

Southchurch Hall



Activity Pack



Welcome

Southchurch Hall is a Grade 1 listed building and a Scheduled Monument - it is a rare example of a medieval moated manor house, and the building and the grounds it stands in are both of exceptional historic interest.

The manor of Southchurch has been in existence for over a thousand years. The present building dates from the 14th century, though other buildings would have stood here before then.

There would have been a larger building on this site before, but the one we know today was built in the 14th century, as was the moat.

Remains of the gatehouse can still be seen at the bridge which crosses the moat but all traces of the other buildings have gone.

Archaeological excavations and documentary research have revealed that there were several farm buildings in the complex including animal sheds, a dairy, a cider house, and even a chapel.

When the Hall was restored in the 1930s it was pretty much returned to how it looked around 1400, after many centuries of additions and changes.



The picture painted by Roger Massey-Ryan below, depicts the manor of Southchurch as it might have looked in 1400. The detail here shows the Hall with moat, gatehouse and other buildings.



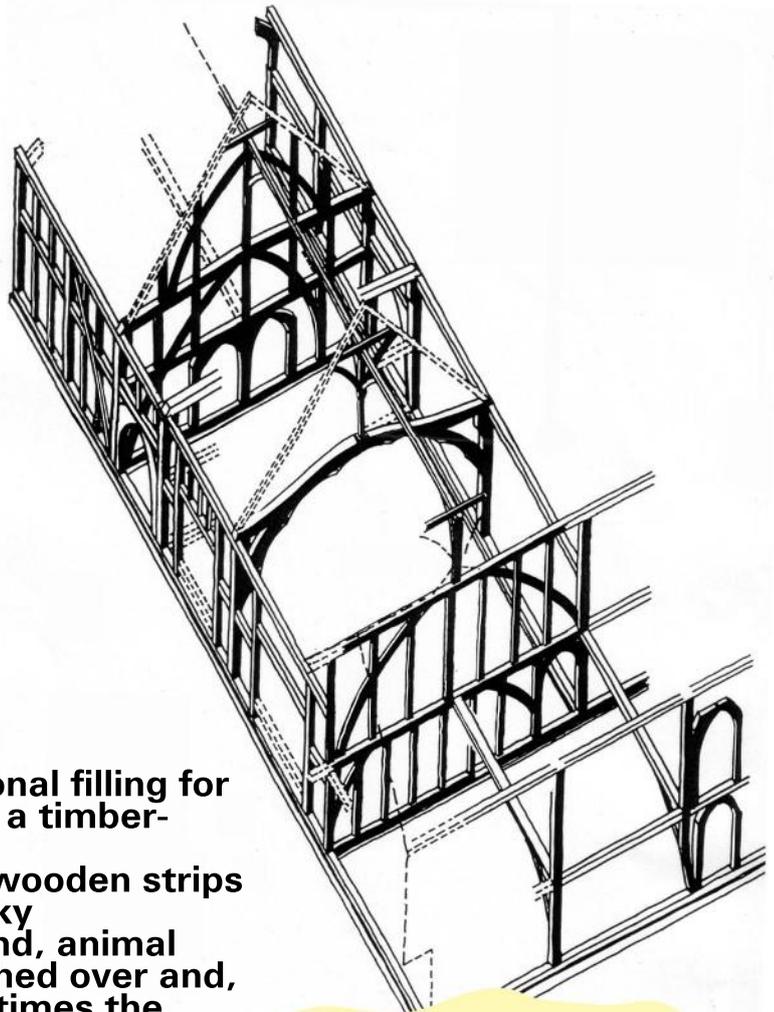
A Rare Building

Southchurch Hall is one of the very few timber-framed houses in Essex that are open to the public. The material between the timber frames would have originally been wattle and daub, which is then plastered. When the Hall was restored in the 1930s, most of the wattle and daub was replaced with lath and plaster.

Timber-frame is a method of construction where walls are built of interlocking timbers to form a frame. The picture shows Southchurch Hall's timber frame (by permission of Essex County Council.)

Wattle and Daub was the traditional filling for the gaps between the timbers of a timber-framed building.

The wattle is a woven lattice of wooden strips which is then daubed with a sticky combination of wet soil, clay, sand, animal dung, hair and straw. It is smoothed over and, once dry, is whitewashed. Sometimes the exterior walls were then tiled to look like bricks or weather-boarded.



Activity!

To get an idea of how Southchurch Hall would have been built, we can recreate our own simple version from lollypop sticks. It's a fun activity that also recycles materials!

Tip: You could also use twigs and sticks from your garden.

You will need:

Lollypop sticks.

Cardboard

Tip: Old cereal boxes are great !

Pens or paints

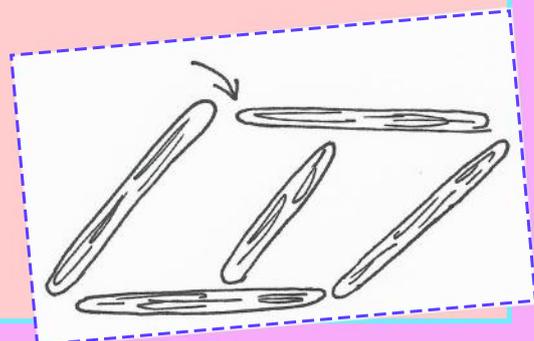
Paper

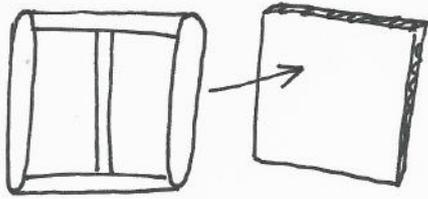
Cellotape or glue



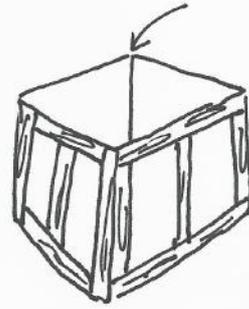
Image: Hobbycraft

1. Taking inspiration from Southchurch Hall, we can start by making our 'timber' walls. Copy the structure shape here or make your own.

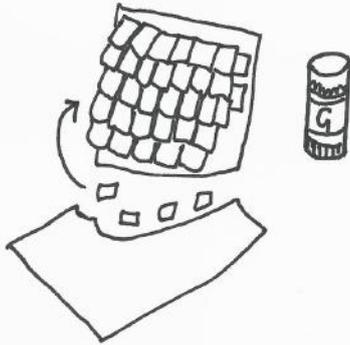




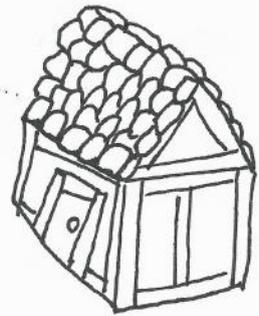
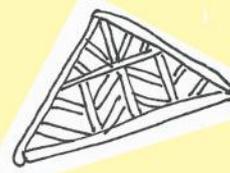
2. Instead of plaster or mud, we can use cardboard to strengthen our frames. Stick your lollipop sticks to pieces of square card.



3. Once you have made 4 walls, you can glue or cellotape these together at the corners.



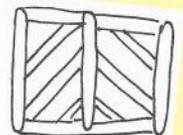
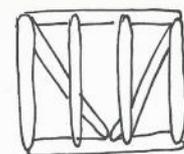
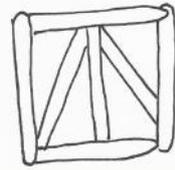
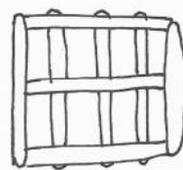
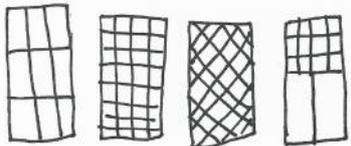
4. To make a roof, we can cut our cardboard up into little rectangles. Once you create a triangle roof, we can decorate it by cutting our paper into rectangles.



These will make our tiles.

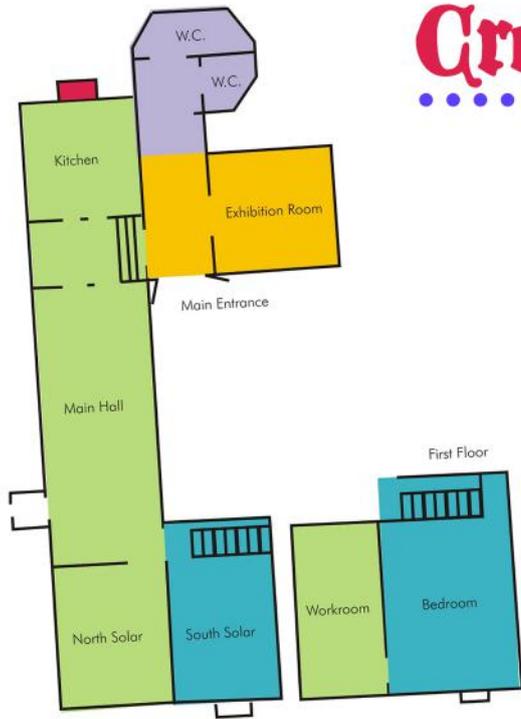


5. You can also draw windows or doors and cut these out from paper, sticking them onto our Tudor home.



6. Use your imagination to extend your own Tudor home to be as big as you like, by adding more timber frames.

Create a custom floor plan



Key

-  Late Tudor/ Stuart period (Early 1600s)
-  Medieval (1321-1363)
-  Tudor (1500s)
-  Modern (1970s)
-  Modern (1930s)

Southchurch Hall has been around for such a long time that its use has changed throughout history.

Using our template, design your own hall.

Like SH, you can include rooms from different periods of history- and even rooms for the future!

The Medieval Hall (14th century)

The halls of medieval manor houses like this were the most important part of the house and where the whole household, including the servants, dined and undertook daily business. The open fire would have burned in the middle of the room, with the smoke seeping out through the roof, which was then thatched, and the floors would be dirt laid with rushes, or herbs to make the room smell sweeter.

The Tudor Kitchen (16th Century)

The Hall's kitchen was first used as a kitchen in the 1500s when the fireplace and chimney were built. Before that, the kitchen was located in a separate building. This activity pack front cover depicts an eel being prepared for dinner. Eels and other freshwater fish were popular foods and may have been kept in the moat. Poorer people could only afford vegetables and bread, but the rich lived mainly on meat and expensive white bread.

The Victorian Bedroom (19th Century)

Southchurch Hall was a home right up until the 1920s. This room might have been used as a bedroom by the Kilworths, the late Victorian family who lived here. On the bed you might find a ceramic bed warmer, a kind of hot water bottle, and next to the bed on the floor, a chamber pot to save going to an outside toilet on a cold night! A wash stand would be for washing you hands and face in the morning.

**Attack on Southchurch Hall
during the Peasants' Revolt, 1381**
Painted by Alan Sorrell
(1904–1974)



In 1381 an army of peasants from Kent and Essex marched on London in protest at their treatment at the hands of the church and the rich and powerful of the country. Many of them had to work for free on church land, which restricted how much they did on their own land to grow enough food for their families. Also, a poll tax had been introduced by the king, Richard II, to help fund the long war with France.

The leader of the peasants was **Wat Tyler** from Kent who was eventually killed in London, but by then the king had promised to give the peasants what they asked for and they were sent home.

This painting, by Thundersley artist, Alan Sorrell, was painted in 1969 and depicts the peasants attacking the Hall. It appears that one of the main targets of the rebellion was to destroy the evidence of the burdens that

peasants carried, hence their attacks on manor houses like this.

Supposedly, they had broken in and burnt the official paperwork which listed the obligations they were protesting against.

The picture is probably a very good impression of how the Hall looked in 1381 except that it is now known that the gatehouse, shown here as a timber-framed building, was actually built of stone.

Activity

The peasants were protesting their working conditions and heavy taxes.

Thinking about the world we live in now, what would you protest about?

Design a protest poster for now.

Or, if you'd like, design a protest placard for the peasants in this painting.