

Tudor House newsletter

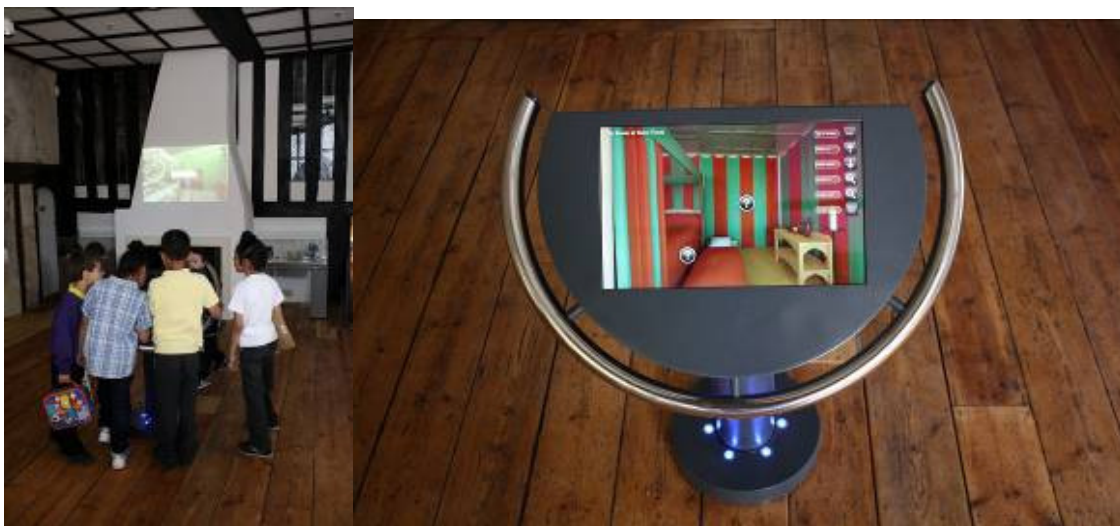
July 2011

Tudor House and Gardening is re-opening on Saturday 30 July. Here's an update on activities since the last newsletter and what you can expect to see when you visit.

Displays and Technology

Tudor House and Garden offers the kind of hands-on experience that modern day museum visitors expect. Pictured below are the impressive 'Guida Rotate' touch-screens, allowing you to strip back the layers of time and view each room in the house as it would have been centuries before. You can also embark on a virtual tour to explore the inaccessible cellar and attic rooms.

Each screen provides nuggets of information to enhance your knowledge of, not only the Tudors, but every generation that has occupied the building right up to the 20th century.



As the pictures of children from Bevois Town Primary School show, it's child's play to use the new equipment.

However, Tudor House and Garden is about more than new technology. Each room is equipped with display cases showing artefacts from the Arts and Heritage collection, many of which will jog the memories of previous visitors (see the story about Mary South in this newsletter).



Situated in each room are low-tech 'interactives' - exhibits that you can touch and play with - for example mystery objects in barrels: you can push your hand in and discover something interesting. You can try your hand at grinding spices the Tudor way and explore Old Town via a 'touch-map' model located in the garden.

If you prefer to read material from panels rather than screens, each room has an information board complete with a image-changing picture. There is also a book full of textiles that you can touch to really get a feel for the fabrics used in each period.

Children (and adults) will also be mesmerised by the opening 'Big Show' in the Banqueting Hall (pictured below, in red) – an audio visual extravaganza that sets the scene for your visit and places Tudor House firmly in historical context.



Report from Julia Howard, Projects Officer (Exhibitions), Southampton City Council

Tudor House is now full of paintings and artefacts and the exhibitions team have had some challenging objects to install.

The range in the Victorian Kitchen was one of the heaviest items, which required lots of peoplepower. Up in the Museum Room you will find a beautifully conserved Knife Grinder, which demanded careful negotiation to firstly fit it in the front door and secondly lift it around the corners of the stairway to get it up on the top level.

We have some large paintings, a bust of an artist, a ship's figurehead and other treasures from the museum collection on display. When you visit, please let us know your favourite thing about Tudor House – you can jot down your thoughts by making a label in the temporary display area.



‘Horrid’ artefact makes a lifelong impression on seven year-old Mary South.

Tudor House contains many objects that are locked in the memories of local people. The stuffed puppy (pictured above) is a good example.

“It’s absolutely horrid,” says Mary South, a volunteer working with museum collections, “but that’s what made it memorable to a seven year-old child.”

Mary’s family visited Tudor House on Sunday afternoons in the late 1940s, taking the bus from Millbrook to the town centre on an odyssey to the draughty and creaky, yet mysterious building.

“The puppy was in the Victorian room, and I didn’t realize that it had been stuffed until my parents explained that someone had loved their pet so much and wanted to keep, even after it had died. I was horrified! We had a cat and dog at home and the thought of having them stuffed appalled me.”

A visit to Tudor House became the top Sunday afternoon outing for young Mary and looking for the puppy was her first thought, “to see if it was still there,” she said.

“Each time I expected a miracle and I would go to the viewing window, desperately hoping that the puppy would be there, jumping up and wagging its tail at me.” The puppy will be on display in Tudor House if you want to see it.

‘Pilot’ School Visits and learning at Tudor House and Garden

We’ve had a few local school groups in already, to see what works and what doesn’t work in Tudor House and Garden.

So far, Year 3 from St John’s, Year 2 and 6 from Bevois Town, Year 5 from Thornhill and Year 7 from Hounslow as well as pupils from Polygon School have taken part in guided tours and workshops.



We're able to provide bespoke educational resources for school groups and students of all ages – including adult learners and can offer cross-curricular art and history sessions.



Topics include Tudor life, Victorian life and changing Southampton. Tudor House and Garden can accommodate several classes in a single day. For further information about learning opportunities at Tudor House, contact Gemma Winterton on 023 8091 7814 or museums.education@southampton.gov.uk

Every week during the summer - from Monday 1 August - children and families can enjoy drop-in workshops at Tudor House and Garden. Sessions run from 11am to 12.30pm or 1.30pm to 3pm and are with your admission ticket. Subjects will include pirates and Tudor trade, Georgian design and making your own Tudor Knot garden to take away and grow at home.

For more information visit www.southampton.gov.uk or see the latest Exhibitions and Activities leaflet from the Southampton City Council's Arts & Heritage team.

Café

The catering team have been hard at work co-ordinating the creation of a new café for the Tudor House & Garden Museum.

As the only new-build part of the museum, it has been designed to fit in with the concept of the house with an added contemporary twist.

The Tudor House & Garden Café will sell local produce and locally sourced food wherever possible and will be a relaxing place to enjoy a coffee and cake, a wide selection of handmade sandwiches and wraps or to treat yourself to a tasty afternoon tea, all whilst enjoying the beautifully revamped gardens. Truly one of Southampton's hidden gems.

You don't have to have a ticket for the museum to enjoy the wonderful new café, so come down from Saturday 30 July and join us in this magnificently restored listed building.

The view from Gemma Winterton's office window is one of the best in Southampton!

In the foreground, Gemma - from the Tudor House education team - can see a meadow of waving grass and wild flowers, part of the eco-friendly 'green roof' on top of the new café; in the background ships slowly moving down the River Test, past the edge of the New Forest...not that there's much time for staring out the window, with the packed programme of educational visits and workshops on offer at Tudor House.

As well as allowing the eye to travel seamlessly from new roof to restored garden, the green roof provides cooling in the summer and insulates the building by absorbing rainwater in winter. It also soaks up CO2 and provides a haven for wildlife.



An eco-friendly restoration

As well as the green roof, all materials in repair stage came from sustainable sources. For example, all the English oak used for the major timber repairs



A Community Exhibition - the first in a varied programme of exhibitions from local groups and communities - highlights from the Tudor House collection and travelling exhibitions form other museums and galleries.

Local school children and community groups have been working with an artist to discover more about Tudor House and its history – and to create personal labels representing memories or thought inspired by objects from the collection.

Children from Polygon and St John's schools found out about conservation and archaeology and then created their own objects and 'excavated' items, complete with a self-penned museum label. Thornhill Saturday Club, a group of 5 to 12 year old children, looked at Victorian and Tudor artefacts and tried to guess what they were used for, then made things inspired by their discoveries.



Artefacts were taken to the Hightown Centre for the group Thornhill Community Voices to explore. Members of the group took photographs of their favourite things and recorded memories of childhood visits to Tudor House.



Over in St Deny's, Roshni Asian Elders handled objects and engaged in a reminiscence session, creating stories from their own lives inspired by the artefacts in the Tudor House handling collection.

'Tudor House & Us' will be on display in the House from the end of July and you can take part by creating your own label explaining what it is that you love about Tudor House and Garden.

Southampton's Past Times: Monthly Thursday Lecture Series:

**Thursday 14 July – Tudor House: the exhibition design and interpretation
Westgate Hall, 7.30pm £4.50 (£3.50 FOSMAG. SCMAS)**

How did the interpretation of Tudor House come to fruition? This talk traces the work of the design team and Southampton City Council from initial briefing through to implementation.

Speaker: Mark Magidson, Exhibition Plus.

If you want to read the previous issue you can see an on-line version at www.southampton.gov.uk/tudorhouse

For the very latest information about Tudor House and Garden, follow us on Facebook - search for Tudor House and Garden.

Please pass this email on to colleagues and friends. If you have received this email from a friend and would like to be put on the mailing list direct please get in touch here museums@southampton.gov.uk and put Tudor House newsletter in the message line of your reply and we will add you to the list.