

**DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY OF TUDOR HOUSE
AND OF THE NORMAN HOUSE
TRADITIONALLY KNOWN AS "KING JOHN'S
PALACE", WITH NOTES ON THE GUARD ROOM,
UNDERCROFT AND NORMAN VAULT IN THE
COUNTY BOROUGH OF SOUTHAMPTON**

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Description and History of Tudor House and of the Norman House Traditionally Known As "King John's Palace", with Notes on the Guard Room, Undercroft and Norman Vault in the County Borough of Southampton by F. J. C. Hearnshaw & R. MacDonald Lucas

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F. J. C. HEARNshaw & R. MACDONALD LUCAS

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WITH NOTES ON

THE GUARD ROOM, UNDERCROFT and
NORMAN VAULT,

IN THE
COUNTY BOROUGH OF SOUTHAMPTON.

SET FORTH BY

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AND

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and Archaeological Society.

2nd Five Thousand.

SOUTHAMPTON.
At the Tudor House.
1914.

By Order of the Estates Committee of the
County Borough Council.

PREFACE

PREFACE.

Tudor House and the Norman House which is traditionally known as "King John's Palace" were purchased by the Southampton County Borough Council in 1911, at the instigation and during the Mayoralty of Colonel Edward Bance, V.D., D.L., J.P., who was also Chairman of the Estates Committee of the Corporation, and were opened to the public as a Hampshire Antiquarian Museum in 1912 by the then Mayor, Lieut. H. Bowyer, R.N.R.

That these profoundly interesting buildings have been preserved for future generations is also largely due to the admirable public spirit of W. F. G. Spranger, Esq., J.P., of Springhill Court, Southampton, who bought the properties some years ago when they came into the market, spent a large sum in restoring them, and ultimately sold them to the Town at a price very much below his actual outlay upon them.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO AUTHORS.

To the accomplished gentlemen, Professor F. J. C. Hearshaw, M.A., LL.D., R. Macdonald Lucas, Esq., F.R.I.B.A., and W. Dale, Esq., F.S.A., F.G.S., who have given so freely of their knowledge and limited leisure to the writing of this little pamphlet, very grateful but inadequate thanks are tendered. How such busy persons found the time necessary for what is a much heavier task than it seems at first sight, is best known to themselves; but they have helped equally to make the pamphlet what it is, and each has for the public well given freely of his best without fee or reward.

R. E. Nicholas, Hon. Curator.

1st. October, 1914.

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INTRODUCTORY

The Norman House and Tudor House, Southampton

ARCHITECTURALLY DESCRIBED BY
R. MACDONALD LUCAS, F.R.I.B.A.

INTRODUCTORY.

THESE buildings present a very marked difference in character, interesting not only as a matter of construction but also as an indication of the greatest change a nation can undergo—the change from internecine war to peace.

Nowhere else in this country, I believe, can two dwellings which are such fine specimens of their respective styles be found in proximity to each other; and the contrast between them is emphasized by their position. It is one so obvious that it may be desirable to invite visitors to dwell upon it a little, as attention is apt to be diverted from a broad fact when it is over-shadowed by interesting details; and one might thus chance to overlook the repellent character of the one building and the hospitable nature of the other.

The Norman House shows us the dwelling of men established in the country but not yet of the country, enforcing their laws by the sword, and secure *against* but not *with* their neighbours, while the Tudor House was clearly built by a man who was at home in the land, safe in the companionship of his kindred and born to abide under the same settled laws as his neighbours.

The actual period at which the Norman House was built is not certainly known, nor have we any knowledge of its first owner; but all authorities agree that the character of its details and masonry is that of early twelfth century work. It is possible, perhaps probable,

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that of the few surviving fragments of Norman domestic architecture in England, this is actually the oldest. What we see now is a plain square stone building at the south-west corner of Blue Anchor Lane. Its northern wall remains practically intact for a length of about fifty feet, and its western for about twenty-eight feet. How much more of it there was we cannot be sure.

The entrance is through a semi-circular-headed doorway in Blue Anchor Lane, with arch and jambs simply chamfered. The necking or capital from which the arch springs is one of those crude Norman mouldings that hark back through Roman to Greek architecture; and over the arch is a small double-chamfered label or dripstone, in connection with which it may be noted that the earliest "dripstones" were not devised to drip, and were thus obviously not invented for the purpose of throwing water away from the arch as did the later ones. It is not unreasonable to think that the Norman label may be but the impoverished descendant of the Greek cornice repeatedly diminished since the Roman period, during which it was adapted for use over round-headed openings.

In the northern wall is the doorway just mentioned; and in the western are chamfered jambs indicating two wide openings which were filled in (probably during the fourteenth century) with masonry in which two oilllets are formed. The walls are rather over two feet thick.

Two windows in the west wall and one in the north, are of the same size but not of precisely similar construction; and there is a difference of three inches or so in the thickness of the walls, the western being the thicker. Every one of the windows is divided externally by a balluster-shaft with base and foliated capital into a pair of narrow round-headed openings, while on the inside of the wall the whole opening is spanned by one arch about three and a half feet wide. Of these openings, the one on the north has plain internal jambs, but those on the west have five-inch "roll-mouldings" worked on the angles, continued up each side and around the arch, starting from square bases of slight projection at the level of their sills.

THE NORMAN HOUSE

In the north wall portions of a stone fireplace, a chimney supported on corbels, and two recesses, one round-arched, with oilet, the other square-headed, may still be seen.*

THE TUDOR HOUSE.

In the Tudor House, built by a wealthy townsman named Henry Huttoft, and completed and occupied by him in 1535, Southampton possesses a remarkably interesting building designed and arranged for the double purpose of a house of business and a private residence. Huttoft was the chief officer of Customs; and it is no doubt owing to the fact that he occupied this house in a dual capacity that there are two front doors opening upon St. Michael's Square. It is a large house of four stories, including extensive cellars and attics; and many families have inhabited it since Huttoft's time, for it has been divided and subdivided again and again. In the course of these alterations many features of the old building were mutilated or destroyed, and to some extent the original plan has been obliterated. All therefore that I can attempt to do is to endeavour to indicate with due diffidence a few points upon which others, who also like to study and dream over the works of their forefathers, may reconstruct for themselves and to their own ideas the house which Henry Huttoft built for his business and pleasure in the early part of the sixteenth century.

The entrance now used by visitors is at the north end of the front and the door under the curious open porch gave direct access originally to the Great Hall. Before the recently-erected partition was put up to form a passage, this apartment had a length of 32 feet; and as the partition is quite unnecessary, it may perhaps some day be removed and the proportions of the Hall again displayed. This was the entrance to the domestic

*Forty-five years ago there was a secret passage in the upper part of the East wall, but the inner side fell away through neglect. Near the South end of this wall can still be seen a narrow window-slit which afforded light and ventilation to the passage.

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apartments occupied by the family of Huttoft. The other street entrance at the south end of the same front was used by persons coming to Huttoft on business; and the small room adjoining and the spacious hall out of which that room opens (and in which a modern staircase has been recently constructed) were his offices for the use of himself and his clerks. Under this entrance is a fine stone-vaulted cellar, with remains of an old doorway indicating the level of the street in Huttoft's time, and a small doorway of sixteenth-century date at the opposite end, where the vault has been cut into and the floor-space reduced by a modern stone wall enclosing a flight of steps. The three stone steps ascending from this doorway are original; but the cemented steps continuing the ascent are modern. These steps were formed to gain access to the very extensive cellars, in the walls of which masonry of the Norman period may be noticed. A large stone corbel facing the foot of the flight now supports nothing except archaeological conjecture and is useless save as an indication that a beam-end of some earlier building rested on it. An interesting suggestion has been put forward by Mr. Charles Cooksey that the whole of this site was once covered by stone buildings of a pre-Norman and even pre-Saxon period, and that in these cellars, in the Norman house and elsewhere, we see their remains; but, as is perhaps inevitable, the basis of this theory is at present very slight. The great size of some of the oak beams in the cellars should be noted, as also the large stone-arched fire-place directly under a similar one in the Banqueting Hall.

With such an extensive basement ready to his hand, Huttoft perhaps utilized it for under-ground kitchens, buttery, larders and stores. He may thus have been the inventor of an arrangement which is still the bane of the terrace house, and have so earned the hatred of generations of weary-footed domestics. However, it is quite possible the kitchens were on the ground floor in a western wing, with an entrance from Blue Anchor Lane.

At the back of the Great Hall is another large and much more lofty apartment, possibly the Banqueting

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Hall. Here the ceiling is of panelled oak, and I am indebted to Mr. Inkpen (of Messrs. Stevens and Co., the builders who did extensive restorations a few years ago) for the information that three ceilings had to be cleared away to open it up. Of the two windows, the small one was found almost in its present condition, but the large is practically new except for two or three stones which gave slight indications as to size and design. The stonework of the doorway is original, and one half of the fireplace exists as Huttoft left it.

At the north end of this room a screen shuts off one passage and carries another on the first floor which later probably served as a gallery for musicians on festive occasions; and it is thought that the main staircase of the house may have been in the place now occupied by the staircase of the caretaker's rooms ascending to the west end of the gallery, from the opposite end of which three or four steps led up to the rooms over the Great Hall. This would be quite in accordance with what we know about staircases of periods anterior to Elizabeth's time; they were small and insignificant, often tortuous, and seldom decorated in any way.

The arrangement of the first floor rooms and those in the roof does not call for any detailed description, but the elaborately arched and panelled ceilings of oak should be noticed, and also a large cupboard on the right hand side at the top of the attic stairs. This it is conjectured, may have been what is called a "Priest's Hole," or place of refuge during the persecution of Roman Catholics in the days of Henry the Eighth and Queen Elizabeth, but to my mind this is not probable.* A real hiding place of this kind existed till 1912 at No. 17, High Street, where there were considerable remains of a house once occupied

*Since Mr. R. Macdonald Lucas wrote this, the removal of the panelling at the side of a cupboard in the North-East first floor room of Tudor House has revealed the entrance to a hidden way to the floor above. Many ancient houses contain these quaint passages and hidie-holes, the commonest being the Priest's Room, from which the Rev. Father emerged to practice the rites of the forbidden religion. While not necessarily an escape for priests, this secret passage speaks of the curiously furtive life which the gentlemen of England were compelled to lead in the late 16th and 17th centuries—Roman Catholics at first, and later those who "held for the King."