- OR "Haas" refers to the mist across the flat meadows
- OR it was the half-way bridge between Fordingbridge and Christchurch ……

The church was rebuilt in 1838, but is most famous for its stained glass windows, both old and new.

St. Mary, Breamore   SP6 2DF

This may well be the most westerly church in Hampshire, much more significantly it is "one of England's most important Anglo-Saxon Churches".   With the tower in the middle of the church and narrow transepts (called "Porticuses"), this is known as a "Turriform" church, trying to copy the Eastern Byzantine style.   However, the Anglo-Saxons couldn't build domes, so they built towers instead!

Over the doorway into the south porticus can be found an Anglo-Saxon inscription: "HER SWUTELATH SEO GECWYDRAEDNES THE" (which is believed to mean "Here is manifested the word to thee").

Hampshire and the Islands Historic Churches Trust
DAYS OUT:
in the New Forest

These brief notes are intended to whet your appetite for the unusual and quirky secrets hidden in our churches.   We have in Hampshire and the Islands the oldest bell in the world still being rung, Handel's organ, myriads of TV and Film locations and many other lovely oddities.

And, yes, please do tell us if you discover something we haven't spotted.

The New Forest

Famously proclaimed a Royal hunting Forest by William the Conqueror, for centuries the timber was taken to Buckler's Hard for constructing the ships of the Royal Navy.   The resulting bear heathland with animals roaming free led a visiting archdeacon from Uganda to exclaim "But where is the jungle?"   All the churches are special – here are just a few.

Breamore
Harbridge
Minstead
Lyndhurst
Thorney Hill

Copy link to get map: https://tinyurl.com/mryrtazf

All Saints, Minstead SO43 7EX

This wonderful 12th C village church comes with a very rare 17th C three-decker pulpit, two galleries, two "family pews" (complete with fireplaces}, and a possible Saxon Font.

In the churchyard you can find the grave of Arthur Conan Doyle, who was first buried in the grounds of his house in Crowborough, but transferred to Minstead in 1950 near the home of his second wife in Bignell Wood.   Sometimes a Meerschaum pipe can be found on the gravestone – a reminder of his most famous creation - Sherlock Homes.

But look first of all at the headstone of Thomas White, on the left just before entering the church.   He died in 1842 and his headstone tells much about his life: "A faithful friend, a Father dear, a ……… husband lies buried here."   The word incised between "a" and "husband" has been edited out with a chisel, for reasons we can only guess!

Lyndhurst, St Michael & All Angels
SO43 7BD

Behind the altar is a famous fresco by Lord Frederick Leighton of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. Outside, to the south, can be found the grave of "Mrs Reginald Hargreaves" usually with white and red roses growing on it. The reason?   That was the married name of Alice Liddell who inspired Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland.

Thorney Hill, All Saints BH23 8DG

This remarkable Edwardian baroque building would not look out of place in the middle of a city. It was built in 1906 at the expense of Lord and Lady Manners in memory of their daughter Mary who died in India from cholera.   There is also a bronze effigy of their son John who was killed in action in 1914. This Grade I listed building is one of the first churches to have an aluminium cupola.

A fresco behind the altar in memory of Lady Manners who died in 1920 was painted by Phoebe Anna Traquair with local villagers depicted as angels; those who were small children at the time could still point to themselves in the 1990s. Phoebe wrote on the painting that it might suffer from damp in the wall.   Sadly, she was correct.

All Saints, Harbridge
BH24 3PS

This small hamlet is just north of Ringwood; there are several explanations for the origin of its name:

- In the time of Domesday, Bernard Haerda owned the manor and was chamberlain to the king
- OR "Hoffa" was the name of a Viking who came up the river Stour in the 9th century