

## Commemorate or Challenge? John Hawkins and the Slave Trade

### Lesson Plan

National Curriculum links & curriculum fit	KS2 and KS3 History The slave trade; local history
How to use	Second activity in the <b>Telling Our Stories</b> pack. It could also fit very well as an introductory activity in a scheme of work on the slave trade.
Aims	Embedding knowledge of slave trade and Devon links. Building empathy with experience of enslaved people.
Duration	1 hour
Materials required	<b>Resource 2 b) Hawkins Powerpoint</b>
Differentiation	Younger students may need more background explanation of the slave trade. Descriptions of the trauma and pain of those who were enslaved could be tempered for younger age groups, but remember that empathy is an important component of this activity.
Background reading & references for teachers	Todd Gray's book, <i>Devon and the Slave Trade</i> . Conscience Alley activity: <a href="http://www.dramaresource.com/conscience-alley/">www.dramaresource.com/conscience-alley/</a> Legacies of British Slave-ownership database: <a href="http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs//">www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs//</a> Plymouth Square: <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-53095468">www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-53095468</a> <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-54956993">www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-54956993</a> Good page on the Atlantic slave trade, with links and resources: <a href="http://www.theschoolrun.com/homework-help/the-atlantic-slave-trade">www.theschoolrun.com/homework-help/the-atlantic-slave-trade</a> BBC Bite Size resources: <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zy7fr82/revision/1">www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zy7fr82/revision/1</a> Lucy MacKeith's book, <i>Local Black History: A Beginning in Devon</i> , available to read online: <a href="http://www.blacknetworkinggroup.co.uk/local_black_history.htm">www.blacknetworkinggroup.co.uk/local_black_history.htm</a>

### Stage 1: Powerpoint presentation (20 mins)

- If you prefer to lead the students slowly to the slave trade focus, start the lesson by telling them that today we're looking at coats of arms.
- Show the students slide 1 (Courtenay coat of arms).
- Tell the students "Here's a coat of arms from Devon. What do you see?"

**Note: It's OK to take this slowly – students will enjoy explaining the bits of the shield & there will probably be at least one who knows lots about coats of arms.**

- Show them slide 2 (the full crest), and ask them to say what they see.
- Slide 3 (What is a coat of arms?). Elicit answers and discuss the function of a coat of arms. Show them slide 4 if needed, with the analogy of a Facebook profile.
- Do the same reveal with slides 5 and 6: Hawkins' coat of arms and his full crest.

**Note: Don't rush into these slides – let them fully absorb the point about pride first.**

- Tell them that this coat of arms was given to a Devon man called John Hawkins in the 1560s: the time of Elizabeth I. Ask them how long ago that was (answer: 450 years+).
- Ask them what does the presence of the Black man suggest? What does it tell you about the period it was made in - the 1560s?
- Show them slide 7 (John Hawkins).
- Show them slide 8 (Hawkins' first voyage).
- Show them slide 9 and explain the triangular trade.

**Note: You'll find some facts and figures on the slave trade in the notes under the slide.**

## Stage 2: Discussion (10 mins+)

- Ask the students “So what does that coat of arms tell us about attitudes then and now?” See notes under the slide for discussion points.
- Devon men and ships were involved in the slave trade after Hawkins’ time too, although the main slave ports in Britain were Liverpool, London and Bristol. People from Devon made a living out of plantations in the Caribbean using slave labour to grow tobacco and especially sugar.
- Slave trading and slave labour were about making money. Sugar cane plantations in Jamaica were owned by people in Devon. Devon people put their money in banks that invested in slave ships and plantations. Devon people bought the sugar that came from those plantations: there was a sugar refinery near the Bishop’s Palace in Exeter, and another at Topsham.
- So ordinary people in the 18th and 19th centuries were - without knowing it - contributing to the damage and the abuse of slavery.
- There were individuals and families across the county who made money out of the pain, trauma and suffering of other humans.
- Point out that the slave trade was abolished in the British Empire in 1807, and that slavery was abolished in the Empire in 1833 (the difference being that between 1807-1833 it was legal to own slaves but not to take them across the Atlantic).

## Extension / homework activities

- You could go to the online Legacies of British Slave-Ownership database and explore Devon connections further. To do this, go to:  
[www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/project/exeter2015](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/project/exeter2015)

To find a list of Devon slave owners, navigate back to the LBS home page, type ‘Devon’ into the search box, then select ‘Addresses’ from the box below. See what comes up. You should find a list of Devon slave-owners who received compensation in 1833 when their slaves were freed (it is important to also note that the enslaved people received no compensation). Was that fair? How does this make students feel?

### Stage 3: Conscience Alley – What shall we do with the Square? (20 mins)

- Slide 11 is a photo of Sir John Hawkins Square in Plymouth.
- Slide 13 is about Black Plymouth footballer Jack Leslie. In summer 2020 there was a suggestion that the square be renamed in his honour.
- Divide the students into two groups and tell them:  
*“You’re going to do an activity called Conscience Alley. I will be Plymouth City Council [or this could be one of the students if you think there’s one who could handle this role]. You are a bit like those cartoons where you see the devil on one shoulder and the angel on the other. The question we’re addressing is: shall we rename Sir John Hawkins Square to be Jack Leslie Square? In your groups, spend 5 minutes thinking about reasons to rename, and reasons not to rename”.*
- When they’re ready, line the class up in two lines facing each other.
- The City Council role-player then walks between the lines, with the students one by one saying “Yes, you should rename it because...” or “No, you shouldn’t rename it because...”
- When you’ve walked the whole line (or students are repeating what’s already been said), make a decision. Give the reasons for the decision.
- Then ask the students: “Did the Council make the right decision?”
- Refer back to the earlier discussion of what was considered acceptable in the 1560s, and the fact that and the fact that some people today still think of Hawkins as an heroic explorer.

#### Extension / homework activities

- Further discussion on themes around memorialisation and history, considering the removal of statues and monuments such as the statue of Colston, the slave trader, in Bristol, and Buller, the colonial military man, in Exeter.
- Make a crest and coat of arms for your family. What do you want to be known / remembered for?