



## The Story of Lord Hussey

Born in 1465 into a wealthy family, Sir John Hussey was a privileged member of society. He amassed large amounts of land and property across the Midlands and was also given the office of 'tronage and pesage' in Boston, which meant that he was able to charge a tax on all goods passing through the port. He was made a knight in 1497 at the age of 32 after having proved himself in battle, and became an important person in the Tudor court. He was present at the funeral of King Henry VII in 1509 and was also a close friend of King Henry VIII, accompanying him to the 'Field of the Cloth of Gold' in 1520 where Henry and King Francis I of France signed their peace treaty. Sir John was Lord Lieutenant in Lincolnshire and was also made a guardian of Henry's daughter, Princess Mary, and his wife, Lady Anne Hussey, was her personal attendant.



**Lord Hussey**



**Henry VIII**

But being a close friend of the King at that time was no guarantee of a long and prosperous life. In 1534 Henry VIII wanted to divorce his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, to marry Anne Boleyn so he broke away from the Roman Catholic Church and created the new Church of England. Some people did not agree with the course that he was taking and they rebelled against him. Henry's break with Rome was called the Reformation, and the rebellion against it began in Lincolnshire and was particularly strong in the north of England. The rebellion was called the Pilgrimage of Grace, and the uprising in Lincolnshire was called the Lincolnshire Rising.

You can find out more about the Reformation and the Lincolnshire Rising in our Tudors in Lincolnshire schools resources at: <http://www.lincsheritage.org/education/tudors/index.php>



Instead of trying to stop the protests Sir John remained neutral. Henry VIII considered that because he had not acted swiftly and forcefully to help put an end to the rebellion in the county he was guilty of treason. He was executed in 1537 and Henry confiscated all his land, property and wealth. He sold Sir John's Boston manor house to Boston Corporation in 1545. Boston still owns the building today, although it is looked after on their behalf by Heritage Lincolnshire.

### **What happened to Hussey Tower after that?**

Sir John Hussey's house was never used as a home again and some of the buildings deteriorated through lack of maintenance and gradually disappeared. The gatehouse was demolished in 1565. Any building materials that were reusable were most probably taken away and used in other parts of the town. Parts of the old house survived longer; some repairs were done over the years and it was rented out for a variety of different uses including sail-making. Eventually, the remaining buildings were demolished and the solid brick structure of the tower was the only part left standing. We can tell from old maps and engravings, though, that it was already a ruin in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was probably not until later in its history that the building came to be known as Hussey Tower.



**18th century engraving of Hussey Tower as a ruin**