Discover Maritime History – New Developments (lesson 4)

Lesson	Lesson Title	Resources
4	New Developments	Lesson plan PowerPoint Handout – printed (one per student) Internet access
Learning objectives		
All:	- Understand that modern technology can help to expand historical research - Understand that traditional maritime research was somewhat elitist or "top down"	
Most:	- Be able to explain broadly how using different sources, or the same sources in different ways, can broaden our view of our maritime past	
Some:	- Be able to explain how the case study example demonstrates the possibilities offered by new historical methods	

Activity	Timing

Starter:
 	
Slide 1: Note lesson objectives
 	
Slide 2: <u>Recap</u>
  - Last week we discussed:
     • What historiography is
     • What primary sources are
  - Ask students to provide brief description of both terms – then reveal using hidden boxes
 	
Slide 3 : <u>Recap</u>
  - And we looked at 3 examples of commonly used primary resources in English maritime history
  - Ask students to tell you what those three sources were, then reveal with the following boxes
     1. High Court Admiralty records
     2. Customs records
     3. Works of Richard Hakluyt
  - This week: will look in more detail about <u>HOW</u> the traditional historiography has skewed our understanding and how we can use these sources to adjust this view
	5 mins

Main:
 	
Slide 4: <u>Limitations of early research</u>
  - There are a number of common limitations relating to early maritime research
  - Some of these we noted last week when we discussed the sources used, others we haven't talked about before
 	
Slide 5: <u>Limitations of early research</u>
  - Firstly, as we discussed last week, the large volumes of information contained in sources like the customs records or HCA records makes them very difficult and time consuming to work with
  - Therefore historians have tended to choose specific groups or areas to look at (sample the data)
	5/10 mins

Slide 6: Limitations of early research
- Those that are chosen as the sample are often the richest, most powerful or most socially important individuals (such as members of parliament, the richest merchants, nobles and royalty, powerful members of the church)

Slide 7: Limitations of early research
- This means that those who were poorer, less involved in politics, non-elite, or that were minority groups have been overlooked

Slide 8: Limitations of early research
- Recent scholars have tried to counteract this problem by focusing on previously overlooked groups…such as [see board]… but…

Slide 9: Limitations of early research
- THERE IS A PROBLEM!
- The vast majority of primary sources that survive relate to society's richest and most politically important individuals
- Sources specifically detailing the lives of individuals from minority or marginalised groups were rarely produced and few of those that were produced survive today

Slide 10: Sources
- Why do we lack sources relating to these groups?
- In pairs: students to come up with a few reasons

2/3 mins

Slide 10: Sources
- Talk through reasons they came up with, especially highlighting:
  • Low rates of literacy among poor or marginalised groups = created less primary sources material
  • Cost of writing tools (including paper/vellum) prohibitive
  • Rarely appeared in government sources because were not permitted to be involved in politics (these sources have been looked after best by the government and were therefore most likely to have survived)
  • Chroniclers and early modern historians mostly interested in exceptional individuals engaged in rare and unusual voyages, not the normal people going about their daily business (who were typically poorer and of lower social standing)
  • Also some level of racism, xenophobia and misogyny throughout the period which led to exclusion of some groups from the discourse – not deemed worthy of acknowledgement

5 mins

Slide 12: Solutions
- We can't do anything about records that **don't** exists…
- However, records of the High Court Admiralty and customs records **do** contain information about minority groups, it is just rather minimal/shallow for each individual
- So we need to use clever techniques to be able to access the information they can provide

5 mins

Slide 13: Solutions

- One of the most important modern developments is the widespread use of databases to store large volumes of data - This makes it possible to make use of the documents that we highlighted as too voluminous to deal with in large numbers - And then once the data has been databased it is possible to analyse it using other software and in this way we can obtain a reasonable overview of minority or marginalised groups even though each single appearance in the sources lacks detail - For example, maritime history has tended to focus on overseas voyages and overlooked coastal trading…. - Meaning that coastal traders, who tended to be less wealthy and political, are missing from the historical narrative.	
Slide 14: Activity **use this as a chance to show students how to work the database** - On http://medievalandtudorships.org/search_advanced/ (linked on slide 13) - Into the "master" field: type Holford and select "Holford, John (51)" - Into the "year from" field: type 1565 - Into the "year to" field: type 1570 - Click "retrieve voyages" - Tick the box that says "voyage destination" (**note, you must click retrieve voyages first!**) - This should bring up 13 voyages (which should just fit on to screen – if they do not fit on one screen, zoom out a little) - Students should use the handout to plot John Holford's voyages on the map - The handout also provides basic information about Holford and poses three questions about this method. - Most students probably won't get to the questions – so talk through these in the plenary.	10/15 mins
Plenary:	

Slide 14: summary
- What have we learnt from this activity?
    • What can this data add to our understanding of how John Holford ran his business?
       ▪ Holford was foremost a fisherman but he had transferable skills and he used his sailing skills to opportunistically engage in coastal commerce to make extra money when he could.
       ▪ He only remained in the immediate region so he either lacked the skills to travel further afield or did not want to take the risk of travelling to further ports – either way, there were clear limitations to his engagement.
       ▪ He was an entrepreneur and had a diverse portfolio of maritime activity in which he engaged.
       ▪ All of his trade went to/from Southampton suggesting that his engagement in coastal trade was facilitated by his location in Southampton
	5/10 mins

- What does this suggest about his position in the town?
    - It suggests that when he wished to engaged in coastal commerce he was able to forge connections with men that wished to hire a shipmaster – he had a place within the town and was able to build business relationships
- What does this data tell us about how individuals engaged in coastal commerce?
    - It tells us that coastal trading could be opportunistic – individuals from different occupations would engage as and when it suited them
    - As such, individuals from a broad spectrum of society took part

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The data on the screen provides details of the voyages undertaken by a man named John Holford over a 5 year period. Use this data to plot Holford's voyages on the map below. You can either draw an arrow from one port to another, or mark start points with circled number and end point with a corresponding number in a square. You can indicate multiple voyages on the same route with thicker lines or by labelling your lines.
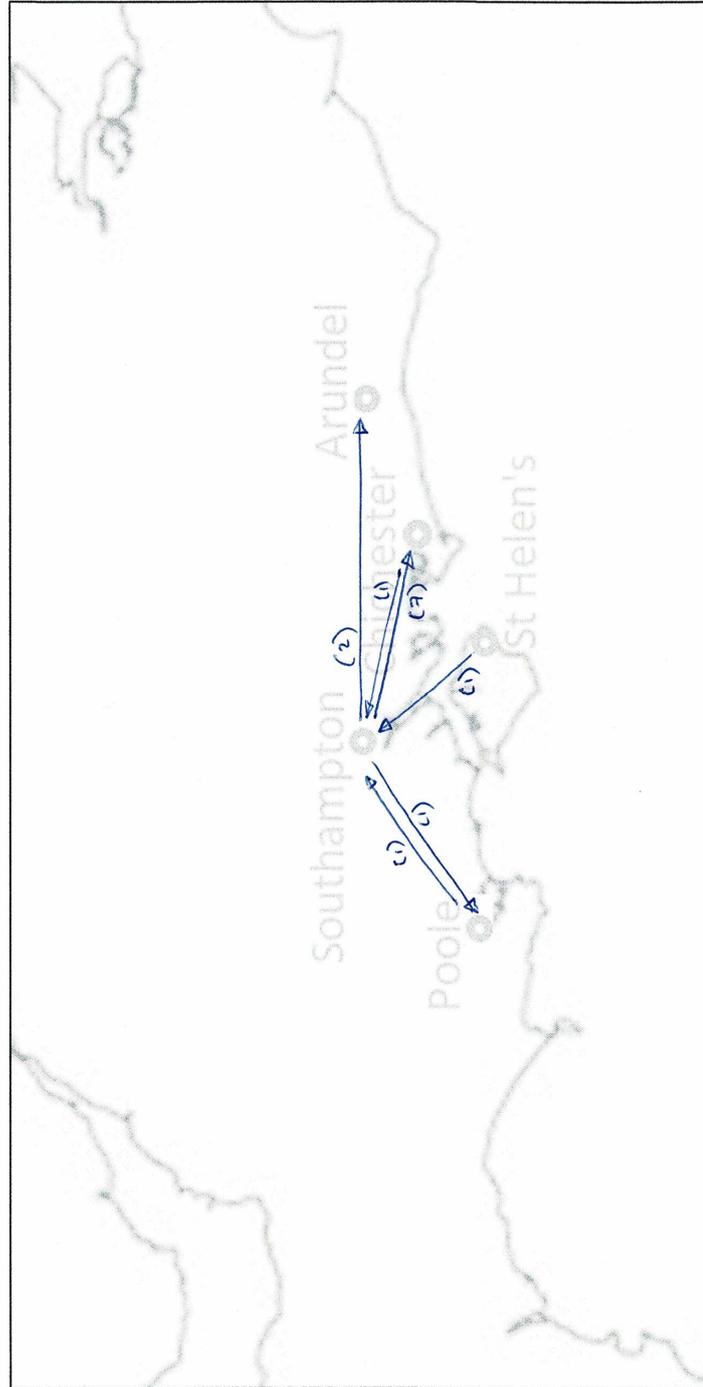
We know that John Holford was a fisherman from Southampton, but no other information about him has been found. Consider the following questions:

- What can this data add to our understanding of how John Holford ran his business? What does this suggest about his position in the town?
- What does this data tell us about how individuals engaged in coastal commerce?