Exploring diversity through a personal story

What does the life of Licoricia of Winchester reveal about how medieval society treated its Jewish community?

KS3 historical enquiry 1 on the experience of the Jewish medieval minority built around questions of historical significance



Hampshire

HIAS History Centre resource



Overview of resources

The HIAS History Centre is delighted to be able to offer these two fully resourced KS3 history enquiries on the history of the medieval Jewish community in England centred around questions of historical significance. They have been written to support the development of a more representative history curriculum that reflects the diverse histories of the people of Britain and in particular, England's little-known but important medieval Jewish community. It hopes to promote tolerance of diversity and tackle some of the myths and misconceptions around medieval Jews that continue to impact Jewish communities today. The resources will also support the teaching of medieval kingship, trade, and power of the medieval Church. For schools in Hampshire these enquiries also provide the opportunity of a meaningful local study on Winchester's royal and Jewish medieval past.

The first enquiry uses the remarkable personal story of an influential medieval Jewish woman, Licoricia of Winchester, to explore the changing relationship between the Jewish community, their Christian neighbours, the Church and the king. The enquiry investigates how medieval society treated its Jewish minority and looks at the Jewish contribution to medieval society. It also considers the historical significance of Licoricia within the historiography of medieval Jewish history in England.

The second enquiry uses a sense of place and time to explore what the history of Winchester can further reveal about the experience of medieval Jews. Students use information from historical scholarship and archaeology to investigate further how Jews were treated, including the many challenges they faced particularly in the 13th Century in which Licoricia lived and died.

These enquiries have been researched and written by HIAS Secondary History Adviser, Sarah Herrity. Our grateful thanks go to the following people who generously gave their time and expertise to support the development of these resources: Maggie Carver CBE and William Carver from The Licoricia of Winchester Appeal charity, Dr Emma Cavell, Senior Lecturer in History at Swansea University, Dr Toni Griffiths, Honorary Research Fellow Swansea University, historian Miri Rubin, Professor of Medieval and Early Modern History at Queen Mary University of London, and Rabbi Romain MBE. Our thanks also go to the Hampshire Cultural Trust, Winchester Excavations Committee, National Archives, Westminster Abbey and The Licoricia of Winchester Appeal charity, Licoricia.org, for kindly providing many of the sources of evidence used in these enquiries.



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Knowledge and assessment

- The enquiries provide an opportunity to study substantive concepts such as society, religion, minority, medieval kingship, the Church, othering, persecution, tolerance, trade and finance, guilds and city.
- The enquiries allow students to build their disciplinary knowledge on concepts such as historical diversity, historical significance and the speed and nature of change. It also provides an interesting context for learning about historiography.
- The enquiries could lead to a number of outcomes depending on whether this enquiry will need to lead to a written assessment in your curriculum. The first four lessons support students in talking and writing about the speed, nature and causes of changes in relation to Jewish treatment over time. The third lesson could lead to students writing about the attribution of historical significance to Licoricia within the context of the historiography, and consider her historical significance in terms of resonance with current examples of othering. The final outcome challenges students to apply their historical knowledge to a real world purpose in creating a walking tour and historical guide for visitors to the new statue of Licoricia which is soon to be erected outside Winchester Discovery Centre on Jewry Street.

Points to consider

- Medieval England was a period from which there emerged a number of powerful myths that continue to impact the Jews to the present day. These enquiries are an opportunity to tackle these myths and misconceptions. Together the lessons attempt to address the role of Jewish financiers head on and touch on the issue of false accusations around child murder and coin clipping. The resources are best used together and in sequence but schools may need to be selective of the materials due to time pressures in the curriculum. If you are being selective, consider how the Jews are being represented and the myths that will be tackled in your teaching.
- As early outcasts in Western Christendom, along with Christian heretics and Saracens (Muslims), the study of medieval Jews is relevant to understand the process of othering in history and warned of the full-scale process of othering played out during the Holocaust and in our modern world. The first enquiry attempts to humanise the Jewish people in these enquiries using the story of Licoricia, rather than jumping straight into a history lesson on a nameless group of *Jews* which could contribute to othering in students' thinking. Othering is also addressed explicitly in the second lesson in enquiry 2.
- This history is vital to an understanding of the Medieval Church, state and society. It reveals Britain has always had a diverse society. Jewish people were an integral part of Medieval society especially in towns and cities from 1067 to 1290. The Jewish community contributed to trade, intellectual life and culture, as well as to the building of iconic places of worship such as Westminster Abbey. Jewish financiers provided important funding at a time when Christian to Christian financing was seen as a sin. Most trades and landownership were restricted for Jews. They were able to work as doctors, teachers, scribes, poets, wine merchants, metalworkers. Jewish business women played a significant role in the business affairs of the community so provide a useful context to look at female agency in medieval England.
- The unique position of the Jewish community in society as servants of the king was controversial in medieval England. Jews were owned by the monarch to whom their economic expertise and value in providing royal income was so important. They were promised protection from the king but were increasingly taxed at will by the king and queen. Resentment over this royal economic system which led to Barons forfeiting land over unpaid debt was a contributory cause of the Barons War 1264-5. Hundreds of Jews were killed when cities like Winchester were captured. Increasingly crippling tallages from the king eventually meant the community was too poor to be useful. As a result, Jews were forced to convert or be expelled in 1290 by Edward I. Consider downplaying the term expulsion when talking about the 1290 expulsion in favour of terms like forced to leave to avoid the negative connotations of expulsion in the school context where students are seen to deserve the punishment of being expelled for poor behaviour.
- You may want to give your students access to the glossary to be able to look up unfamiliar words or, better still, incorporate the key terms into your direct teaching.



What does the life of Licoricia of Winchester reveal about how medieval society treated its Jewish community?

Enquiry 1 Lesson 1





If this statue could speak, what questions would you ask her to find out about her story?

This sculpture is based on a real English person, so who is she?

You can find this brand-new sculpture in the centre of the Winchester.

It stands outside the The Arc, (the centre for arts and culture) on Jewry street,

If the statue could talk, Licoricia might tell you ...

My name was **Licoricia of Winchester**. Licoricia is French for sweet meat. I was born in the middle of the **medieval period** in the early **13**th **Century**.

I was **widowed** very young and left with five children.



Some of my Jewish friends lived in Winchester because they had been **forced to leave** other towns like Southampton in 1236.

I wanted to **live in peace** and safety with my Christian friends and neighbours but sometimes Jews were attacked by violent mobs.

I was an English Jew at a time when England and Europe were **Christian** and under the authority of the King and the **Pope**. Today we call the Jewish religion **Judaism**.

I was a leader in my community. I was well **educated** and can read and write English, French and some Latin and Hebrew - I am **multilingual**. I am also an excellent **mathematician**.

My statue shows me holding the hand of my son **Asher.** I wanted to provide for my family and ran a successful **business.**

Winchester was my home but I travelled a lot with my work.

I travelled in style, sometimes with **bodyguards.** I was well dressed in the latest silk fashions and. I liked French food.

I was well known and well connected. I regularly met with King Henry III in Winchester's Great Hall.



What does this sculpture tell us about her? What does it suggest?

Historical research helped the sculptor decide on Licoricia's medieval clothes.

The boy, Asher, is shown holding a dreidel – a **Jewish** child's toy.

Licoricia is holding a **tallage** – a demand for a large amount of money from the King which was often unfair.





Enquiry question: What does the life of Licoricia of Winchester reveal about how Jews were treated in medieval England?

Learning about my life will **reveal** what was it like to live in a small **minority group** in **medieval society** since **Jews** were the only **non-Christian community** living in medieval England.

To understand how I was treated you will need to learn about the time and place in which I lived and the **attitudes** of people who lived there.

You will learn about the **Jewish community** in medieval Winchester and their **relationship** with the **king**, **the Church** and their **neighbours**. You will also find out how local and world events changed that relationship.

You will learn about me from the **official records** from the **royal writing office** and the historians who have used them.

Licoricia was an English widow, mother and the most well known Jewish business woman who was part of the small Jewish community living in medieval Winchester.

A minority group is a smaller group of people that have different religion, race, background or culture to most other people

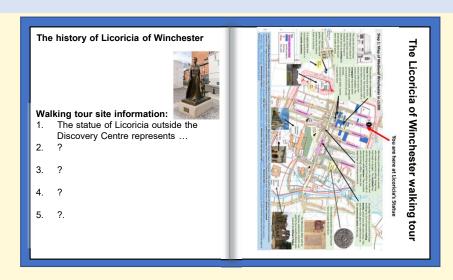


Challenge: The Arc, Winchester's new cultural centre on Jewry Street has asked for your help! They need a walking tour and historical guide for visitors to the statue of Licoricia wanting to know more about the history of Licoricia and the medieval Jewish community in Winchester.

Her statue will be the starting place of the tour. You will need to:

- explain who Licoricia of Winchester was and what her story reveals about how Jews were treated in medieval England over time
- create a walking tour of the main sites that reveal more about her life and Jewish history in Winchester.







Why were there Anglo-Jews (English Jews)?



1348

Black Death

410CE Romans left Britain

1066 Norman invasion

1095 Crusades start

1189 Massacres of Jews in towns and cities after Richard I became king

1215 attacks on Jews during Barons War against Henry III



Licoricia's life (d.1277)

Medieval period

1050 CE

<u>) CE</u>

1150

1250CE

In 70CE the Romans destroyed the Jewish temple in Jerusalem after Jewish revolts against Roman rule. Jews were barred from their holy city of Jerusalem and exiled from their lands.

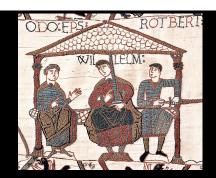
There were many Roman citizens who were Jews living across the Roman Empire so it is possible that Jews visited English cities or were living in

this to date.

the cities of Roman Britain but

there is no reliable evidence of

In 1066 Norman king, William the Conqueror brought Norman Jews to England. He wanted them to set up financial businesses that would help to pay for his new castles and cathedrals. Some Jews were also invited by church leaders who wanted translators for Hebrew documents that would help them understand the Bible.



Jews became the only non-Christian community to be tolerated in medieval England.

Descript Grinsty

Lincoln

Lincoln

Crossia Baia

Design Survival

Crossia Baia

Cannolice

Cannolice

Crossia Baia

Cannolice

Commissio

Cannolice

Cannoli

A map showing Jewish communities in medieval England

The 1216 invasion of England by Louis VIII of France and Alexander II of Scotland, during the First Barons' War

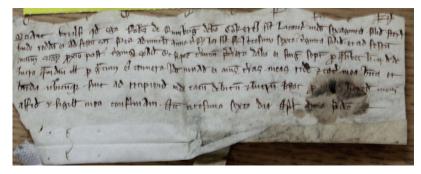
Edward I decided that the Jews were no longer providing the king with enough money. In 1290 he forced the Jews to leave England and took their homes for himself.

Jews were not allowed to live openly in England again until **1656.**



How do we know about Licoricia?

1. A chirograph



3. Medieval tally sticks

These are from medieval Hampshire







My job involved these four artefacts. Can you guess what they might be and what links them together?



2. Archa





4. Silver coins



How do we know about Licoricia?

1. A chirograph – a record of money that has been borrowed, called a debt. The lender and borrower were recorded. Licoricia's name appears on some of these.

Copies were made and put together before ripping the edges so that you could match them to check the documents were the real, authentic copies. This made sure people could not cheat and over charge for the borrowing or claim they had borrowed less.

1st copy - given to the person borrowing

2nd copy - given to the lender

3rd copy – was put into the king's archa as an official record.

Medieval tally sticks from Hampshire





recorded fines, taxes, tolls, legal matters, debts and letters from the king. These referred to Licoricia.

The royal Rolls

Can you read Cokerel fil Licorice? This chirograph is written in Norman French and says Cokerel son of Licoricia. This is a record of a debt that was owed to Licoricia's son. This photo was kindly given by the National Archives where they keep a lot of these financial records today.

2. An archa – a chest used to lock away records of debts owed to Jews in royal castles. The chest had three locks. These debts were then recorded on the Rolls so the king could help to enforce repayment. Licoricia is mentioned. Occasionally, the archa chests were attacked and destroyed by mobs of people who wanted to get rid of the evidence of their debts.



3. A tally stick – a stick to record money you owe in a debt or tallage demand. The stick had notches for payments made. It was split into halves so the lender and person borrowing had a copy. Signatures of lenders can be read. This one records a debt owed to the rural dean of Preston Candover, Hampshire, of a tithe to the Church of 20d each on 32 sheep, amounting to a total sum of £2 13s. 4d.



4. Silver coins – valuable coins
Licoricia and other Jewish and
Christian financiers lent people
money like these coins. These
coins were made in the
Winchester mint under Henry III.



Why were some medieval Jews working in finance?

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During the medieval period, both Christian and Jewish financiers could earn money by lending people money as long as they agreed to pay back more money than they borrowed. This is called charging **interest**. The Church believed it was a sin for Christians to lend money to other Christians and charge interest. It was banned by the pope. This sin was called **usury**. A way around this was to borrow from Jewish lenders. The king encouraged this.

It is interesting that Jewish and Christian financiers were also in competition with French and Italian financiers. The Italian lenders were recommended by the Church as approved by the Pope and were known as *Papal bankers*. Records show that barons and bishops complained that Italian lenders charged full interest on loans even when the loan was paid back early, whereas Jews only charged interest while the money was borrowed. Jewish financiers also developed new ideas like mortgages that allowed people to borrow money to buy a home and pay it back gradually like we do today.



What questions do you have?

Questions a historian might ask:

- Were many Jews involved in finance?
- Why was the king so involved in Jewish business?
- What was the relationship between the king and the Jewish community?
 How did he treat the Jews?
- How did this relationship with the king change over time?
- How did these changes affect the lives of Jews over time?

Step 1: Read about the way the king's treatment of the Jews changed over the medieval period.

We call the way the king decided to treat the Jews, his **policy** towards the Jews.

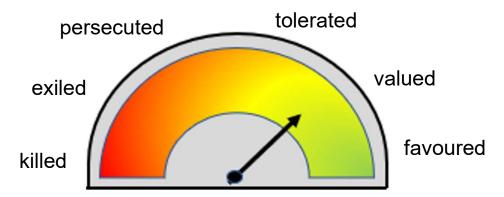
Choose the words that best describe the Jewish policy at each stage.





Step 1: How did the king's treatment of the Jews change during the medieval period?

1. For each time period on student resources 1-3, circle the words that best describe how Jews are being treated at this time.



Which words best describe how Jews are being treated?

- favoured to help or give special treatment (sometimes unfairly)
- valued seen as helpful, useful or worthwhile, appreciated
- tolerated accepted, allowed or put up with
- persecuted treated in a cruel way (treated badly) repeatedly
- exiled forced to leave, not allowed to return
- killed murdered or executed.

2. Circle the words that best describe the king's policy towards the Jews at each time?



welcoming, friendly, supportive, protective tolerant – *allowing or putting up with* mutually beneficial –*helps everyone involved*



mean, harsh, controlling, cruel

exploiting – using Jews unfairly

(eg to make excessive amounts of money)

hostile – unfriendly or treating someone like the enemy

excessive - too much

oppressive - unfairly harsh or mean, causing suffering

ruthless - willing to cause suffering

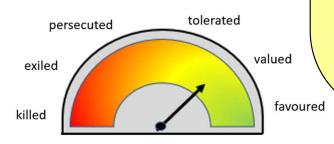
persecution – treating people badly because they are different an abuse of power – wrongly using your power to get what you want

A royal business? What did it mean to be Jewish servants of the king?

1066-1180 The kings were borrowers

William 1066 -1087

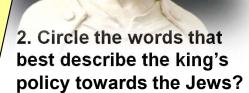
1. How were Jews treated under William I? Circle the words that best describe how Jews are being treated at this time.



About 150 years before I was born, William I brought
Jewish Normans over to England. He expected Jews to
help him raise money to build his castles and cathedrals
and wanted to borrow the money from Jewish
financiers. Later kings also gave their permission for
Jews to live in England so that they could help increase
business and trade in England using their knowledge of
finance and their trade contacts in other countries.
However, Jews could not own land and were shut out of
many trades. Jewish scholars were also invited over to
help translate religious documents. Others came to
escape violence against them on the continent in
countries like France, Germany and Italy.

From about 1164 King **Henry II** decided to use Jewish lenders instead of more expensive Christian lenders. To help raise money Jewish financiers lent money to the Church, Nobles, and ordinary people. Some people borrowed money from Jews to go on **Crusade**. By this time Jews were seen as **servants of the king**. They lived and worked in England with his permission and were promised the king's protection.

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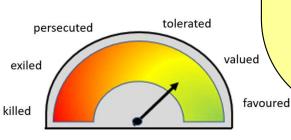
welcoming, friendly, supportive, protective, tolerant, mutually beneficial.

mean, harsh, controlling, cruel, exploiting, hostile, excessive, oppressive, ruthless, persecution, an abuse of power.





3. Circle the words that best describe how Jews are being treated at this time.



By 1180 King Henry II taxed Jews instead of borrowing their money. Under King Henry III Jewish people became the king's property. Jews were still seen as the *king's servants* who could be taxed more than all other English people. Jews could be taxed at any time and without permission of a council or parliament. Jews had to register all their lands, houses, rents, property and debts. This helped the king decide what money to demand from the whole Jewish community when he needed money for things like wars or new buildings. These demands were called tallages. Jews were a bit like the king's private cash machine. These tallages were upsetting and oppressive. In 1210 King John imprisoned all Jews and tortured Jewish leaders until they promised they would pay a tallage of 60,000 marks to the king (a mark was a coin that was worth around six days' wages for a knight).

In **1244**, **Henry III** demanded a massive **£40,000** (worth £30 million today) from the **5,000** English Jews. He claimed a third of everything Jews owned, sending many into **poverty**. Those who could not pay were thrown into **prison** and threatened with having to leave the country and hand over their property. This meant Jewish lenders suddenly had to ask people to **repay loans** early to help pay what was owed. This caused anger against the Jews. It also turned some **barons** against the king as they too had to repay their debts to Jews, **enforced** by the king. This led to attacks on the Jews in 1265-66. The **poorest** Jews were asked to leave England. Some who had **business connections** in France left England to escape the tallages.



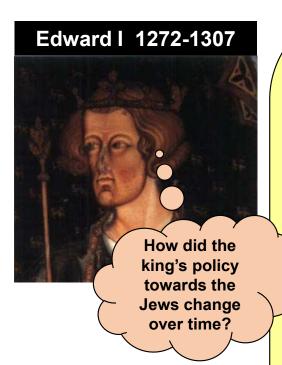
4. Circle the words that best describe the king's policy towards the Jews?

welcoming, friendly, supportive, protective, tolerant, mutually beneficial.

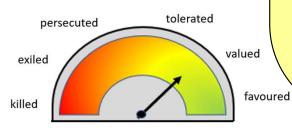
mean, harsh, controlling, cruel, exploiting, hostile, excessive, oppressive, ruthless, persecution, an abuse of power.



The king was a liquidator 1275-1290?



5. Circle the words that best describe how Jews are being treated at this time.



Under King **Edward I** things went from bad to worse. He needed large amounts of money to pay for his new expensive castles and his wars in France. As well as demanding the Jews paid large tallages to the king each year, in 1275 Edward I passed a new law called the **Statute of Jewry**. Any Jewish person over 12 years old now had to pay a yearly tax. At the same time money lending in coins was banned. This made it very difficult for Jewish people to make a living and made many Jews desperately poor. Also any Jewish person over seven years old now had to wear a badge. This was because Jews and Christians worked together and the Pope did not want Christians mixing and becoming intimate with Jews.

In 1290 Jews heard the terrible news that the king was forcing all Jewish people to leave the country or convert to Christianity. This meant the Jews had to leave their businesses, homes and belongings to the king, taking only what they could carry with them to Europe to start a new life there. Ending a business and selling everything you can to make money, is called **liquidation**. That's what Edward I did with all Jewish businesses and homes he now owned. All the archa chests with documents of Jewish property and loans were brought into London so the king could claim their property and loans.



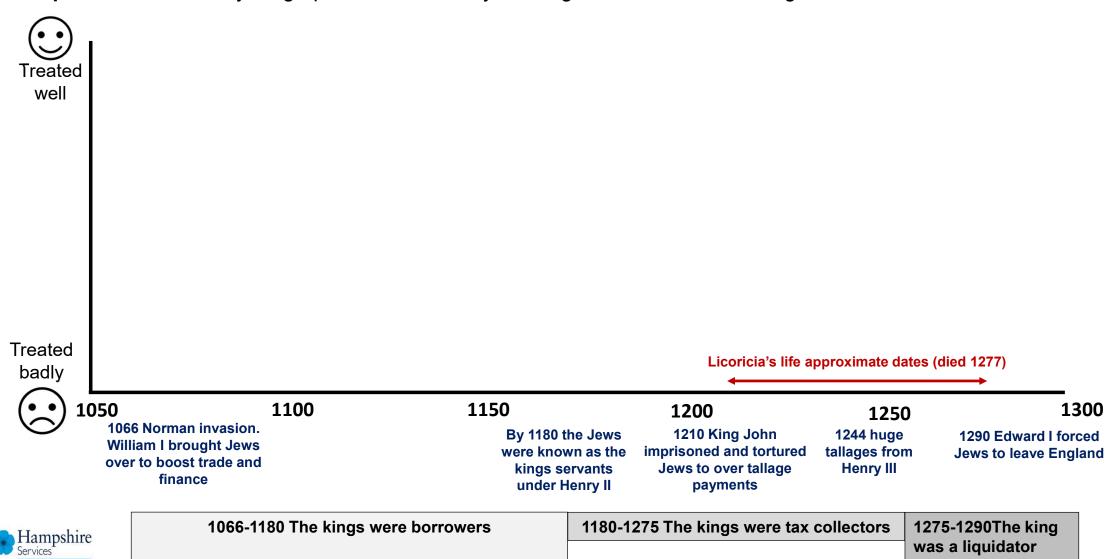
6. Circle the words that best describe the king's policy towards the Jews?

welcoming, friendly, supportive, protective, tolerant, mutually beneficial.

mean, harsh, controlling, cruel, exploiting, hostile, excessive, oppressive, ruthless, persecution, an abuse of power.



Step 2: Draw a line on your graph to show the way the king treated the Jews changed over time.



Step 2: Talk like a historian - label your graph to describe the changes



Add these labels to your line to show when the changes happened:

- A. The king's persecution of the Jews grew worse, eventually forcing all Jews to leave England.
- B. The king welcomed Jews into England. He valued and protected Jews as they provided money for personal spending including building projects.
- C. The king's treatment of the Jews became oppressive. They could be imprisoned and tortured until huge payments were paid for tallages.
- D. Add a label of your own using the words you have learned to describe the king's treatment of the Jews at different times or explain how this changed.

Treated badly

1050
1066 Norman invasion.
William I brought Jews
over to boost trade and

finance

Licoricia's life approximate dates (died 1277)

1200

By 1180 the Jews were known as the kings servants

under Henry II

1150

1210 King John imprisoned and tortured Jews to over tallage payments

1244 huge tallages from Henry III

1250

1290 Edward I forced Jews to leave England

1300



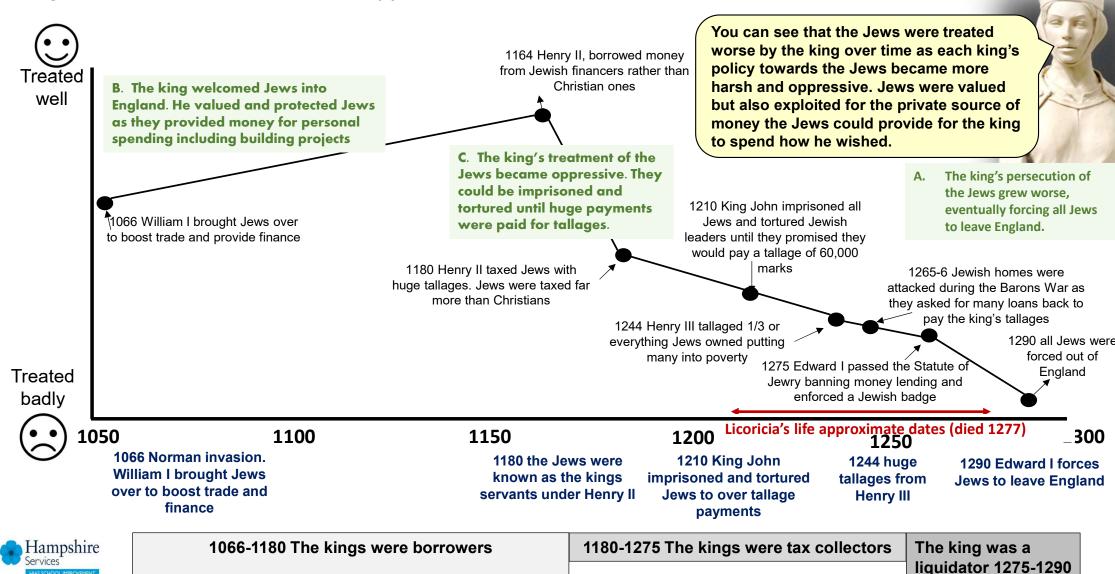
1066-1180 The kings were borrowers

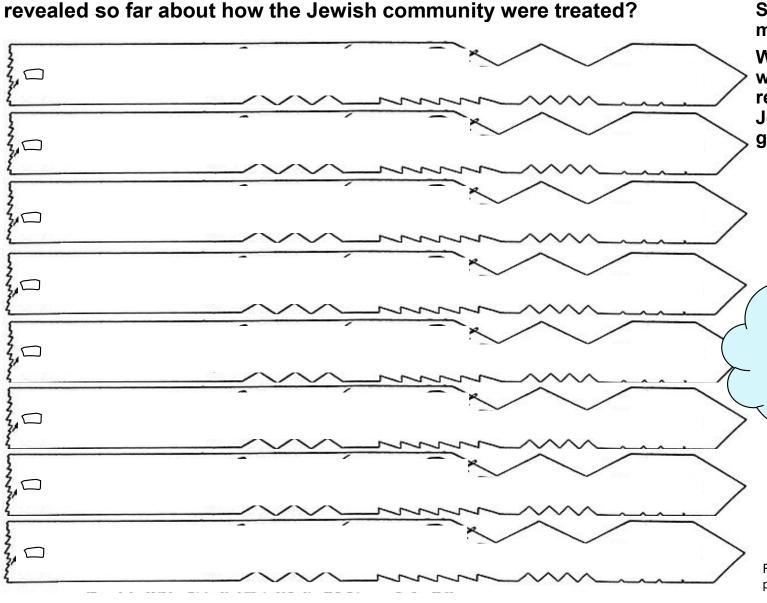
1100

1180-1275 The kings were tax collectors

1275-1290The king was a liquidator

Step 3: Add a line to show what happened to the treatment of Licoricia over time





What has the life of Licoricia and the kings' policy towards the Jews

Step 3: Use these tally sticks as memory aids.

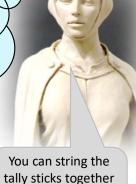
Write on the sticks to keep a record of what you think people should remember about the treatment of Jews in medieval society for your guide.



Think: What should people visiting Licoricia's statue know about her and the history of the Jewish community?



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like a medieval key ring!

Hampshire
Services

HIAS History Centre Resource



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A map showing Jewish communities in medieval England https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brockhaus_and_Efron_Jewish_Encyclopedia_e2_505-0.jpg by unknown author, in the public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

14th Century **miniature showing the expulsion of Jews** following the Edict of Expulsion by Edward I of England (18 July 1290). Marginal Illustration from the Rochester Chronicle (British Library, Cotton Nero D. II.), folio 183v https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BritLibCottonNeroDiiFol183vPersecutedJews.jpg from the British Library in the Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

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