
Poole Hospital (A&E)
01202 665511
Housing Benefit
Enquiries 0345 0344569
Libraries
01202 265200
Parking Penalties &
Permits
01202 634240
Pest Control
01202 261700
Road & Pavement
Maintenance
01202 265255
School Admissions
01202 261936
Street Lights
01202 262223
Toilets
01202 261700



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