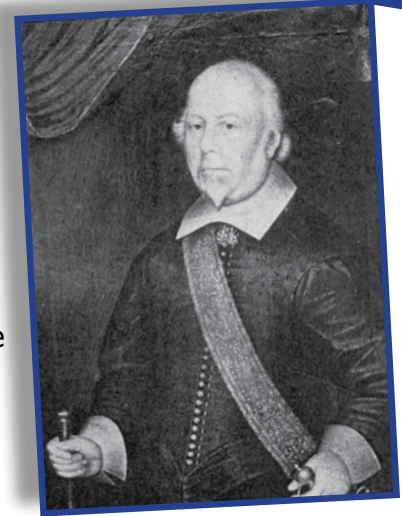




The Hussey Tower repair project

Hussey Tower off Skirbeck Road in Boston was built in the mid 15th century. It is all that remains of what was once a complex of buildings that made up an important late medieval manor house. It is a Scheduled monument and a Grade II* listed building, which means that it is recognised as being of national importance and that it is protected by law.



Sir John Hussey

The house was built by a wealthy Boston man called Richard Benyngton, but the tower takes its name from Sir John Hussey who owned the house after Richard Benyngton died. Sir John Hussey was an important member of the courts of both King Henry VII and Henry VIII, but he fell out of favour with Henry VIII at the time of the Reformation. The king accused him of treason after he failed to act quickly and decisively enough to put down the Lincolnshire Rising, the local rebellion against the changes that were being made to the English church. He was tried, found guilty and executed in 1537.



Howlett's engraving of Hussey Tower in the late 18th century

Soon after John Hussey's death, his house became the property of Boston Corporation, and the Borough council has owned it ever since. The other buildings in the complex were gradually demolished, with the materials most probably being taken for use elsewhere. Eventually only Hussey Tower itself remained. The tower was put to a number of different uses over time, including as the workshop of a sail maker,



but it has been a ruin now for many years. This is clearly shown in engravings made in the 18th century.

Since 1996 Heritage Lincolnshire has looked after Hussey Tower on behalf of Boston Borough Council. Although repairs have been made to it during that period and its grounds have been improved and cared for, this had unfortunately not been sufficient to keep pace with the gradual decline that it has suffered over the years. Parts of its brickwork were damaged and decayed and the stair turret was home to a colony of pigeons, which meant that access to the tower was very limited.



The staircase at Hussey Tower before the repair project



Repair work being carried out

With the help and support of Boston Borough Council, Heritage Lincolnshire therefore developed a project and secured funding to undertake extensive repairs at the tower. Grants for the work were given by WREN, Heritage Lottery Fund, Wash Fens Development programme and RDPE, Lincolnshire County Council and Boston Borough Council.

Work began in June 2011 and took 4 months to complete. The brickwork to the walls and the staircase was repaired and replaced where necessary and netting was put in place to stop pigeons from entering the building.

The building is now safe and clean and much better able to receive visitors. The spiral staircase is fully accessible right up to the top of the building. Because of the age and importance of the building the repairs had to be carried out with particular care. Only



The finished repairs



traditional building methods and materials were used and the new bricks that were required were specially hand made.

As well as the repair works the project was designed to allow as many people as possible to become involved with it. While the repairs were in process Heritage Lincolnshire held a number of hard hat days when visitors were able to tour the building and find out about the work and the traditional methods being used. There have also been medieval re-enactments and a schools day.

The grants have also funded the production of this education pack, new computer-generated reconstructions of Hussey Tower as a medieval manor house, and a heritage trail which helps to link Hussey Tower with other late medieval and Tudor buildings in Boston.



Practising traditional bricklaying skills



Medieval archers