

Max Keen - Sir Francis Drake (1540 - c1596).

Max made another much anticipated visit to the History Group and did not disappoint as he recounted the life and times of Sir Francis Drake in his usual controversial, detailed, but humorous style.



He entered in the full costume of a Tudor Naval Officer and, picking up his guitar, sang the ballad 'Drake's Drum'. There was laughter as he suggested we might be better off with an afternoon of Beatles' songs!

Quoting from a 1595 book which had an obituary of Drake, Max told the life story of this gallant, adventurous Tudor seaman, whose religious beliefs as a Protestant were crucial to his life and career. His life's ambition was to overthrow Rome and Spain.

The PowerPoint presentation included portraits of key persons of the era, maps, charts, diagrams, and Ladybird Book illustrations. Max also frequently mentioned his favourite football team, Wolverhampton Wanderers, and hinted that being a Wolves fan in an Everton stand, at a match, was akin to living as a Protestant among Catholics during Drake's lifetime.

Among the topics Max covered in his presentation were: slave trading, sailing protocol, religious issues, Drake's own personal beliefs, the designs of ships and warships and the geography and importance of the Spanish Main (the Panama isthmus between South America and mainland America), and he encouraged the History Group to boo and hiss at appropriate moments in his talk. Max also posed the questions: Was Drake a slave trader/a pirate/ a hero and gave his opinion on these questions.



Max highlighted the exploits and achievements of this great sea-faring Tudor, including the circumnavigation of the world, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and his devotion to his Queen Elizabeth I. There were many humorous asides as well as much detailed information.

Max ended his talk and presentation by mentioning 'Drake's Drum' again and suggested that in our current troubled times we may well hear Drake's Drum again, summoning this hero to our aid!

Heidy Hague.