

English Civil War Debate: For the good of the country? (about 45 mins)

This session is aimed at **KS3 and 4 students** who are studying the English Civil War and its impacts.

In this session, students are faced with one of the most pressing consequences of the English Civil War - soldiers forcibly taking supplies from local people, damaging their property and threatening their lives. They will present a real-life case and argue their points in a debate.

For this session, you will need:

- English Civil War Debate: For the good of the country? extract sheet
- English Civil War Debate: For the good of the country? Team People of Thornaby sheets - enough for half of the class to have one each
- English Civil War Debate: For the good of the country? Team Captain James Levingstone sheets - enough for the other half of the class to have one each
- Document Investigation Teacher's Notes - these provide you with the necessary background information to this extract

Begin by asking: **“Where would you get food from as a soldier in the English Civil War?”** Today, soldiers are paid and well-fed by the army, but in the 17th century, most soldiers could not expect regular payments or food supplies to be provided. Where then could they turn to? Being heavily armed and hungry, many soldiers helped themselves to supplies, especially if the people they were stealing from were thought to be supporters of the other side.

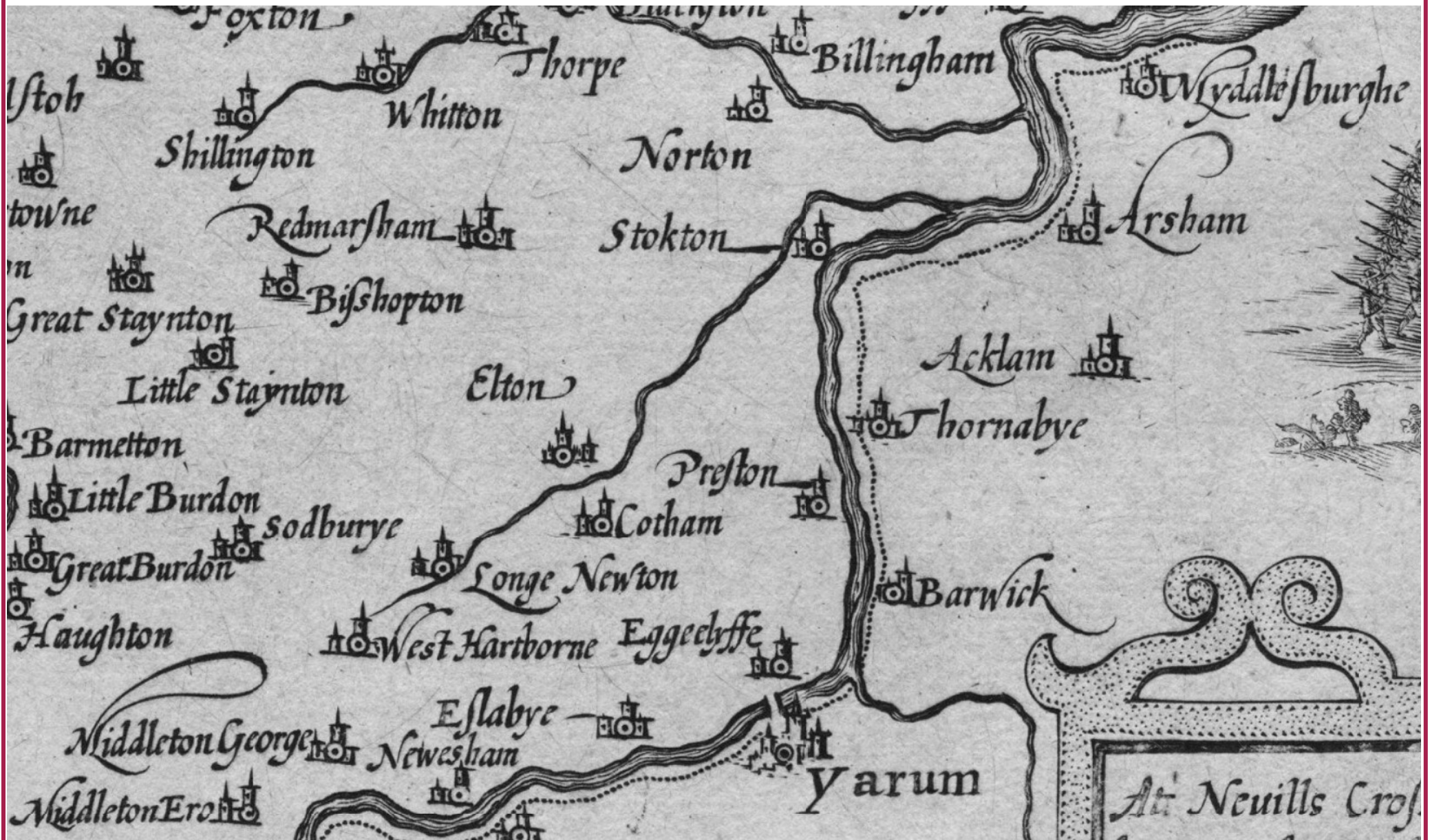
Following on from this, ask your students **“What would you do about your things being stolen like this?”** They might suggest fighting back, or turning to someone in authority - this is exactly what happened. This session will look at how people could try and get justice by creating a petition.

Begin by showing your students the map included here. The main point is to show that Stockton was in County Durham, whereas Thornaby was in the North Riding of Yorkshire, and outside the authority of Captain James Levingstone, governor of Stockton Castle. Students will then need to read the extract.

You will need to split your class into two teams - one representing the people of Thornaby, the other representing Captain James Levingstone. Each team has its own sheet to make notes before the debate and to write down any counter-arguments while the other team is speaking.

The team representing the people of Thornaby will go first, outlining their complaints to you, the ‘Commissioner’. Levingstone’s team will then set out their arguments, and make any counter-arguments. Go back and forth between the teams. Once both sides have made their arguments, you will need to choose whether to uphold the people of Thornaby’s complaints, or to side with Levingstone in his efforts to serve Charles I.

Follow up activity: encourage your students to research and sign an online petition (for example on change.org).



Map of the southern edge of County Durham in 1611. Stockton was in County Durham, as it was on the northern side of the River Tees, which cuts diagonally through the middle of this image. Thornaby, however, was on the North Riding of Yorkshire side of the river.

Ref: Speed, J. 1611 **The bishoprick and citie of Durham**. Rm5/PFC/25/4/10

Bruce, J. (ed.) *Calendar of state papers, domestic series, of the reign of Charles I 1625-[1649]*. London : Longman, 1858-97. 941 STA (DOM)

112. Petition of the inhabitants of Thornaby, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, to the Commissioners of both kingdoms. Petitioners live nigh Stockton Castle in the Bishopric of Durham, whereof Captain James Levingstone is now Governor, and have had their meadows eaten up with his horses betwixt Lady Day and May Day last, which amounted formerly to 60*l*. per annum, and is petitioners' chief maintenance in winter; the captain saying further he would take the meadow grass of the said ground when ready and carry it over to the castle, as in part he hath done.

they got the meadow into hay and were carting it home when the Governor sent his quarter-master with soldiers commanding petitioners to carry it to the river side, where all the hay is detained till he be satisfied, his demand. He usually distrains petitioners' goods upon the said grounds and keeps them till they be almost starved, and will not render them but upon payment. The soldiers take and kill their goods at pleasure without satisfaction, have broken a windmill nigh the town, and draw their swords upon petitioners when in a peaceable manner they have desired to pass their garrison.

This book is a later printed version of the large collection of letters, reports, petitions, orders and so on put together by government ministers during the reign of Charles I. They offer a glimpse into how the country was run, what sort of decisions were made by those in charge, and what was happening to ordinary people.

This extract is dated 18th July 1643.

Debate!

You are now going to take on the roles of the **Thornaby petitioners** or **Captain James Levingstone** in a debate.

Your teacher will play the role of a **Commissioner**, or local leader.

You need to convince them that **you** are in the right! Use the boxes on the next sheet to jot down some ideas for arguments you could make to support your case.

Team: People of Thornaby

Name: _____

You will be arguing in favour of the people of Thornaby who wrote the petition on the other page.

Write down your **main arguments** here. What exactly has Captain Levingstone done? Why does this make you angry? What would you like to see happen?

While the other team is speaking, write down some **counter-arguments** here. Do you believe their argument? What exactly have they got wrong?

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