

St Andrew's Castle - Hamble

How many local residents realise that Hamble had its own castle, known as St Andrew's Castle, which was situated on Hamble Common? Today all that remains are a few large stones on the beach but it must have been an impressive sight when Henry VIII built it around 1543. It was built as one of a chain of coastal forts to defend the Solent from the French.

Its prominent position indicates it had two main functions, one to command the shipping in Southampton Water and the other to protect the Hamble River. It appears it had three tiers of guns and at the beginning of the 17th century it had a garrison of a captain, two gunners and four soldiers.

It was during the early 17th century that its governor was Sir Henry Maynwaring who had earlier made a career as a pirate. He reformed and wrote a book on his own experiences entitled "Of the Beginnings, Practices and Suppression of Pirates". Subsequently he was knighted and made Deputy Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.

St Andrew's Castle was maintained until it was disabled by Cromwell's Parliamentary forces under the command of Captain Swanly of HMS Charles in December 1642. After it became derelict, it is reputed that many of its stones were reused in other Hamble buildings and structures such as walls.

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