Hamble, Bursledon and Hound Churches

10th September 2026 - Memorial Hall

Well-known local historian, Jeff Martin, told the fascinating long histories of these associated churches. He started by explaining that a group of Benedictine monks from France built Hamble Priory and Church between 1109 and 1128. Subsequently, they built Bursledon Church later in this century and Hound church about 1230. Netley Abbey was founded by a group of Cistercian monks from Beaulieu a few years later in 1239.

Roman tiles used in building the church's walls. The church was built on prominent high ground so it was a good navigation point for its seaman and a good defensive position. Hence Hamble was sometimes known as Hamble-le-Rise. Jeff showed figureheads in the interiors of Hamble and Bursledon churches that could be depicting the monks. The monks at Hamble undertook manual work such as undertaking the building works at the churches, as well as farming the land.

The monks from Hamble built Bursledon church dedicated to St Leonard and ancient burials have been found near the adjacent creek and in the church grounds. As Bursledon was in the Hundred of Bishop Waltham, the monks had to seek permission to build the church from this authority and it was granted in 1154. Bursledon and Hound churches have Yew trees in their grounds that might be as old as the churches. At the beginning French monks administered the services but later English clergy took over.

Hound church, dedicated to St Mary the Virgin, similar to Hamble was built on the site of a Saxon church about 1230. In 1294 Edward I seized most of the alien priories in England but Hamble's churches' French connections continued. It is recorded that the Hamble monks put up pig fencing and undertook oyster fishing. It was a custom that in Lent they sent 20,000 oysters to monks of St Swithin in Winchester. In return the six monks at Hamble received 21 loaves and 42 flagons of ale weekly.

Despite its connections with France, in 1377, the Church was burnt and plundered by a French raid on the English coast. In 1391, the Bishop of Winchester, William Wykeham, took over ownership to aid his funding of Winchester College and a college at Oxford. Winchester College then became Hamble's Lord of the Manor. The burnt church roof was replaced and the tower reb

Hamble church, dedicated to St Andrew, was built on the remains of a Saxon church and Roman remains have been found in the church's grounds and he showed a photograph of uilt to today's height, as the original tower was about a third lower. The tower was a good viewing platform, as well as the previous assets of the church being on high ground. Neither Bursledon or Hound had a similar tower, just a low wooden bell turret.

Jeff then went on to give details of the bells in each church. He also pointed out some blocked-up doors and windows as alterations were made to their buildings to adapt to the changes in circumstances over the years. In the

1700s Hamble and Hound churches had a gallery to accommodate the important people of their villages. In 1768, Hound's gallery collapsed injuring several of the congregation.

Family memorials at Bursledon Church date back to the to the early 1700s (and a little earlier at Hamble and Hound) commemorating shipbuilders and other important people. The box tombs in its graveyard were reputed to be used by the village smugglers to store their loot. Jeff then illustrated the other church memorials and graves stones of the villages' important people.

He next talked about when the vicarages were built, with Hamble vicarage being built in 1821. In 1830/40s Charles Henville was Hamble and Hound's vicar and a rich man who was very benevolent to the parish, being responsible for building Hamble village school and setting up an educational charity that still is existence today.

In 1832-3 Bursledon church had new transepts built, making the church cross shape. There had been no seating in the church for the congregation and previously they had to stand. Parish records show that in the 1800s the churches undertook much of the administration of their parishes.

During this period Bursledon and Hound church became separated from Hamble. With population increasing the churches were enlarged and in Hound, Netley St Edwards church was built. Bursledon church expanded designed by the same architect as used by Netley Church, John Sedding. Lychgates were built to shelter coffins while they waited for the clergy or for people to wait in inclement weather. Vestries for changing clothes for church ceremonies, office use or meetings were also built. He then explained when Hamble Church had its clock installed to replace a previous sundial, plus its stain glass windows and the introduction of electric lighting.

Jeff finally mentioned Hamble' vicar, Rev Watson, who appeared in the newspapers in the 1960s for charging high wedding fees similar to those in London.

As usual another comprehensively research and well-illustrated talk by Jeff, Well-known local historian, Jeff Martin, told the fascinating long histories of these associated churches. He said Hamble Church with its associated churches were a major heritage attraction.