

*DISCOVER*

# FESTIVE

*TUDOR & STUART*

# NORWICH

*CIVIC ENTERTAINMENTS*



NORWICH

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## FESTIVE NORWICH

Norwich's fifteenth-century **GUILDHALL** was the first port of call for visiting playing companies and entertainers seeking permission from the Mayor to perform in the city. Plays were occasionally performed in the Guildhall's assembly chamber. Cannons were fired from the roof and the Waits performed music there for civic ceremonies held at the Marketplace below.



Norwich's Norman **CASTLE** functioned as a jail between the 13th and 19th centuries, though its walls and ditches—like the city walls and Marketplace—were often used for both festive and judicial display. Archery and wrestling took place in the Castle ditches during the mid-Tudor period.

Formerly part of the dissolved Dominican friary, **ST ANDREW'S HALL**—the 'New Hall' or 'Common Hall', as it was known in the period—was purchased for the city by local dignitary Augustine Steward in 1540 and repurposed as a civic meeting place, court-room, granary and performance space. A common venue for visiting troupes, this was Norwich's largest indoor playing place.



**TUDOR AND STUART NORWICH** boasted a rich tradition of civic drama and festivities produced by the city corporation, small troupes supported by the county nobility, and schoolmasters of the city's grammar school. It was a regular stop for travelling London-based playing companies, and staged a week of entertainments for Queen Elizabeth I when she visited in August 1578. Shakespearean clown Will Kempe morris-danced his way to the city from London in 1600.

Norwich also had an active culture of musical performance centred on its indigenous, civic-funded minstrels called the Waits, and on the choirmasters, singing-men and composers linked with the Cathedral (most famously Thomas Morley).

Use this walking map to discover how Norwich was the stage on which a host of dramatic, musical, festive and sporting activities were performed in the inns, streets, public buildings and open spaces of the second city of 16th- and 17th-century England. Retrace the steps taken by players, entertainers, audiences and visiting royalty!

Based on new archival research, this map identifies exactly where different kinds of entertainments took place and reveals a variety of performance sites located across the city, including many buildings or spaces later demolished or repurposed. As the map shows, several places where Renaissance Norwich's citizens enjoyed festive spectacles were also used for far more grisly purposes...

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## DISCOVER TUDOR & STUART CIVIC ENTERTAINMENTS

Celebrations, pageants and bonfires were held at the **MARKETPLACE**, together with more visceral displays of civic justice. (49 of Robert Kett's rebels were executed here in 1549.) A market cross erected in 1518 was used by the Waits for evening music performances. A pageant of famous historical queens was staged here for Elizabeth I's entry on 16 August 1578.

Built by Thomas Howard, 4th duke of Norfolk, between 1561-7, the **DUKE'S PALACE** was a grand, multi-storied building with an indoor tennis court, bowling alley and hall used for staging entertainments. The duke also patronised his own playing company. The palace was largely demolished in 1711.

In the mid-1540s, the 4th duke's father, Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, built a grand house on Mousehold Hill called **MOUNT SURREY**. The duke's son, Philip Howard, earl of Arundel, entertained Elizabeth I here on 20 August 1578.

Like the marketplace, **TOMBLAND** was regularly used for civic 'triumphs' involving bonfires, cannons and fireworks, and was the site of celebrations marking the annual mayoral inauguration.

Touring companies staged plays at several of Norwich's inns, including the **RED LION INN** on Red Lion St where, in June 1583, an affray at a performance by the Queen's Men resulted in a man's death. The **WHITE HORSE INN**, formerly on the corner of Pigg Lane and Palace St near Tombland, served as a performance space. Records also mention an interlude presented on 21 June 1545 at '**MASTER CASTYLDENS PLACE**'—possibly located in Westlegate.

**LOLLARDS' PIT**—part of a chalk-mine east of the city, near Bishopgate—is labelled on William Cuninghame's 1559 map of Norwich as 'The place where men were customablie burnt'. It was described as the 'Gameplace' in a 1536 valuation of the manor of Thorpe, which suggests it was also used for less gruesome popular spectacles.



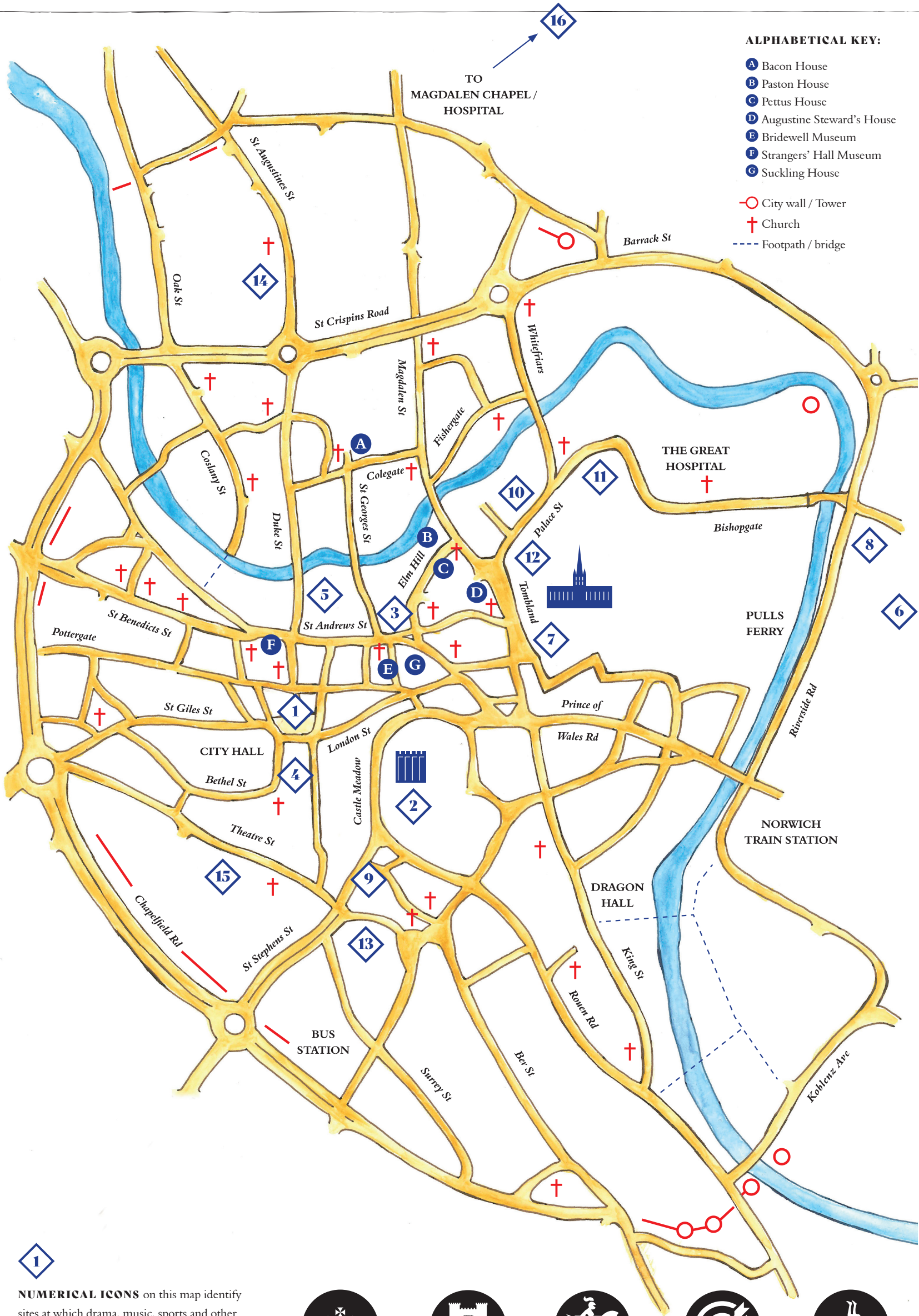
Norwich's **GRAMMAR SCHOOL** played an important role in the city's festive culture. It was the schoolmaster's task to compose orations and interludes that he and his pupils performed for the mayor and visiting dignitaries. School ordinances from 1566 stipulated that pupils had to rote-learn annually a 'lerned dyalog and commodie' for presentation at Christmas. In 1578 schoolmaster Stephen Limbert wrote a Latin oration for Elizabeth I's visit and his pupils acted in pageants composed by Thomas Churchyard and Bernard Garter.

Queen Elizabeth I resided at the **OLD BISHOP'S PALACE** during her 1578 visit and was entertained there by several elaborate shows, including a masque in which she was celebrated—perhaps for the first time—as the 'Virgin Queen'.



# FESTIVE NORWICH

- 1. THE GUILDHALL**  
Gaul Hill
- 2. THE CASTLE**
- 3. ST ANDREW'S HALL**  
St Andrews St
- 4. THE MARKETPLACE**
- 5. DUKE OF NORFOLK'S PALACE (SITE OF)**  
Duke St / St Andrews St
- 6. MOUNT SURREY (SITE OF)**  
St Leonards Rd / Mousehold
- 7. TOMBLAND**
- 8. LOLLARDS' PIT (SITE OF)**  
Riverside Rd
- 9. RED LION INN (SITE OF)**  
Red Lion St / Orford Yard
- 10. WHITE HORSE INN (SITE OF)**  
Palace St / Pigg Lane
- 11. OLD BISHOP'S PALACE**  
Cathedral Close
- 12. NORWICH GRAMMAR SCHOOL**  
Cathedral Close
- 13. MASTER CASTYLDENS PLACE (SITE OF)**  
Westlegate (conjectured)
- 14. GILDENCROFT**  
Pitt St / Gildencroft
- 15. CHAPEL FIELD / COLLEGE OF ST MARY-IN-THE-FIELDS (SITE OF)**  
Chapelfield North / Theatre St
- 16. ST MARY MAGDALEN CHAPEL**  
Sprowston Rd / Gilman Rd



## ALPHABETICAL KEY:

- A Bacon House
- B Paston House
- C Pettus House
- D Augustine Steward's House
- E Bridewell Museum
- F Strangers' Hall Museum
- G Suckling House

- City wall / Tower
- † Church
- Footpath / bridge

1

**NUMERICAL ICONS** on this map identify sites at which drama, music, sports and other entertainments took place in Tudor and Stuart Norwich. The key right shows what sorts of activities have been linked with each location.

A

**ALPHABETICAL ICONS** on the map indicate significant buildings that survive from this period. For navigation, Norwich's remaining medieval churches and city walls are also marked.



ROYAL ENTERTAINMENTS



CIVIC CEREMONIES



JOUSTING



ARCHERY



WRESTLING



DANCE & MISCELLANEOUS SHOWS



DRAMA



MUSIC



ANIMALS



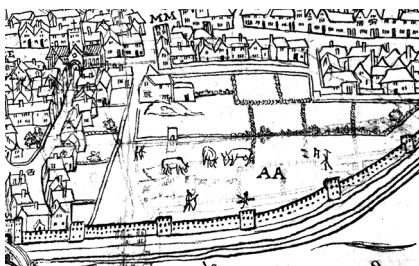
EXECUTIONS

## FESTIVE NORWICH

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**A**longside drama, music and ceremonial activities, the people of Norwich enjoyed a range of different **SPORTS**. In the 1540s, the mayor and aldermen enjoyed wrestling shows at special wrestling places erected in the Castle ditches and at 'Magdalen fair', near the Chapel of St Mary Magdalen, Sprowston (formerly a leper hospital).

By the Tudor era the area in north-west Norwich known as **GILDENCROFT** had long been used for jousting and archery. It continued to be used for sports and leisure well into the 17th century.



**ARCHERY** was also practiced in the Castle ditches and at Chapel Field. From 1579, Chapel Field was used 'for the learning to shoote in any manner of handgonnes, harquebuzes, callivers, or suche lyke'.

