



STORIES FROM THE SEA

EXPLORATION OBJECTS



THOMAS CAVENDISH (1560 -92), SIR FRANCIS DRAKE (1540?-96) AND SIR JOHN HAWKINS (1532-95)

Date made

Seventeenth century

Object ref.

BHC2603

Credit

National Maritime
Museum, Greenwich,
London

Artist / maker

English School

Description

This is a triple portrait of three Elizabethan explorers. On the left is John Hawkins wearing black clothes, a hat and a gold chain. Hawkins commanded several expeditions to the Spanish colonies of the New World and traded in enslaved people. Francis Drake, Hawkins's cousin, stands in the centre, and his right arm leans against a globe. From a humble family, Drake pursued a very successful career as a privateer. He was the second man and first Englishman to circumnavigate the world in 1577-80. In 1587 he successfully attacked the Spanish fleet in Cadiz which was being prepared for the invasion of England. He was second in command during the Armada campaign, and after its defeat he commanded a number of expeditions against the Spanish in Europe and America.

Thomas Cavendish is shown standing on the right. He wears a red doublet and black cloak, both sewn with pearls, and he has a gold earring in his left ear. In 1585 Cavendish went on a colonizing expedition to Virginia. In the following year he set off with three ships to circumnavigate the world. After passing through the Straits of Magellan he successfully attacked the Spanish on the west coast of South America, taking a large and very rich treasure ship. On his way home he discovered St Helena and arrived at Plymouth just after the defeat of the Armada in 1588. His attempt to repeat this achievement ended in failure and his death at sea in 1592.

Questions

Describe the clothes that these three men are wearing.

Look carefully at the expressions on these explorers' faces. Which one do you like best and why?



Supported using public funding by



ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

