

Hamble River

Summary Description

The modern day Hamble River is dominated by recreational boating activity through marinas, boat yards and supporting infrastructure. Outside of the areas where marina are clustered the river remains relatively unaffected by modern development, particularly in the Upper Hamble. In the past the river has been utilised for a variety of marine industries – particularly shipbuilding and timber exporting – which has left a rich archaeological legacy on, along and within the river.

Sea Surface

From Bishop's Waltham, the river flows in a generally southerly direction picking up several small tributary streams before reaching [Botley](#), where it becomes tidal and navigable. Further south, the river passes between the villages of [Bursledon](#) and [Lower Swanwick](#), before reaching Hamble-le-Rice and [Warsash](#) prior to entering Southampton Water.

The lower area of the river is dominated by yachting and recreational boating with associated marinas, moorings, navigational buoys and markers. The Upper Hamble is dominated by small craft and is popular for canoeing. A passenger ferry operates between Hamble-le-Rice and Warsash, this service dates back to at least the Medieval period and utilises the same hards for landing.

Seabed Surface

There are a number of sandbanks which surround the narrow entrance to the river. The main channel is self-regulating, with maintenance dredging only occurring within the Marinas.

The wealthy maritime archaeological resource of the river has been recognised. This is shown in the available digital data which has over twenty wrecks and obstructions charted in the fully marine area. In the intertidal zone a large number of hulked ships and boats have been recorded and are currently being archaeologically surveyed.

Other archaeological sites for which there are traces on the seabed surface of the marine zone include jetties, wharves, landing places, saltworking, brickmaking, shipbuilding, timber export, to name but a few.

In terms of historic vessels the river is home to the protected wreck site of the Grace Dieu – Henry the V's flagship. There are reports that two other vessels may also lie within the river close to the Grace Dieu. In the late 19th century a logboat was recovered from Shawford Lake in the Upper Hamble, close to the site of a Roman villa complex. This find has not been formally dated, however, if it did date to the Roman period it would represent the remains of the earliest watercraft found in the Solent.

Seabed Subsurface

There are extensive saltmarsh and mudflat deposits which form the upper levels of the seabed surface around the river. To date there has been little investigation of the sub surface deposits of the river, although peat deposits have been identified and cored at Swanwick and south of Warsash which are Bronze Age in date. These deposits are likely to be found in many more locations around the river. This information provides important data on prehistoric environments for human occupation and for the development of the river and Solent as tidal water ways.

Coastal

The dominant modern features in the coastal zone are the numerous large marina of the Lower Hamble river. In addition to berthing facilities there are marine based industries and the buildings of a variety of yachting and sailing clubs. Boatbuilding still takes place at Swanwick, echoing one of the historic industries of the river

Coastal archaeological features surrounding the river are plentiful and are not confined to the historic villages – which themselves have developed as 'maritime' settlements. Large parts of Hamble Common are a Scheduled Ancient Monument due to Iron Age, Medieval and Second World War features, there is another Scheduled site at Curbridge where a complex of Roman remains exists.

The undeveloped nature of the river frontage outside of the villages and marinas has led to a wealth of natural habitats being designated for their environment and the species that they sustain.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of the river Hamble is very high. This is demonstrated through evidence of preserved prehistoric landscape deposits within the river bed and a wealth of prehistoric sites and finds from adjacent to the river. This exploitation of the marine resources and environment has continued through all periods with visible evidence of use of the River in the Iron Age, Roman, Medieval, Post Medieval and modern periods.

References

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Anderson, R.C. *The wreck in the Hamble River*. [London] : [O.U.P.], 1934.

Friel, Ian. *Henry V's Grace Dieu and the wreck in the R. Hamble near Bursledon, Hampshire*. [S.I.] : Nautical Archaeology Society, 1993.

Links

The River Hamble Harbour Authority - <http://www.hants.gov.uk/leisure/coast/harbours/hamble/index.html>

Hamble-le-Rice Interactive - http://www.hamble.net/Hamble_Interactive.htm

Hamble Local History Society - <http://www.pendlebury30.fsnet.co.uk/index.htm>

Hamble River Sailing Club - <http://www.hamblerriversc.org.uk/>

Hamble Valley - <http://www.hamblevalley.com/>

Warsash Maritime Academy - <http://www.warsashacademy.co.uk/>

Warsash Sailing Club - <http://www.warsashsc.org.uk/>

Warsash Local History Society - <http://www.warsash-lhs.org.uk/index.htm>

Hook with Warsash Local Nature Reserve - <http://www.hants.gov.uk/countryside/hookwarsash/>



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Images



Reference:	HWTMA Photo Archive
Character Area	Hamble River
Description	The Hamble at Burlesdon
Photographer:	Julie Satchell
Date Photographed:	24 July 2005



HWTMA Photo Number	HWTMA Archive
Character Area	Hamble River
Description	Recording hulk on Satchell Marsh
Photographer:	Julie Satchell
Date Photographed:	August 2006



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