



Life in Tudor Times

6. Tudor Travels and the Mary Rose

NEWSREADER: Throughout the Tudor period exploration and discovery were on the whole successful. Not only did they allow bragging rights, but they also allowed new opportunities for England to expand its wealth. Take John Cabot, an explorer under the reign of King Henry VII, whose voyages took him to the coast of Canada. And after him, Walter Raleigh, a favourite explorer of Elizabeth I, who explored the coast of North America and who is sometimes credited with bringing potatoes to Britain. But perhaps most famous of all Tudor explorers, Francis Drake - widely known for his circumnavigation of the globe, which means he sailed around the world. I'm Ann Kerr. Let's have a look at a reconstruction of the time to see what the man himself had to say.

CORRESPONDENT: Francis. Can you tell us what you're doing?

FRANCIS DRAKE: But of course. I, Francis Drake, explorer extraordinaire, am travelling around the world with the full backing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. We left England in December 1577, five ships strong, across the great Atlantic Ocean. We're heading around South America to explore the coasts beyond. And I... Er, you're a reporter you say?

CORRESPONDENT: Indeed.

FRANCIS DRAKE: Oh, well, I'm sure you can keep a secret.

CORRESPONDENT: Er, well...

FRANCIS DRAKE: Just between us then, I also have another goal: to raid Spanish holdings and intercept their treasure. It's sure to be a great plunder!

CORRESPONDENT: I'm sure. And tell us what it's like on your grand ship.

FRANCIS DRAKE: Well, life on board *The Golden Hind*, that's my ship by the way, is terrific. It's like a home away from home, you know? Without some of the usual comforts of course, but we love it out here. Don't we, fellas?

NEWSREADER: That must have been a fun day. Francis Drake completed his journey around the world in 1580, three years after he left England. Upon his return, he was awarded a knighthood by Queen Elizabeth I for his bravery and achievement. He kneeled on the deck of his faithful ship, *The Golden Hind*, to receive the honour in a much celebrated event. But life in those times, wasn't all about making discoveries, exploring, smooth sailing and getting awards from your queen. In a tragic turn of events, Henry VIII's famous wife, Mary Rose, sank to the bottom...



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PRODUCER: Not a wife! Not a wife! A warship. *Mary Rose* was a ship.

NEWSREADER: Oh, goodness, so sorry. With all those wives it's hard to keep track! Henry VIII's famous warship, the *Mary Rose*, sank in 1545 while on a mission to stop French ships landing on the Isle of Wight. Let's see what it was like for one of those sailors.

SAILOR: Oh, we love it on board the *Mary Rose*! 34 years she's been winning battles for our king, almost as long as King Henry's reign. She's such a grand ship, built for four hundred brave strong men to do battle. What a feat! There's more of us on board today, than she's built for - a bit cramped - but what harm can that do? When we're not warring, we're performing our duties, eating and sometimes even playing board games. Not a lot of elbow room though, with all those men. I was hoping to speak to the captain about the room on board, but it's unlikely I'll get the chance now!

NEWSREADER: Well then, in more recent times, 1982, the *Mary Rose* was carefully brought up from the bottom of the sea. When it sank, the ship was covered in a lot of mud really quickly, which helped to keep many artefacts onboard preserved. These things have helped historians work out what it was like for people alive back then. There were about 19,000 items preserved on the ship, things like bows, arrows, gold and silver coins, swords, clothes and even the bones of the ship's rat-catching dog. These are all now on display at a museum in Portsmouth. Only time will tell what other wonders we'll discover that can help us understand the Tudor times even better.

SAILOR: I hope it's something that will make sailing a bit safer.