

# Portslade in Tudor times. 1485 -1603

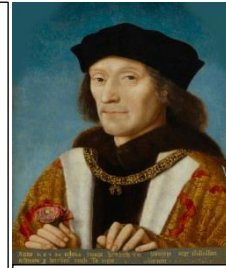


## Wars and wealth, beheadings and betrayals – welcome to the Tudor era

The Tudor era began in 1485 after the Battle of Bosworth – a clash where 28,000 soldiers were killed in a single day. The then King Richard III was finally defeated by Henry VII in a civil war that had lasted 32 years. It was the last time a monarch was killed in battle. Many say that Henry VII had no legitimate claim to the throne, as he was not of direct royal blood.

When the English army were not fighting each other, or stopping rebellions by the peasants, they were at war with France, Spain, Scotland and Ireland. Perhaps the most famous battle was with the 1588 Spanish Armada. 130 Spanish ships and 30,000 soldiers attempted to land in England. Spain was angry with England, who they claimed had been robbing their ships of cargo and treasures. Although the English army were outnumbered, a combination of better tactics, good luck and poor weather meant defeat for the invading Spanish.

The Tudor period is famous for its brutal justice (lots of beheadings and torture), and religious intolerance. But there were many positive things. England became richer than ever before. Life for the peasants improved. As the country became wealthier, towns grew, beautiful houses were built and schools and colleges were set up. Arts and crafts also flourished. England was home to great painters, musicians and writers (William Shakespeare first play was in 1591).



Henry VII



Henry VIII



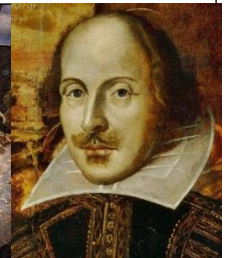
Edward I



Mary I



Elizabeth I



Shakespeare

## What did the Tudors do for Portslade?

### Portslade's first police constable in 1576

The post was unpaid and in addition to the person's usual day job. They were often local tradesmen, which meant that communities were self-policing. The Parish Constable duties:

- Keep order in pubs
- Keep the peace in town
- Send stray children back to their original parish.
- Impound stray farm animals.
- Arrest criminals.
- Prevent trespassing & poaching.
- Carry out punishments such as whipping.
- Look out for vagabonds.

Local people were duty bound to help the Constable if he requested it, keeping the community responsible for enforcing law and order.

### Prepared us for war with the French

This map from 1514 shows an attack on Brighton from the French. During Henry VIII's reign, archery practice was legally required of all Portslade residents.



### Built Portslade's first indoor toilet

The first indoor toilet was built at Portslade Manor in the Tudor era. It was basically a hole in the floor, with a stone chute blow to get rid of the waste. This waste would then fall into the garden, where a servant would clear it away from the manor. All the other residents of Portslade would still use holes in the ground, situated close to their homes – imagine the smell!

## Tudor buildings still in Portslade.

Portslade Manor was extended during the Tudor period. The original medieval manor house was small compared to other Tudor homes of the wealthy, and a building extension was overdue. This extension included a new west wing, which doubled the manor in size. A two storey tower was added, which contained more decorative and private bedrooms. Also, a large kitchen was added in the basement, which was essential for any Tudor feast. Finally, two large chimneys were installed. Chimneys were a status symbol, showing the owner could afford to heat their house and cook indoors.

The house known as Kemps – situated near the manor – was originally built in 1540. Although it has undergone changes, the original Tudor west wing still survives. Kemps has been home to the wealthy and famous, including the private surgeon to Queen Victoria.



## Life gets better for the average Portslade Tudor resident.

During the Tudor period, around 90% of the population lived in the countryside. At this time, Portslade was considered the countryside, and had a population of about 20 households. Typically, a house consisted of eight people of all ages. This house would be one large room, with a permanent-lit fire in its centre. Furniture was very basic – normally just a table and a few chairs – and food was eaten from wooden bowls.

Tudor homes were normally built of tree branches, which were then covered in plaster. As the Tudor era progressed, more homes were built with brick and plaster.

No longer were people merely servants or slaves to the Lord of the Manor. Now many could own or rent their own land. They were called Yeoman or tenant farmers and earned money for their families. Sheep were popular to keep, as they provided milk, wool and meat. Crops and vegetables would be grown. Some of these would be sold at market, the rest to feed the farmer's family.



## Tudor tech. Can you identify these Tudor inventions, still in use today?

(answers are below – no peeping!)



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.

1. Portrait paintings. Before, paintings tended to be of religious events or people. Having your picture painted was a sign of wealth. 2. The sewing machine. William Lee invented the first automatic knitting machine in 1600. Modern knitting machines still use the same basic technique that he invented. 3. Tennis. Henry VIII had an indoor court built at his palace. The first racquets were made from kitchen sieves. 4. The flushing toilet was invented in 1592, especially for Queen Elizabeth. However, they did not become common-place for another 200 years. 5. Shopping centres. The first shopping centre built had room for 120 shops, all under one roof. Queen Elizabeth loved shopping and bought all her hats there!



## Henry VIII and St Nicolas Church, Portslade

When Henry declared himself Supreme Head of the Church in England in 1533, his decision initiated the Reformation of English religion. Over a four year period, 800 monasteries and churches were either destroyed or closed, with their land and riches being given to Henry.

For ordinary worshippers, the rapid changes to churches from Catholic to Protestant must have been bewildering. Shrines and images of saints were destroyed or sold. Catholic wall paintings were whitewashed over, including those in St Nicolas Church.

Church wall paintings were popular during the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, and often portrayed key passages in the bible. They were called "the poor man's bible" and were for those who couldn't read – which was most of the peasant population.

Medieval graffiti has also been found in the church, believed to be a cross engraved by a returning crusader in the 13<sup>th</sup> century



## The Tudors and their food

The Tudors had very precise and extensive list of rules for eating. Guests were expected to bring their own knife and spoon to the meal. Forks were not used, as they were considered 'foreign and fancy.'

- Keep your hands and nails clean.
- Keep your knife clean and sharp.
- Cut your meat into small pieces and eat.
- Cut your bread with your knife, and do not tear it in great hunks.
- Do not overfill a spoon with soup or pottage, and definitely do not spill it on the tablecloth.
- Do not slurp your soup or pottage (stew).
- Do not leave your spoon in the communal dish when you are done.
- Never put meat into the salt pot. Diners were instructed to take a little salt on the tip of a clean knife and put it on their food. Spilled, dirty salt would never be put back in the pot.
- Do not return chewed bones to the shared central plate.
- Do not throw your bones on the floor, but put them in a bowl. The popular image of Henry VIII throwing bones over his shoulder to his dogs, would mortify Tudor sensibilities.
- Keep the tablecloth as clean as possible.
- If food is dropped on the floor, pick it up but do not eat it.
- Empty and wipe your mouth before drinking.
- Do not stuff your mouth, pick your teeth, make rude noises, scratch yourself, blow on your food, spit in the washing basin or across the table, spit up food into your dish, talk with your mouth full, or fall asleep at the table.
- Do not put your elbows on the table.
- Cats and dogs are not allowed in the dining room

## Fake news alert

If you think of the Tudors as greedy pigs with no manners, then read here



## A Tudor Christmas

1. No work for the 12 days of Christmas. Dec 25 to Jan 5<sup>th</sup>
2. No meat or dairy on the menu in the four weeks before Christmas day.
3. The first book of Christmas carols was produced. Carols included themes of food, drink and dying babies!
4. Mince pies contained lamb.
5. No trees, but holly and ivy were used as decorations.



## Famous Portslade people in Tudor times. Sir William West – a proper bad'un

Born in 1530 into a wealthy family, William West was also the adopted nephew of the Baron De La Warr (another rich family). In 1548 West tried to gain the de la Warr estate early by poisoning his uncle. The attempt was unsuccessful and he was in the Tower of London by year end. He was disinherited by an act of parliament in 1550, and was unable to inherit any money or property from his uncle, whom died in 1532.

In 1556, matters got worse. He was convicted of treason for plotting against Queen Mary, in favour of Elizabeth becoming queen. However, he was later pardoned by the Queen and the death sentence removed. By the reign of Elizabeth in 1770, William West had been made Lord Lieutenant of Sussex. This role meant he was the personal representative in Sussex for Queen Elizabeth I – quite a reversal of fortunes for a man once sentenced to death.

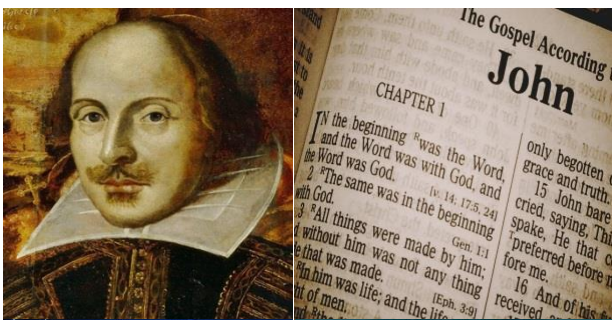


### Top Tudor trivia

# Queen Mary died of the flu # Tudors believed disease was carried by bad smells # Queen Elizabeth brushed her teeth with sugar # Tudors wrote the first cookery book # Shakespeare's first play involved a scene where a mother eats her two sons, baked in a pie # Printed the Bible in English. Before, it had only been in Latin # It was illegal for women to be actors. Female roles were undertaken by boys #



### Famous events from Tudor times. Can you name them and the year?



### Activities and discussion points

1. You are the King or Queen of England. Would you make everybody change their religion?
2. Make up your own dining rules for the school canteen or home
3. Design a wall painting which would show your life at school
4. In what ways has life improved for peasants in the Tudor era, and what problems remain?
5. Write your own cook book for a Tudor feast
6. You are an architect. Draw a design and floor plan for the new extension at the manor.
7. Queens & Kings inherit the crown through birth. Is this fair, or should we vote for our monarch

### Famous events

1. 1564 Shakespeare is born. 1591 and his first play is performed.
2. 1535. The first Bible printed in English
3. 1545. The sinking of the Mary Rose
4. 1485. The Tudor era begins with Henry VII
5. 1533. Henry VIII declares himself head of the English Church.
6. 1588. The English defeat the Spanish Armada.