NORTH DEVON AND NEWFOUNDLAND: A FOUR HUNDRED YEAR STORY

INTRODUCTION

Of all the episodes in the history of North Devon, there is probably none more overlooked than that of trade with Newfoundland. In Bristol, as well as the Cabot shopping centre and the Cabot Tower on Brandon Hill, there is Newfoundland Way, linking the city centre to the M32. Yet proportionately Bristol had far less involvement with Newfoundland than did Barnstaple and Bideford, but in neither town is there anything as obvious to suggest this connection. In Newton Abbot, which only ever saw recruitment of men for the Newfoundland fishery, a stretch of the inner relief road has been named Newfoundland Way. One reason perhaps for the neglect of Newfoundland in North Devon is the picture painted by Charles Kingsley in his 1855 novel, *Westward Ho!* Kingsley was unusual among Victorians in that he was nostalgic not for the Gothic middle ages, but for the vigorous Protestant spirit of the latter part of the sixteenth century. One suspects that for Kingsley, the defeat of the Spanish Armada had the same iconic status as the Second World War has come to enjoy in our own time. For much of the twentieth century a prominent building on the Quay in Bideford has been called the *Rose of Torridge*, after the heroine of Kingsley's novel. A frequently reproduced nineteenth century photograph of Bideford Quay features the paddle steamer *Privateer*, but just visible in the background between the ships' funnel and mast on the façade of the Rose of Torridge, is the legend Newfoundland Hotel (figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. The *Privateer* at Bideford Quay.

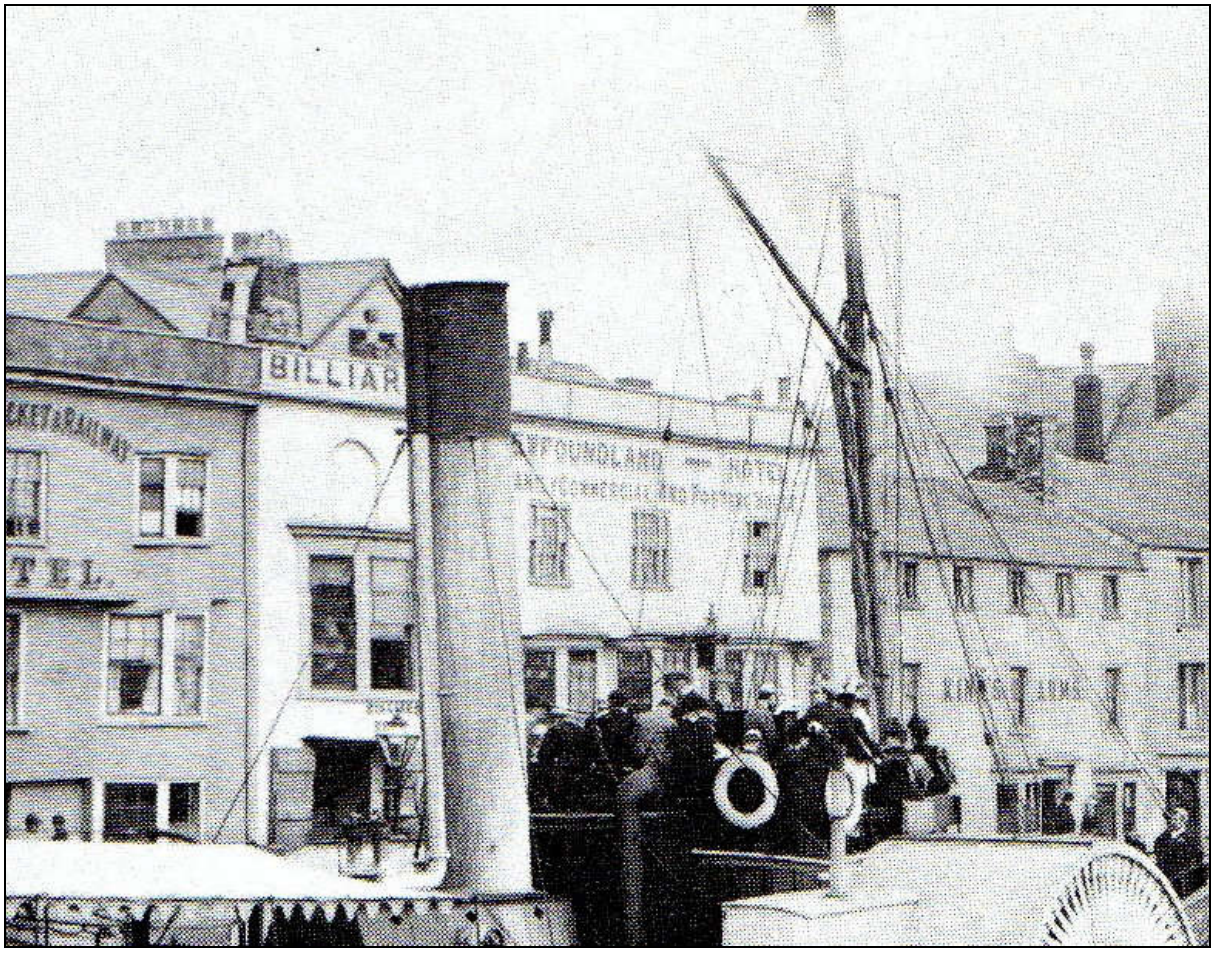

Figure 2. Detail of the *Privateer* and the Newfoundland Hotel

There are many good histories of the Newfoundland fisheries (eg Cell, 1969; Innis, 1954; Lounsbury, 1934; Matthews, 1968; Pope, 2004; and Starkey, 1992). All mention North Devon but in the overall coverage, Poole and the South Devon ports, especially Dartmouth and Teignmouth, stand out, not least because their active participation in the fishery outlasted that of North Devon by half a century, and in the case of Dartmouth and Poole, was on a scale that, even when combined, Barnstaple and Bideford could rarely equal. A primary aim of this study is to tell North Devon's story and show how central the Newfoundland trade was to Barnstaple and Bideford for around a century and a half. North Devon had two episodes of involvement with Newfoundland: the migratory fishery of the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries; and the carrying trade of about half a century from 1850 to 1900. During the migratory fishery, North Devon was a major player and until the mid-eighteenth century, ports from Bristol around the South West coast to Poole totally dominated. In the carrying trade of the second half of the nineteenth century, North Devon was but one of many areas supplying ships and the last merchant houses of Dartmouth and Poole had either collapsed or transferred their headquarters to Glasgow, Liverpool and St John's in Newfoundland.

The study will cover the discovery, or perhaps more correctly the re-discovery, of Newfoundland by Europeans in the fifteenth century and the emergence of England and France as the two key protagonists in Newfoundland. The migratory fishery, as practised by North Devon and the other English ports will be described, with a background of the great struggle between England and France for supremacy in North America from 1698 to 1763. By the early nineteenth century the migratory fishery was all but finished, the disruption of the War of American Independence and then the prolonged wars of 1793-1815 merely completing the eclipse of English direct participation in the fishery and after 1820 virtually all the fishing was being done by settlers on the island. However, the fish was still marketed in Iberia and the Mediterranean and the carrying trade arose with ships chartered to take the fish from Newfoundland to market. This lasted until the widespread adoption of refrigeration at the start of the twentieth century. The Newfoundland connection in North Devon lingered on into the mid twentieth century when the last of the men who had sailed in the carrying trade passed away and the Slade family of Appledore, among the last of England's auxiliary sailing ship owners, favouring ex-Newfoundland vessels for their fleet.

NEWFOUNDLAND

Newfoundland is the closest part of North America to Europe, about 3,000 kilometres or 2,000 miles. As the prevailing winds and the North Atlantic Drift ocean current both flow from west to east, the North Atlantic was not easy to cross in the days of sail, and even in the nineteenth century with much improved sailing vessels and better knowledge of environmental conditions, the saying 'forty days to the windward' expressed satisfaction at a relatively swift passage from England. Figure 3 shows Newfoundland in its Atlantic setting. It can also be seen that there is an extensive area of shallow continental shelf lying to the south and east of the island. This forms the famous Grand Banks, one of the most biologically productive places on the planet, thanks to the mingling of the waters of the cold Labrador Current off the east coast with the warm North Atlantic Drift to the south. Newfoundland itself lies between 47 and 52 degrees north, roughly comparable to the mouth of the Loire in France and Cork in Ireland. But it is significantly colder than similar latitudes in Western Europe. At St John's the average summer temperature is only 13° C and winter temperatures range from 0° C to minus 4° C. The period with minimum temperatures above 6° C, at which vegetation will grow, is around 26 weeks. One consequence of the cold seas off-shore is that Newfoundland is particularly prone to fog, occurring on around 120 days per year, but especially common in spring and early summer. It is also worth noting that the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also were characterised by the Little Ice Age, when temperatures were possibly as much 2°C lower in North America and Western Europe than in 1980 and the general consensus is that maximum cooling occurred between 1645 and 1715.

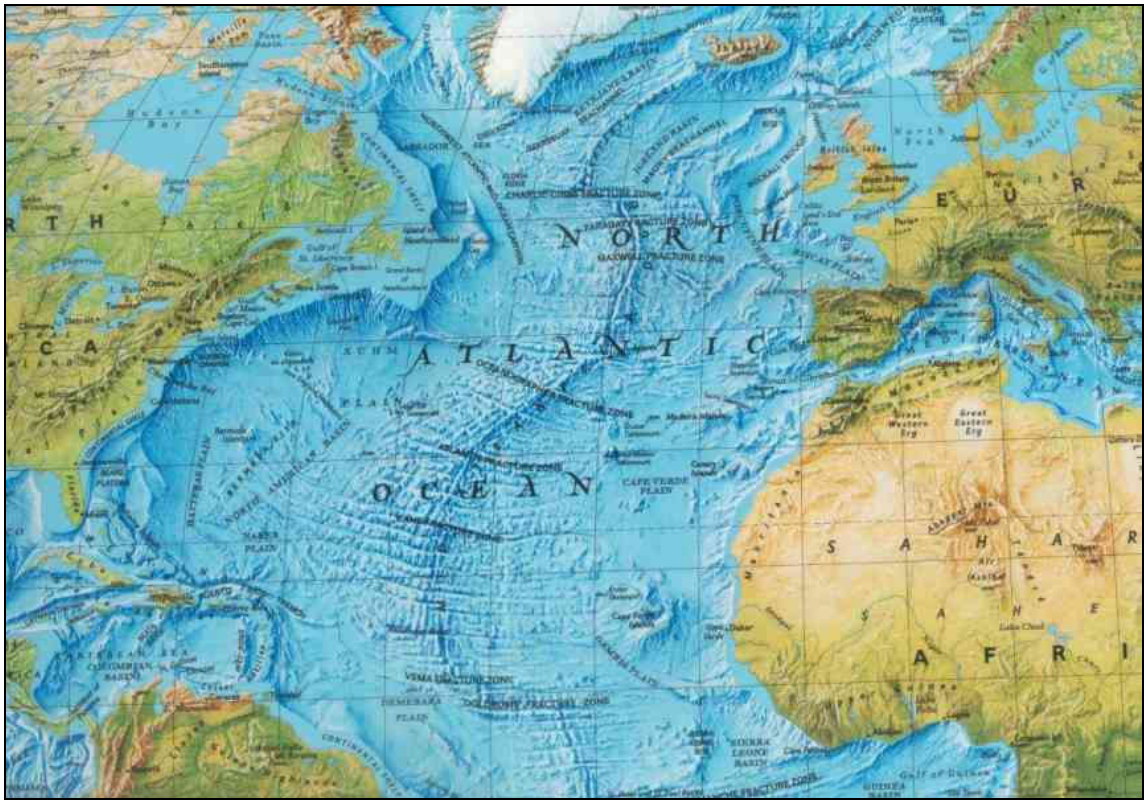

Figure 3. Newfoundland and the North Atlantic

The island of Newfoundland is roughly 109,000 square kilometres in size (the whole island of Ireland is about 85,000 square kilometres). The highest point is only 800 metres (about 2,700 feet) but it is generally a rugged landscape, with the hills, small mountain ranges and the principal coastal features all having a distinct north-east to south-west trend, as well shown in one of the first reliable charts of Newfoundland produced by Captain James Cook (figure 4). Cook had been in Canada in the 1760s and the map was published whilst he was engaged on his famous voyages to Australia and New Zealand. The Newfoundland landscape was intensely glaciated and its soils are generally thin and acid, not at all conducive to agriculture. Where bare rock was not exposed at the surface, the natural vegetation was woodland, principally pine, fir and birch. Thus marine environments and their natural resources rather than terrestrial environments were the attraction for European settlers.

The history of North Devon's involvement with Newfoundland is confined geographically to the Avalon Peninsula in the south east of the island. This and some of its principal settlements are shown in figure 5. The Avalon Peninsula is one of the main centres of population in modern Newfoundland, but settlement is confined to the coast and tourism has replaced fishing as the principal economic activity.

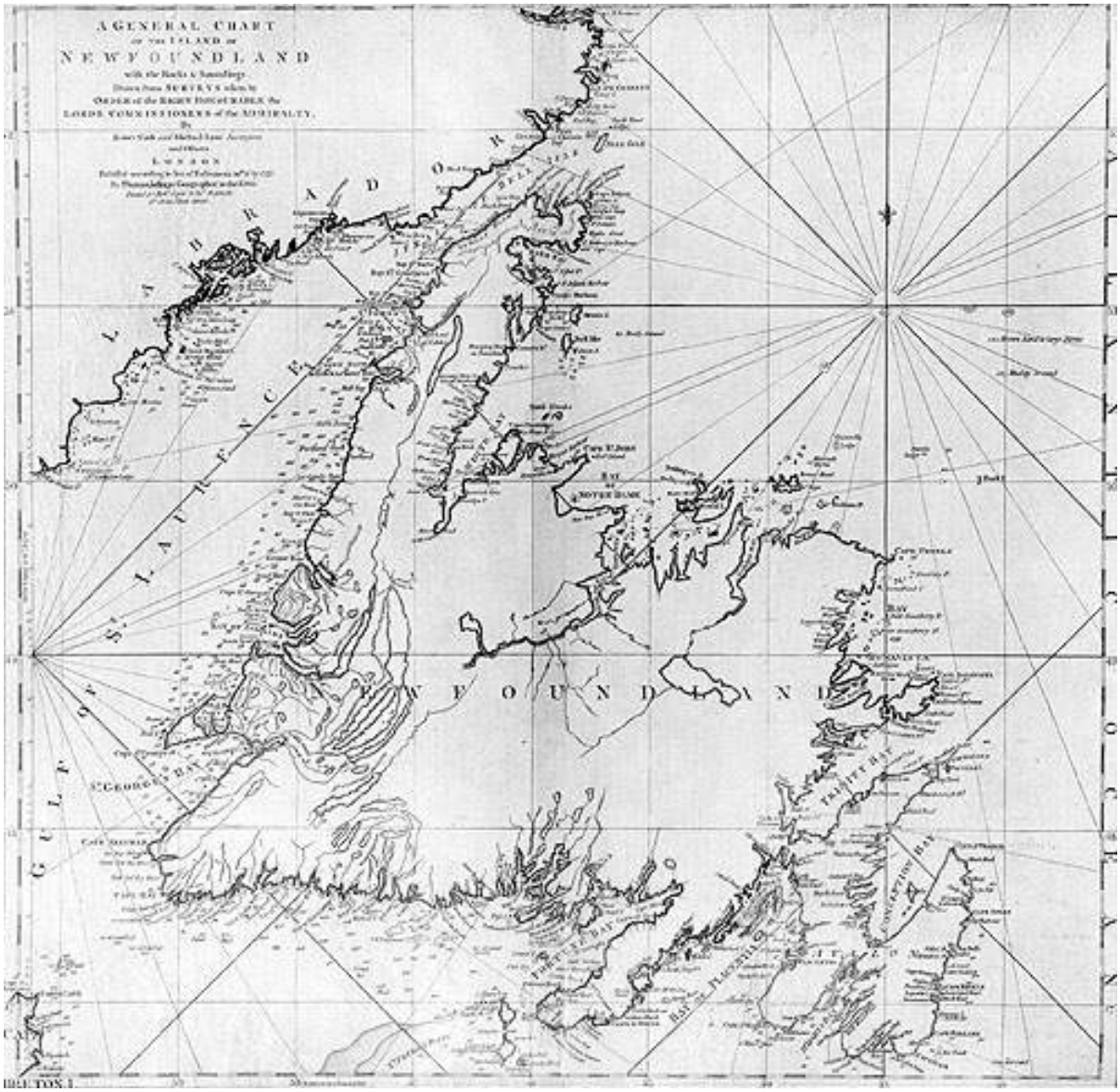

Figure 4. Captain James Cook's chart of Newfoundland

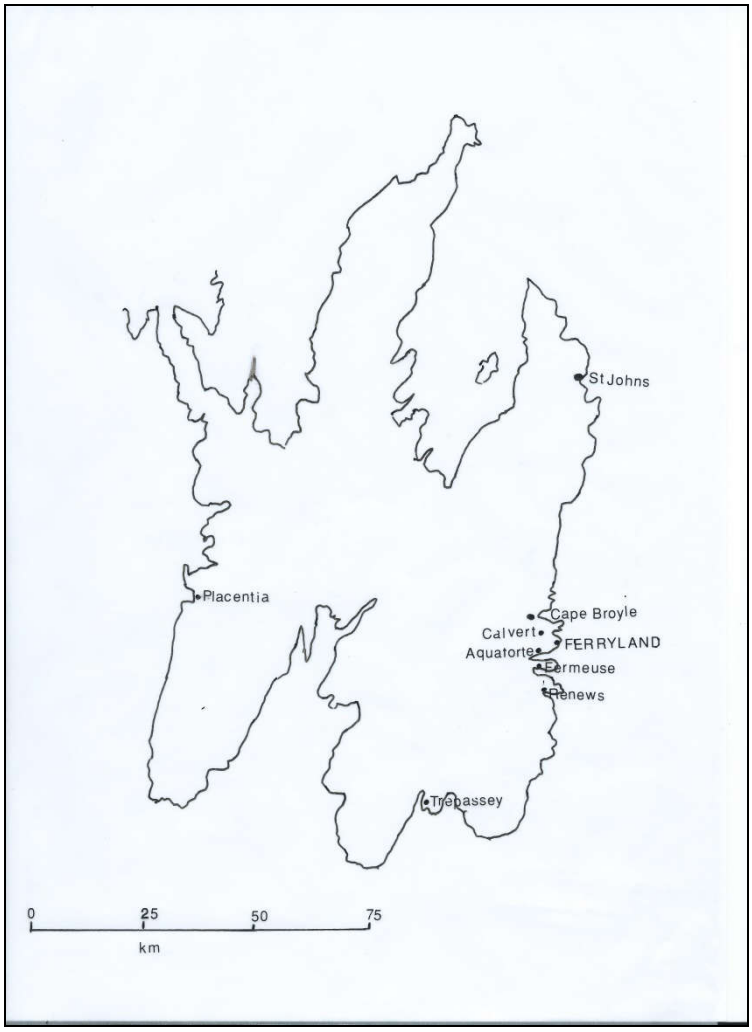

Figure 5. Sketch map of the Avalon Peninsula

THE CABOTS AND NEWFOUNDLAND

Traditional accounts of Newfoundland usually start with the royal commission given by Henry VII to John Cabot in 1496 and his subsequent voyage in 1497. There are two challenges to this more traditional view. First, there is conclusive archaeological evidence that the Norse reached Newfoundland around AD 1000. It is also thought that there was a folk and oral tradition along much of the Atlantic seaboard of Europe of lands and fisheries well to the westward. Whether these were traditions of the Norse voyages or related to various accidental discoveries of the Azores, Madeira and the Canaries or even perhaps of purposeful voyages across the Atlantic will never be proved. Two Norse sagas, *The Saga of Erik the Red* and *The Saga of the Greenlanders*, written down in the thirteenth century but relating to events of the late tenth or early eleventh century had been known for many years. Until the twentieth century scholars had tended to treat the descriptions they contained of voyages as largely mythical or perhaps to unknown areas of the Eastern Atlantic and not to North America. There is also the Irish legend of the land of *Hy Brasil*, a mist shrouded island that lay out in the

Atlantic, which perhaps plays a part in the association of the Cabot's and Bristol merchant interests.

In 1960, the Norwegian explorer and archaeologist, Helge Marcus Ingstad and his wife, Anee Stine Ingstad examined a site, L'Anse aux Meadows, at the extreme northern end of Newfoundland's northern peninsula. Their excavations from 1960 to 1968 showed that it had been a Norse settlement, with eight main buildings and a range of artefacts similar to those from known Norse contexts in Greenland and Iceland. Significant too was the slag from ironworking and many iron nails, which ruled out the possibility of it being a Beothuk site. The Beothuk were Newfoundland's native people and related by culture and language to the First Nation peoples of North America and quite distinct from the Inuit of northern Canada. Their culture was non-metallic. Einar Haugen (1977, 1981) among others points out that this site was not the Vinland of the sagas, but rather a staging post for voyages southwards on the North American mainland, at least to Cape Cod, if not further. Subsequent archaeological work at L'Anse aux Meadows by Parks Canada in the 1970s and onwards discovered butternuts and butternut wood, which do not grow in Newfoundland and so had to come from further to the south. They also found furnaces and pieces of worked wood. Charcoal from the hearths gave radio-carbon dates of around AD 1000. Birgitta Wallace (2003) argues that Vinland was probably the Mirimachi river area of modern New Brunswick, the furthest north that vines will grow and where the topography fits that described in *The Vinland Saga.* Like others, she notes the absence of human burials at L'Anse aux Meadows, and suggests that occupation there was for a few years rather than decades. One of the buildings at L'Anse aux Meadows was large enough to be regarded as a chief's hall but the settlement probably never held more than 70-90 people, although the presence of personal items like a pin and glass beads as well as spindles and a whetstone, perhaps for sharpening needles, point to some of the population being women.

In 1961, Helge Ingstad was shown what were thought to be Norse hunting pits at Sop's Arm about 200 km south of L'Anse aux Meadows. Various artefacts were subsequently found there and, in 2006, a sunstone, a kind of sundial to obtain bearings, was discovered and together these suggest some Norse occupancy. In 2015 a team of archaeologists started work at Point Rosée, at the south-western tip of Newfoundland, where satellite images had suggested a rectilinear structure. Excavations uncovered turf walls and clear signs of iron working. Radio-carbon dates of the charcoal range from c AD 800 to 1300. Work continues at the site but it appears to be another ephemeral Norse settlement, perhaps more substantial than Sop's Arm but less so than L'Anse aux Meadows. Figure 7 shows the distribution of these Norse sites in Newfoundland and it tends to confirm a view that the Norse headed south-west from Greenland and worked down the Labrador coast and perhaps across the Gulf of St Lawrence, rather than sailing direct to Newfoundland from Iceland or Europe. Given the small size of the Norse population in Greenland, even at its peak, sustained occupation of Newfoundland would have been impossible and the ephemeral nature of the Norse sites so far found would be a logical consequence.

Figure 6. L'Anse aux Meadows (picture by Clinton Pierce)

Figure 7. The Norse in Newfoundland: L'Anse aux Meadows; Sop's Arm; Point Rosée. St John's is shown for reference.

Throughout the medieval period there seems to have been folk knowledge of a land out in the Atlantic and, by the fifteenth century, it was known as *Hy Brasil*. This would

seem to be an English rendering of the Irish *Ui Breasail*, the clan of Breasil. The island appears on a map by Abraham Ortelius as late as 1572 (figure 8). It is tempting to see *Hy Brasil* as another version of the Irish Otherworld, *Tir na nÓg*, or the land of the young and, with their well-established connections with Ireland, Bristol and North Devon mariners would most probably have known of these legends. It is also interesting that another name for the Irish Otherworld was *Emain Ablach* (isle of apple trees) and thus cognate with the Welsh *Ynys Afallon,* which Geoffrey of Monmouth popularised as Avalon, the name that seventeenth planters chose for their colony in south east Newfoundland. The notion of land out in the Atlantic had been first formulated by Plato in about in 360BC in his *Timaeus* and *Critias*, where he discussed Atlantis as a rhetorical opposite to his ideal of Athens. The combination of classical Greek authority, of accidental encounters with the Atlantic islands of the Azores, Madeira and the Canaries before their recorded rediscoveries in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and perhaps stories of Norse voyaging sustained the notion of lands across the Atlantic among the people of the eastern Atlantic seaboard.

Figure 8. *Hy Brasil* on Ortelius's map

John Cabot obtained letters patent from King Henry VII in 1496 for a voyage to find new lands. He was a Venetian citizen, originally perhaps from Genoa or Naples, and had been actively seeking support since the 1480s from monarchs and merchants around Europe for such a voyage. He arrived in England in about 1495 and appears to have made some initial contacts with people in Bristol who then secured his audience with the king in London (Quinn, 1999). Cabot returned to Bristol and set sail in the summer of 1496. The ship seems to have run into storms and returned to Bristol. The following year in May, Cabot set off in the *Matthew,* with a crew of about 25, probably also

including the twelve year old Sebastian Cabot. The replica built for the five hundredth anniversary is shown in Figure 9. The voyage took them to Newfoundland, either Bonavista or perhaps to Belle Isle and Cabot claimed the new lands for the king. They returned to Bristol in August 1497. Cabot made a second voyage to Newfoundland in 1498 or 1499, about which little is known and Williamson (1962) speculates that Cabot may not have drowned on this voyage as had been assumed but he seems to disappear from the records after 1500. Cabot's choice of Bristol does not appear to have been accidental. The city had contacts with Iceland and Ireland and so its mariners would have had knowledge of lands in the Atlantic and, as the port was trading with Iberia, many of its mariners and merchants would have known of the voyages of Basque whalers far into the Atlantic in the latter part of the fifteenth century. Whilst some of the Bristol backers of Cabot may have hankered after the alleged riches of *Hy Brasil*, others probably sensed the potential of fisheries off Newfoundland.

Figure 9. The *Matthew* replica under sail.

England had been used to meeting its fish requirements either from domestic waters or from Iceland. The Icelandic fishery and fish trade had been dominated by England's North Sea ports and the eventual exclusion by the Danes of English ships from Icelandic waters in the fifteenth century would have had limited direct impact on the ports of south-west England. The earlier fisheries of south-west England had been inshore but in the late medieval period, especially in the fifteenth century, the waters off the southern and western coasts of Ireland were increasingly exploited by ships from south-west England (Kowaleski, 2000). Use was made of summer shore stations, where ships could be resupplied and the fish salted, and cured, a pattern that soon

became the norm in the Newfoundland fishery. South-west England had a double advantage over the east coast, in greater proximity to the Irish fishing grounds and to supplies of salt from France, Portugal and Spain. Bristol became a significant port for the import of fish from Ireland and, in 1437/8, over a quarter of the ships bringing fish were Irish, itself reflecting an interest in fisheries by the Gaelic Lords such as the O'Driscoll's in west Co Cork and the O'Flaherty's and O'Malley's in Counties Galway and Mayo (Breen, 2016). Bristol participated in many other trades and it appears that its initial interests in Newfoundland were not systematically followed up after the first decade or two of the sixteenth century. Thus the other ports of south-west England, including Barnstaple and Bideford, were eventually able to become well-established in the Newfoundland fishery.

THE RISE OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERY

Early in the sixteenth century ships from the Basque country of France and Spain, Portugal, France and England were all fishing in Newfoundland waters, with the Basques also whaling (Loewen and Delmas, 2012). Some archaeological evidence of this very early period has been found, particularly at Ferryland, where coarse Breton stoneware and ceramics of Iberian origin have been uncovered in layers below those in which there is unequivocal evidence of English occupation after c 1580 (Tuck, 1993; Gaulton and Hawkins, 2015, 2016). Exactly when the English participation started is unclear and it appears to have been quite limited until the latter part of the sixteenth century. It rather looks as if rivals to the English progressively dropped out or greatly reduced their activities as the sixteenth century progressed. French participation was much reduced during the wars of religion from 1562-1598. Many of the ports in the Newfoundland fishery were at that time Protestant in sympathy and in revolt against the Catholic monarchy. Roughly at the same time, Portuguese and Spanish interest waned as new opportunities arose in Central and South America and where silver and gold proved to be more alluring than fish from Newfoundland. It is sometimes suggested that losses of shipping in the Spanish Armada of 1588 was a set-back, but these losses were quickly made up and rationalisation of interests appears a more likely reason for the lack of further serious involvement.

Newfoundland's cod was important as a source of protein for markets in the western Mediterranean. The Mediterranean itself is not particularly productive of fish and in the later medieval period a trade developed in imports of cured fish from northern Europe (Heywood, 2014). Increasing demand in Mediterranean markets and shortages of fish from domestic and Icelandic waters meant that merchants in northern Europe were searching for alternative sources to supply this trade. It is into these markets that Newfoundland salt cod was to go. As will be shown later, only limited quantities of fish from Newfoundland came back to England, and most of the catch went to Iberia and the Mediterranean. In the sixteenth century, most of the salt cod that did find its way back to England tended to be used to provision armies campaigning in Ireland and the Netherlands rather than for direct domestic consumption.

Ports from Bristol around to Poole came to dominate the English Newfoundland fishery, although London and Southampton had early involvement. Western location and access to salt from France, Portugal and Spain played some part and North Devon was able to add to these advantages easy access to Ireland for vital provisions for the fishing fleets. The fishery, whilst a risky business, did not require the same level of capital as many other trades and it also had unpredictable gluts and shortages of fish, so ports like London and Bristol with other more lucrative interests and greater resources of capital, tended to focus elsewhere.

Even in the early seventeenth century, French involvement in the Newfoundland fishery was equal to or greater than that of the English. In 1578 Hakluyt reported Anthony Parkhurst saying that there were 150 French ships, 100 Spanish ships, 50 Portuguese ships and 50 English ships at Newfoundland (Harte, 1932). Harte also found in the Exeter Customs Books from 1563 to 1600, 65 ships bringing train-oil (cod-liver oil) from Newfoundland and ships bringing fish did not have to pay duty, so this figure is a considerable under-estimate of the total number of ships involved. In the mid-1590s there were approximately 100 English ships at Newfoundland, with the majority from Devon. By 1637, there were around 500 English ships, again with Devon predominating. However, the English Civil War caused a significant disruption to the trade. The ports of south-west England were staunchly Parliamentarian but fell progressively to the Royalists, with the exception of Plymouth. Parliament only regained control of the south-west towards the end of the war. The existence of a small number of Royalist privateers often operating from Irish ports, even at the end of the war, curtailed the Newfoundland trade as ships and profits were liable to be commandeered (Lea-O'Mahoney, 2011). In 1652, there were only approximately 200 English ships in Newfoundland waters (Innis, 1954).

EARLY ENGLISH SETTLEMENT IN NEWFOUNDLAND

Although the migratory fishery came to dominate Newfoundland in the seventeenth century, the first intentions of the English government had been to establish plantations, or colonies. In 1578 Sir Humphrey Gilbert, a half-brother of Sir Walter Raleigh and cousin of Sir Richard Grenville, was granted letters patent to found a settlement in Newfoundland. His voyage that year failed to reach Newfoundland and only in 1583 did his fleet finally arrive and he made a formal claim to the territory for the English crown. He went down with his ship on the return journey and nothing more was done, not least because the conflict with Spain reached a climax in the Armada in 1588. In 1608 the Bristol Society of Merchant Venturer's decided to follow up the city's links with Newfoundland and John Guy, one of its members, visited Newfoundland to evaluate sites for a future colony, deciding upon 'Cuper's Cove', now known as Cupids on Conception Bay, west of St John's. In 1610 a royal charter was granted to the Company of Adventurers and Planters of the Cities of London and Bristol and Guy went to Newfoundland as its governor. He returned the following year and the colony survived an attack by English pirates but the potential for agriculture had been over-estimated and the colony eventually collapsed, partly in the face of hostility from

migratory fishermen. Cell (1969) argues that the Bristol Company was an attempt by the city to regain its leading position in the Newfoundland trade, which by this time had been eclipsed by Poole and the Devon ports, including Barnstaple and Bideford.

The Company of Adventurers and Planters had been granted title to the whole of Newfoundland, although it was expected that it would focus on the Avalon Peninsula in the south-east of Newfoundland. In 1616, the company sold land in southern Avalon to William Vaughan, a Welsh writer and potential colonial promoter. In 1617, he sent Welsh settlers to Renews, which he called Cambriol, to establish a colony. The following year, he sent more colonists and under command of Richard Whitbourne. Vaughan himself visited his colony in 1622 and remained there until 1625. He eventually transferred his interests to Virginia and the colony, in the face of hostility from migratory fishermen and attacks by the French, failed in the 1630s. Vaughan had, in 1620, signed over part of his lands in Newfoundland to Sir George Calvert and these lands were to become the Colony of Avalon, with its focal point of Ferryland.
Sir George Calvert (Figure 10) became in 1619 one of the two principal secretaries of state to James I but fell from power after supporting a marriage alliance between the future Charles I and a Spanish princess. He resigned his office in 1625 and was created Lord Baltimore in the Irish peerage (the title arose from his estates in Co Longford, not from the town in Co Cork) and declared publicly his Roman Catholicism. His initial interests in Newfoundland seem to have been commercial and in 1621 he sent colonists under Captain Edward Wynne to Ferryland to establish his plantation. This appears to have been successful and soon Calvert obtained a grant from the king for the whole of southern Avalon. After his resignation from government, Calvert became more interested in Avalon as a colony for English Catholics and fulfilled his intention of living there in 1628. However, the winter of 1628/9 was particular severe and in 1629 he turned his attentions to what later became the colony of Maryland. Wynne had built a substantial house at Ferryland which Calvert and his family occupied and this has been the focus of much archaeological effort. In 2014, adjacent to this so called 'mansion-house', the first unequivocal evidence of a Catholic presence was found in the form of a crucifix, probably from a set of rosary beads. (Gaulton and Hawkins, 2015). Other evidence of the relatively high status of the house came in the form of North Devon sgraffito ware. Work on the whole Calvert settlement suggested to Gaulton, Tuck and Miller (2011, p. 58): "The whole village must have resembled one of the small port towns of the West Country with its layers of buildings and cobbled walkways, courtyards and work areas."

Figure 10. Portrait of Sir George Calvert by Daniel Mytens

In 1637 Sir David Kirke asked Charles I for a grant of Newfoundland after Calvert's lands were declared confiscate because of abandonment. This was granted to Kirke but with the proviso that his settlement should not obstruct the migratory fishery. Kirke sent further settlers to Ferryland and erected defensive fortifications. His interests extended to fishing and this inevitably brought him into conflict with the migratory fishery. The dispute was unresolved when the Civil War broke out in England and Kirke had taken the Royalist side. Thus, when the merchants in the migratory fishery renewed their suit at the end of the war, Kirke no longer enjoyed royal patronage and protection. His lands were confiscated by the Commonwealth but he managed to be acquitted of accusations of breaching his charter and in 1653, he repurchased his lands. He died in 1654, just as a further round of legal challenges began, this time from the Calvert family. The Kirke's managed the settlement at Ferryland until 1679. Archaeological work at Ferryland has shown how extensive this later settlement had become, with more North Devon sgraffito ware, great quantities of North Devon coarse ware and clay pipe fragments testifying to the active links between Ferryland and Barnstaple and Bideford. By the end of the seventeenth century, Ferryland was among the larger settlements in Newfoundland and a harbinger of the rise of the residential fishery in tandem with the migratory fishery. But the era of chartered plantations was at an end.

THE MIGRATORY FISHERY

The basis for the Newfoundland fishery at its inception was seasonal migration of men with their fishing boats from Europe to Newfoundland in spring and a return of men, boats and salted fish in the autumn. Both French and English involvement took this form, although there were other differences in the details of their respective fisheries. Newfoundland was not attractive to permanent settlement on any great scale and, while people began to over-winter in small numbers even in the mid sixteenth century, there was only limited fishing done by all-year residents, called planters after the unsuccessful colonial plantation efforts. Gradually, during the eighteenth century, this equalled and then surpassed the migratory fishery in the size of its catch. By this time, the French had been evicted from Newfoundland, although the various treaties recognised their rights to establish summer seasonal settlements along particular parts of the coast (The French Shore). The migratory fishery evolved two forms, one of which, the by-boat fishery, appears never to have been popular in North Devon.

The original migratory fishery and that clearly the preference of North Devon ports, involved sailing in small to medium sized ships, usually of between 30 and 120 tons, leaving home in late March and staying in Newfoundland until August or early September. These ships were equipped by merchants and what we might now call venture capitalists and both the backers and the crew were paid in shares from the profits of the voyage. The ships carried men, small fishing boats, long-lines to catch the cod, salt, and provisions for the season. As the returning ships had to carry all their crew and cargo, minus the provisions consumed in the summer, they were quite limited in the quantities of fish they could bring back. Furthermore, the principal markets for salt cod lay in Iberia and the Mediterranean, not in England, so the return voyage, involving two legs, was longer. It also meant that men had to be fed for longer and so it quickly became the practice for merchants to send larger ships to Newfoundland in late July specifically to carry salt cod to markets, allowing the fishing fleet to sail home direct. The larger ships, often of 150 to 300 tons, were employed in other trades for the rest of the year, and reflecting this and their preferred return cargo from Iberia and the Mediterranean, they became known as sack ships, after the sweet wine.

Some masters and merchants took to leaving at least some of their fishing boats and gear behind in Newfoundland over-winter. The absence of any formal government and the tendency of the native Beothuk peoples to raid fishing ports to obtain the nails used in boat building and the construction of fishing rooms, the complex of on-shore facilities for the fishery, meant that winter residents were a way of protecting this infrastructure (Pope, 1993). Once some merchants took to doing this, then effectively all the others with interests in the same location would be forced to do so, or risk losing their property through pilferage during the winter. These residents would need to be supplied with food and provisions, especially wine and tobacco, and this offered further opportunities for merchants in the Newfoundland trade.

The by(e)-boat fishery, so called because the fishing boats used 'bided' the winter in Newfoundland, arose in conjunction with the classic migratory fishery. The by-boat keeper (captain) usually had only two or three fishing boats, compared to the four to eight boats typically carried by a fishing ship and he would leave these in Newfoundland over winter. He and his men sought paid-passage on a fishing ship both outward and homeward. The fish they caught and processed would be sold to fishing ships or sack ships for cash. This suited masters of fishing ships and sack ships as they could complete their cargoes quicker or make up short-falls in the catch. As Handcock (1989) shows, by-boat keepers and their men were predominantly drawn from the South Devon coast between Dawlish and Salcombe. It is clear that someone could enter the by-boat fishery with far less capital than that needed for the ship fishery and it is also probable that the lure of adventure and possibility of income beyond that obtainable by a labourer at home would attract men to become crews of by-boats. Both factors would apply quite generally in Devon, but it is not at all apparent why a by-boat fishery comparable in scale did not develop in North Devon. It is, of course, possible that some North Devon ships did carry by-boat captains and crew from South Devon, but given the scale of the migratory fishery from the South Devon ports of Topsham, Teignmouth and above all Dartmouth, there would seem to be little reason for by-boat crew to make the long overland journey to North Devon. In 1698, the *Ruby* of Bideford of 140 tons, and the second largest of the 8 North Devon ships that year in Newfoundland, was reported at Caplin Bay by Commodore John Norris, RN with six by-boatmen. None of the other North Devon ships had carried by-boatmen and there seem to be no other records of by-boatmen on North Devon ships.

The migratory fishery was carried out by the Western Adventurers, the merchants, capitalists and masters of ports from Bristol around to Poole under the conditions granted by the so-called The Western Charters. The early fishery of the sixteenth century had been unregulated, although as Matthews (1973) suggests, a system of informal regulation had almost certainly emerged among the English, French, Portuguese and Spanish fisherman in Newfoundland. As the English participation grew, the Western Adventurers sought to safeguard their position, particularly in relation to the colonies now being established in Newfoundland as a result of royal charters to individuals such as Lord Baltimore. In 1634, the first of the Western Charters granted. The charter was to be re-issued during the sixteenth century and it formed the basis of the fishery until 1699. It recognised that the primary fishery was that of the fishing ships and migratory fishermen and it enjoined the settlers not to interfere with this in any way. It also established the principle that the shoreline and its potential fishing rooms were public property and could not be privately owned. Further, it formalised the convention that the master of the first ship to arrive in a Newfoundland harbour became the Fishing Admiral and could choose the best fishing room for his operations. The second and third masters to arrive became the Vice-Admiral and Rear Admiral respectively. The Admirals were tasked with regulating the allocation of fishing rooms and the resolution of disputes between fishermen. They were also expected to apprehend anyone accused of a criminal offence and transport him to England where he would be tried by the borough magistrates of the home port.

The Western Charter was reissued in 1661 and again in 1670 and became the principal argument employed by the Western Adventurers against any settlement or more formal government for Newfoundland. One principal argument advanced by the Western Adventurers in favour of the migratory fishery, as opposed to one carried out by Newfoundland residents, was that it acted as 'nursery for seamen'. This meant that men with no seafaring experience would spend a season or two in the fishery and acquire sufficient competence to serve in the Royal Navy and the migratory fishery was vital in that it brought back such men each year which the Navy could then press-gang for service.

The migratory fishery had a distinct rhythm. Merchants began to prepare their expeditions immediately after Christmas and masters then sought to recruit fishermen, other skilled men and 'servants' for the fishery. Not much is known about the recruitment of men in North Devon, but in South Devon, recruiting agents were known to tour villages and market towns seeking men for the fishery and Newton Abbot, in particular, had a number of fairs where men could be hired for the season ahead in Newfoundland. Presumably something similar occurred in Barnstaple and Bideford for, by the late seventeenth century, typically 200 to 700 men per annum were employed on North Devon ships in Newfoundland, at a time when the combined population of the two ports was probably not a great deal more than six thousand (Gent, 2002; Gray, 1998). It is suggested that some of the Barnstaple Inns in North Devon were so named as that was where agents signed on men for the fishery. The ships would need to be provisioned, not just for the voyage but for the whole fishing season in Newfoundland. Salted meat, cheese, butter and bread were the principal foodstuffs and soon North Devon's supplies were being supplemented by those from south-east Ireland, with which North Devon had long established links. Salt was essential for the fishery and this had to be obtained from France, Portugal or Spain, where it was produced from sea-water by evaporation. English salt production from mines was very limited at this time and the English climate made the production of sea-salt both expensive and time consuming. The men too needed to be equipped and they required leather jerkins and aprons, the fishermen needed ropes, lines and hooks and the skilled men ashore in Newfoundland, the splitters and salters, needed clothing and knives. The ships, once laden and crewed, aimed to sail for Newfoundland in March. For much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, England was at war with France and it became customary for the fishing fleet from South West England to be escorted by a man-of-war. It is not clear quite where the fleet assembled to await for its escort, but given the preponderance of ports along the south coast from Plymouth to Poole, it is likely that North Devon ships had to sail first to Carrick Roads off Falmouth.

The fleet arrived off Newfoundland in late April (forty days to the windward as the saying had it for a swift passage) and ships jostled to reach their favoured ports first and so claim the best fishing rooms. The initial fishery off Newfoundland was in-shore and the famous Grand Banks only became the focus of English fishing effort in the mid eighteenth century, at about the time that North Devon virtually dropped out of the

fishery. The cod do not move close in-shore until early summer and so the first few weeks after the fleet arrived were spent in repairing the fishing stages, getting everything ready on-shore to process the fish once caught, and in catching capelin and herring to use as bait for the cod. Seabirds too, including the Great Auk, were taken, partly to supplement food rations but also for use as bait. (Bolster, 2008).

The fishery proper usually started in May and ran until late August. The fishing ships were not used in the actual fishery and were usually brought ashore and the masts and rigging taken down until required in the autumn for the return voyage. The actual fishing was done in small, open boats, known in Newfoundland as shaloops. These were probably very similar to the boats used around North Devon's coasts, as they were built in England and carried to Newfoundland on the fishing ships. Most fishing ships carried four to eight boats. These fishing boats typically had five or six men; two to sail the boat and three or four men to look after the lines and do the actual fishing. They would fish fairly close in shore, rarely more than 5 miles (8 kilometres) out and once fully laden, would sail back to the fishing room to unload the fish. Fishing began to run down ahead of the planned departure of the fleet, as the fish had to be salted and dried, a process that would take several weeks. The migratory fishing fleet usually left during early September and would be back in North Devon in October and the men paid their share of the profits and laid off.

One problem confronting the merchants and masters was the amount of space on a fishing ship on the return voyage that could be devoted to carrying fish. Furthermore, the lengthy voyage to Iberian and the Mediterranean meant that the crew would have to be fed for longer, so merchants soon took to sending larger ships specifically to carry fish to market, allowing the fishing ships to return home direct, perhaps carrying just a few barrels of fish and cod-liver oil. Sack ships, as these larger ships were usually known, sailed to Newfoundland in mid-summer and left for Europe once loaded.

The fishing room, the shore base for operations, was a characteristic of the Newfoundland fishery and it reflected the particular processes used to preserve the cod and the market preferences for one type of cure over another. Perhaps not surprisingly, the English favoured a cure that required less salt. The French, with access to sea-salt, tended to use a wet cure that entailed soaking the fish in brine, but which needed more salt to preserve a given quantity of fish than the dry cure. The wet cure too could be done on board ship and meant less reliance on a shore base or fishing room. The dry cure used salt and followed this by air-drying, which required extensive areas ashore. In some places, pebbled beaches sufficed but in most of Newfoundland, wooden stages called fish flakes, became the norm and so the ideal fishing room had deep enough water for a jetty and space ashore for the processing sheds, but also plenty of room to erect fish flakes without compromising the access to the jetty.

A much reproduced engraving by Herman Möll about 1700 (figure 11) shows the typical Newfoundland fishing room and it was clearly a successful development as it can be readily recognised in photographs taken nearly two hundred years later (figure 12).

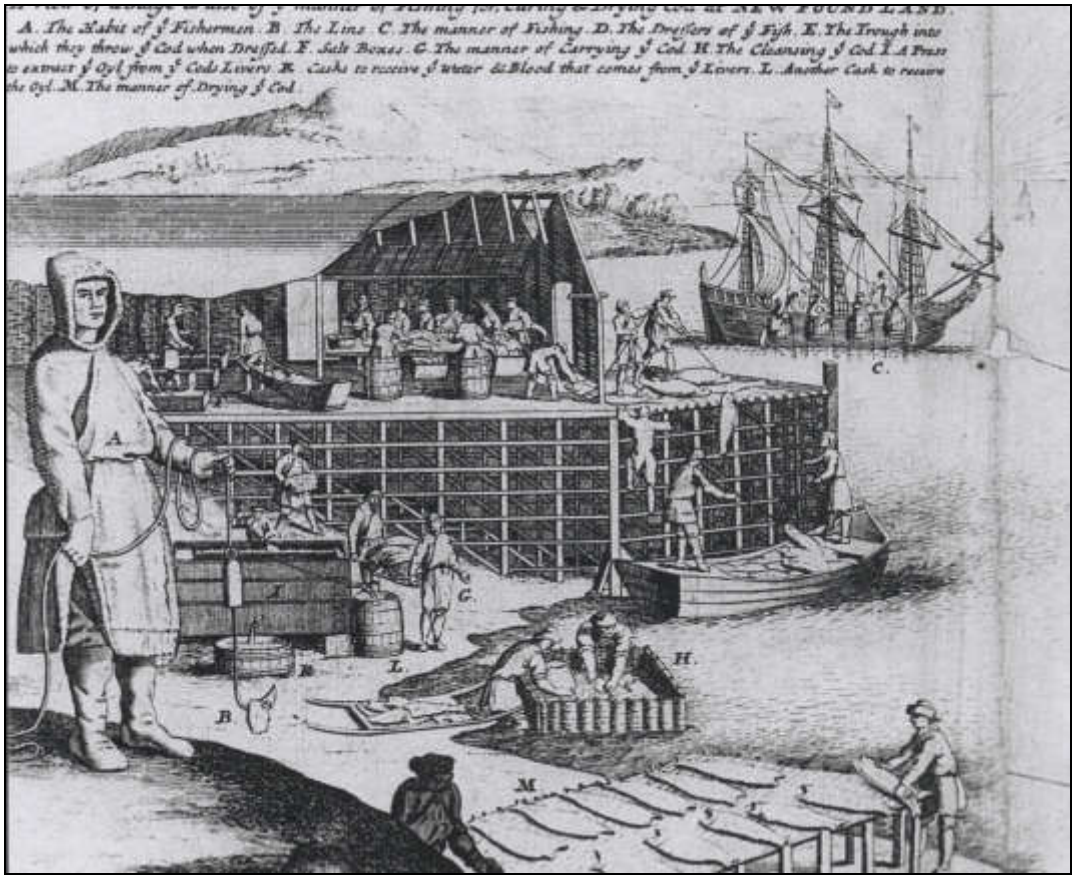

Figure 11. A Newfoundland fishing room of c 1700. Herman Möll.

The man on the left in figure 11 is a fisherman, wearing his leather jerkin, apron and sea boots and carrying a stylised long-line with a large fish hook in his left hand. At the jetty a fishing boat (shaloop) is being unloaded and the fish taken up to the shed on the stage to be de-headed and split and the livers removed for boiling up to yield cod-liver oil. On the foreshore other men are washing the fish prior to salting. The salt is held in the chest behind the fisherman and the salted cod are shown laid out to dry on the flakes at the bottom right of the engraving. The fishing ship, perhaps shown with some licence as it is both afloat and fully rigged, is in the right middle distance.

Figure 12 shows a remarkably similar scene in about 1890. This is Burin, on the south coast of Newfoundland and an area where fishing only developed relatively late compared to the Avalon Peninsula. The larger ship is a schooner of the type still being commissioned at the end of the nineteenth century to sail from the small out-ports of Newfoundland to markets in the Mediterranean with fish. The schooner was a nineteenth century rig developed specifically to reduce the number of crew required compared to the square rigged ships of earlier centuries. In the migratory fishery men who acted as crew on the fishing ship would work in the small fishing boats, so the demands of a square-rigged ship were easily accommodated but as the carrying trade took over, economy in crewing became a priority.

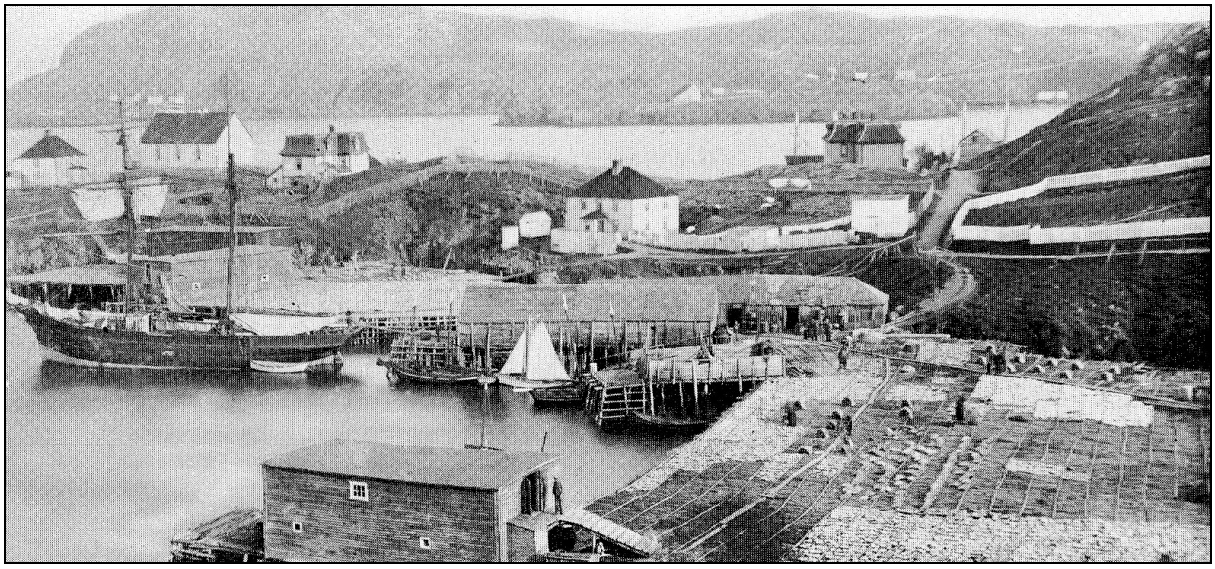

Figure 12. Burin in the 1890s.

The fishing stage and processing shed occupy the middle of the picture and the right foreground shows the extensive fish flakes. The small settlement of Burin itself is the one element missing from the engraving of some two hundred years earlier.

The cod were left on the flakes to dry and had to be covered at night and during the frequent periods of bad weather to stop the salt from being washed out. This was a pretty labour intensive operation but not one that required the skill, speed and precision of the splitters and salters, so it was typically one done by boys and new recruits to the fishery. Once dry, the cod was packed into barrels for transport. One further advantage of the dry cure over the wet cure is that the cod can be removed from barrels once at the destination port and carried on carts or in panniers on to final markets, whereas wet cured cod must remain in barrels for the whole of their journey. In Spain, in particular, dry-cured cod had a major advantage in costs of transport to inland markets and quickly became also the favoured form in which to consume salt-cod.

The notion that fishing rooms should be regarded as common property to be allocated annually on a first-come-first-served basis seems an odd one. However, it does make perfect sense in the context of seventeenth century Newfoundland. As Norrie and Szostak (2005) argue, the resource in short supply in Newfoundland at that time was not fish, but rather good shoreline on which to erect fishing stages and fish flakes. With a negligible resident population and a fishery dependent upon men coming seasonally to Newfoundland, the first-come-first-served system of fishing rooms not only makes sense, but is an optimal way of allocating resources. Should a ship fail to arrive at Newfoundland, then with private property rights, its fishing room would be off-limits until it could be established that the failure to arrive could be taken as relinquishing those rights rather a temporary delay or perhaps due to an accident. With no system of justice in Newfoundland, proving title or claiming title through inheritance or sale would have been impossible and so the custom and practice of the

Fishing Admirals and common property fishing rooms were a rational response to quite unusual circumstances.

Fishing Admirals have also come in for much criticism, especially in Newfoundland itself where they are at best regarded as pantomime villains, rather more comic and incompetent than particularly evil, or at worst as the embodiment of arbitrary violence, corruption and exploitation. Bannister (2001) has endeavoured to separate myths about them from reality. However, there is not a great deal of documentary evidence upon which to draw, for reasons which are quite explicable in retrospect. The Admirals were charged with keeping order among the fishermen in any harbour and to resolve disputes arising from fishing matters. They were also, of course, men actively engaged in the fishery and with potentially conflicting interests. They were probably literate but whether many other men at a harbour were is open to question and so the practice of keeping records would have been far from straight-forward. Equally, many decisions could probably have been taken quite informally and never recorded. Admirals would naturally tend to give priority to their own affairs rather than resolving disputes and with the more serious offences, the Admirals were charged, at their own expense, to bring the accused back to England for trial by magistrates in their home port. Before the system was replaced, the Admirals worked with and under the naval commodore, who was, in effect, both the overseer and final appeal judge. Quite probably some Admirals may have abused their powers but there is at least one instance involving Fishing Admirals from Bideford and Barnstaple that shows the system working surprisingly well.

The basics of the case were that in the winter of 1679/80 a group of five English men set off from Caplin Bay, ostensibly to go fur-trapping, but instead illegally seized a planter's boat and used this to raid a French fishing station on the south coast and destroy boats and sheds. The French owner eventually made his way to Trepassey and laid his case before the Admirals there, Aaron Browning of the *Exchange* of Bideford and Robert Fishley of the *Standerbay* of Barnstaple. The Admirals sought the assistance of the naval commodore, Captain Robinson, and not only heard the case but found against the men and ordered restitution be made to the aggrieved Frenchman (Pope 2004, pp307-311).

A theme in the historiography of Newfoundland has been the negative, or according to some more partisan accounts, the malign influence of the Western Adventurers. It is argued that their insistence that the migratory fishery be both the economic and social basis of Newfoundland set back the development of the island as a colony and the establishment of more usual forms of colonial government. The argument further implies the ability of the Newfoundland merchants to mobilise the Borough Corporations of the ports to petition and successfully influence English government policy for more than a century. A simple comparison of Virginia and Newfoundland might suggest that there is some substance to this argument. Both were established as colonial plantations in the first years of the seventeenth century but whereas Newfoundland had a resident population of around 15,000-20,000 in 1790, Virginia had

a population of 692,000. In a posthumous paper, Matthews (2001) contested the notion that the slow growth of Newfoundland population and its attenuated political development (it did not receive formal colonial status until 1824) as being due to the hostility of the Western Adventurers. He pointed out that merchant families relied upon settlers in Newfoundland for many things, and indeed, members of merchant families frequently spent a few years on the island. He argued that the Western Adventurers were not opposed to settlement as such but were deeply suspicious of any potential colonial government that might impede their operations or even favour Newfoundland settlers' interests over their own. He also wondered how much of a bloc the Western Adventurers formed, spread out as they were across the south-west peninsula and with many long-standing inter-port rivalries. Certainly North Devon would seem to have had limited contact with South Devon and Dorset, other than in Newfoundland. The lists of membership of the Corporations of Barnstaple and Bideford from the seventeenth century have not survived, nor have the lists of the mayors of Bideford. However, mayoral lists for Barnstaple have and these show that merchants with cargoes recorded in the Port Books account for 40% of the serving mayors and that merchants directly involved in the Newfoundland trade were about a quarter of these. Thus it has to be conceded that, whilst the concerns of the Newfoundland trade would have been heard in the deliberations of the Corporation, it would not have been necessarily straight-forward for those interests to mobilise the Corporation to speak on their behalf.

THE NEWFOUNDLAND TRADE AND NORTH DEVON'S OVERSEAS TRADE c 1600-1750

Although the Newfoundland trade came to almost the defining feature of Barnstaple and Bideford during this period, it built on older established trading links and in many ways complemented these. As the Newfoundland trade grew, then it made demands that North Devon could not meet with its own resources. However, by the early eighteenth century tobacco from Carolina, Maryland and Virginia had become the more valuable trans-Atlantic trade, and some of the merchants focused on this, having made their initial profits in the Newfoundland trade.

At the start of the seventeenth century, the wool trade in its various guises was the principal focus of North Devon's overseas trade. Barnstaple, Great Torrington and South Molton were centres for the manufacture of woollen cloth, particularly cloths called bays (from which comes the baize of snooker tables), kersies and serges. The preferred wool for use in manufacture was the merino fleece, which was imported from Spain. It was also to Spain that much of the woollen cloth directly exported from North Devon went. Cloth destined for the Low Countries tended to be shipped coast-wise to London and Southampton. As well as bringing raw wool, ships returning from Spain and Portugal also brought wine and iron from ports such as Bilbao and San Sebastian on the north coast. Another import from Portugal, Spain and the Azores were dyestuffs, in particular woad and sumac berries. Iberia became the destination of choice for Newfoundland salt-cod and so North Devon merchants had existing

knowledge and contacts in these ports. As political relations with Spain deteriorated during the seventeenth century, so Ireland came instead to be the principal source of raw wool for the woollen industry.

Regina Grafe (2003) has argued that wool, woollen cloth and salt cod were among the first commodities to be traded globally or perhaps more accurately, to be traded extensively along and across the Atlantic.

North Devon had a long history of trading with Ireland and its ships regularly went as far round the west coast as Galway and, as the seventeenth century progressed, also up the Irish Sea as far as Belfast and Carrickfergus, as well as making more predictable voyages to south coast ports from Kinsale in the west to Wexford in the south-east. Ireland was progressively incorporated into the English economy as English military and political control was asserted across the island. The Wars of the Irish Confederacy 1643-1650, culminating in the Cromwellian conquest, were a significant interruption, and seem to have played a part in the decline of trade with Wexford and its replacement by New Ross and especially Waterford in the second half of the century. The sacking of Wexford by Cromwell is one of the many black episodes in Anglo-Irish relations but New Ross too was stormed, so it may be as well to note that Wexford Harbour and the Slaney are far more difficult to navigate than is the Barrow to New Ross and that the Barrow gives better access to south central Ireland than does the Slaney. As well as sending raw wool, Irish ports soon developed a thriving trade in exporting butter, cheese, meat, leather and barrel staves. All these were in demand for provisions for the fishing fleet. As noted, some English ships followed the example of North Devon is sailing first to Ireland for provisions before crossing the Atlantic. The rise of Ireland, and especially of Waterford, is discussed by Mannion (2000) who sees the latter part of the seventeenth century as when provisioning became a major activity and in turn triggering both Waterford's participation in the Newfoundland trade and emigration of Irish men and women to Newfoundland to work in the fishery (Mannion 2001).

Waterford had quite close ties with North Devon and by the end of the seventeenth century it had become North Devon's principal trading partner. Along with many Irish ports, it received re-exports of American tobacco and Spanish wine but also took many consignments of earthenware. During the Celtic Tiger years, Ireland built its motorway network and virtually everywhere in Munster rescue archaeology encountered North Devon pottery. It also seems that Waterford was keen to capitalise on North Devon's experience, for in 1700 noted at Ferryland, North Devon's favourite port in Newfoundland, was the *Waterford Galley*, master Peter Fewings, who a decade earlier had been sailing Bideford ships.

In the first half of the seventeenth century La Rochelle stood out as the principal port with which North Devon traded. La Rochelle took large quantities of woollen cloth and in return supplied wine, dried fruit and vinegar. As the Newfoundland trade expanded, then La Rochelle's location in the middle of an extensive complex of salt pans became

significant and cargoes of salt equalled those of wine in frequency. Also, during this period, ports around the Baie of Bourgneuf, such as Le Croisic were important suppliers of salt, sometimes using ships from Brittany to carry it. From 1688, England was so often at war with France that historians sometimes call the period to 1815 as the 'Second Hundred Year's War' and inevitably North Devon's French trade had all but vanished by 1750.

BARNSTAPLE AND BIDEFORD SHIPS IN NEWFOUNDLAND, 1675-1708

As has been noted, during the prolonged wars with France, the annual English fishing fleet to Newfoundland was escorted by a fourth-rate ship-of-the-line and the Naval Commodore became in effect the island's administrator. He was expected to make an annual report, the Heads of Inquiry, to the Commissioners of the Board of Trade. These returns survive in the Public Record Office among the Colonial Papers. Some officers were more diligent than others and there was only convention and not a specific requirement to follow a particular format in the report. So the series is neither complete, with some years missing, nor is it comprehensive, as at the height of warfare between England and France, the English fleet did not sail to Newfoundland. It also clearly shows problems in understanding or transcribing the dialect of the masters from whom the officers collected the required information. Thus, George Darracott is recorded as the master of the *Delight* in 1675; the following year the master of the *Resolution* is George Darracott and in 1684 George Drackett is recorded as the master of the *Endeavour*. The first two ships were from Bideford and the last from Barnstaple and all seemingly referring to the same man. One of Bideford's prominent Newfoundland merchant families was Darracott.

Another problem in using these reports is the practice of using a limited range of names for ships over a fairly brief period, so it is not always possible to say that a ship of different tonnage but with the same name is in fact the same vessel. Thus in 1698 the *Ann* of Barnstaple is recorded as being of 60 tons but the following year she is recorded as being of 100 tons. Today, mariners talk of tonnage in two principal ways, gross registered tonnage, the total volume of a ship, where 100 cubic feet equals 1 ton, and the displacement tonnage, the weight of water displaced by the ship. So ambiguity as to which type of tonnage may also explain discrepancies like that surrounding the *Ann*. Graham Farr (1976) notes that until 1786 there was no official standard method of calculating a ship's tonnage and that prior to this date multiple systems were employed. Ships with the same name also appear in different years from both Barnstaple and Bideford. The 40 ton ship *Mermaid,* is reported in 1675 and again in 1677 as from Barnstaple, but in 1676, she is given as a Bideford ship. In all three years her master was Edmond Smale. This probably reflects the funding of the voyage, with the Bideford merchants having the controlling share in 1676 but with Barnstaple interests the larger in the other years. The fact that George Darracott of Bideford is master of a Barnstaple ship in 1684, suggests a degree of fluidity and probable co-operation between Barnstaple and Bideford in the matter of funding and equipping Newfoundland fishing expeditions.

North Devon ships are found in the seven naval reports in the period 1675-1708 at Caplin Bay and Ferryland. Table 1 shows the numbers from each port, with the convention adopted that when a ship has appeared, like the *Mermaid* from both Barnstaple and Bideford, she is regarded as from the port with the greater number of references, in this case Barnstaple. There were 18 different ships from Barnstaple, with most appearing just once or twice. Bideford sent 23 different ships, with most appearing twice or three times. As mentioned above, the ships were not large, with most being between 40 and 150 tons.

Year	Barnstaple	Bideford	Ilfracombe	Total for North Devon
1675	3	8	0	11
1676	3	9	0	12
1677	4	3	0	7
1681	6	0	0	6
1684	1	0	0	1
1698	2	6	0	8
1708	2	5	1	8

Table 1. North Devon ships at Caplin Bay and Ferryland in the Naval Commodore's reports

Figure 13 shows the comparative sizes of Barnstaple and Bideford ships. Bideford's ships do appear to be larger than those of Barnstaple, with an average size of 91.1 tons, compared to 61.6 tons.

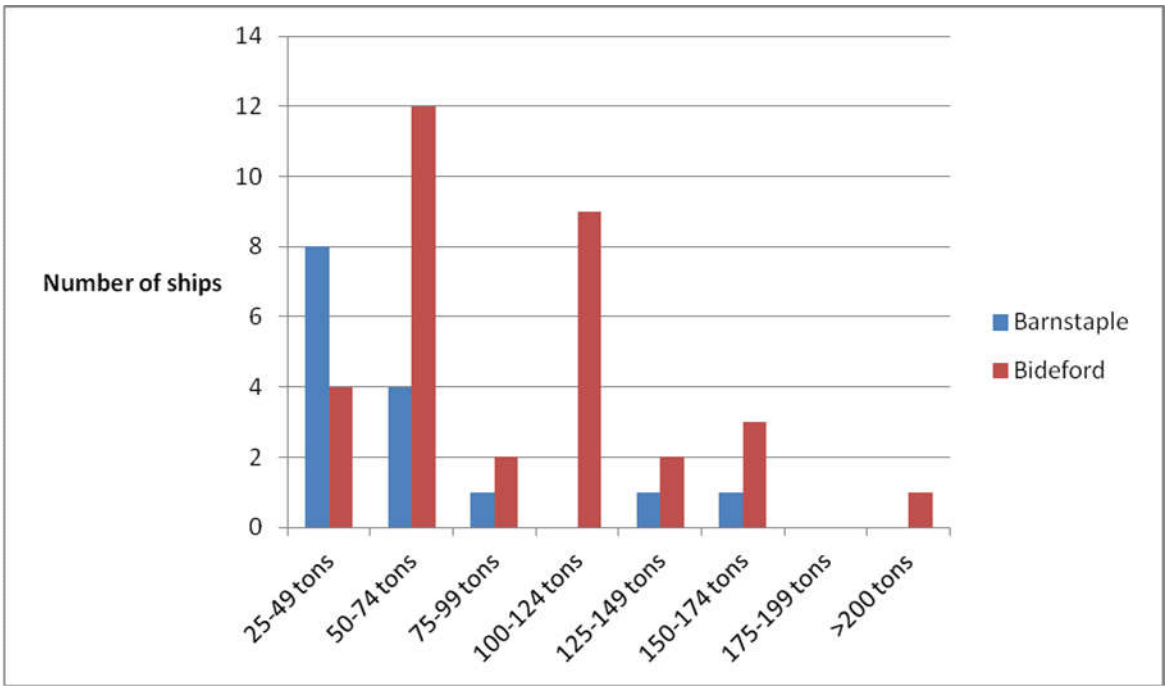

Figure 13. Sizes of ships from Barnstaple and Bideford at Ferryland and Caplin Bay 1675-1708

In figure 14, North Devon's ships are compared with those from the other Devon ports and all other ports, again just for the Newfoundland harbours of Caplin Bay and Ferryland. This shows that North Devon's ships tended to be among the smaller vessels at these Newfoundland ports, although in the size range 100 to 174 tons, North Devon was at no particular disadvantage. It is probable that most, if not all, of the ships of 200 tons or more were sack ships and whilst ports like Bristol and London sent hardly any fishing ships, they were far more active in the sack trade. North Devon, perhaps, had little need for many ships of this size.

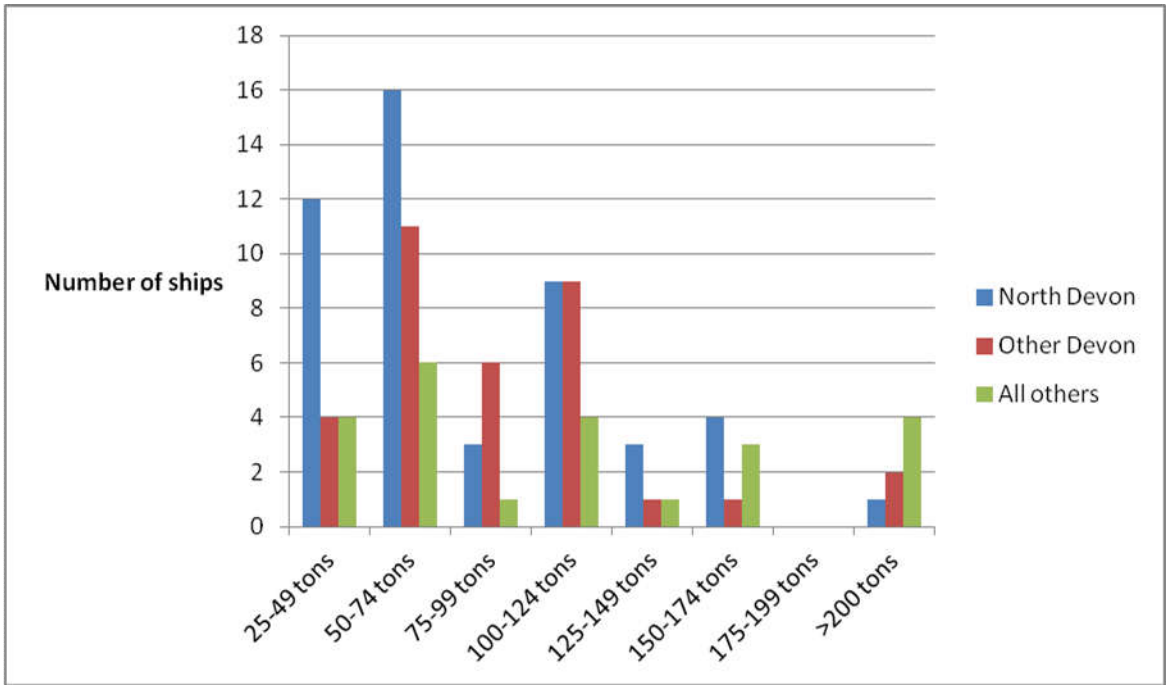

Figure 14. Comparative sizes of ships from North Devon, other Devon ports and all other ports at Caplin Bay and Ferryland 1675-1708.

In this same period 1675-1708, 39 men are named as masters of North Devon ships, assuming that some men have their names recorded by inaccurate transcription as suggested above. Most men appear in the lists just once (28) but nine men appear twice and George Bewes , master of the *Black Swan* of Bideford appears three times as does George Darracott, mentioned above as master of three different ships. Without analysis of the parish records, it is impossible to say whether men bearing the same surname were brothers, father and son, uncle and nephew, or cousins. Four family names are carried by two men: Brooks (Robert and William); Browning (Aaron and Christopher); Poe or Powell (George and John); and Strange (George and John). All but John Strange were masters of Bideford ships and the Browning and Strange families had a long association with Newfoundland as ship-owners, merchants and masters. The practice of merchant families employing relatives as masters was a characteristic of the Newfoundland trade in most ports and frequently the younger members of the family commenced their association with the trade as mariners, then masters and finally as merchants and owners.

In 1698, the Naval Commodore, John Norris, made a particularly comprehensive report on affairs in Caplin Bay and Ferryland, which shows how North Devon's ships carried on their trade with Newfoundland. Details of the ships themselves are shown in Table 2 and the trading activities for each ship appear in Table 3. The ships in Table 2 are a little larger than those from North Devon across the longer period 1675-1708. The size of crew broadly correlates with the size of ship, thus there is an average of roughly 1 man for every five tons of shipping and the number of fishing boats also broadly correlates with the size of ship and crew, with a fishing boat to every 20 tons

of shipping. This is fairly consistent across the size range of ships, so it suggests that none of the ships had left many, if any boats in Newfoundland over the previous winter, otherwise there would have been some ships with far more crew relative to their size and number of boats aboard.

Ship	Home port	Master	Tonnage	Crew	Fishing boats
Adventure	Bideford	John Hockaday	110	18	3
Ann	Barnstaple	John Strange	60	16	2
Barnstaple Merchant	Barnstaple	Henry Wilkey	150	34	7
Bideford Merchant	Bideford	Aaron Browning	130	35	7
Eagle	Bideford	James Osborne	50	11	2
Fidelity	Bideford	William Clayton	50	12	3
Levant	Bideford	Gilbert Berry	70	15	3
Ruby	Bideford	William Brooks	140	39	7
Sapphire	Bideford	Philip Cade	150	52	10

Table 2. North Devon ships at Caplin Bay and Ferryland in 1698

Table 3 shows how the Newfoundland trade was tied in with other trades followed by North Devon ports. Just two ships had sailed direct to Newfoundland and both were carrying 'necessaries', which given that another category used was 'provisions' perhaps indicates that these were things like pottery, barrels, ropes, hooks and nails, rather than foodstuffs. Four ships called at Irish ports, either for provisions or necessaries. North Devon's trade tended to be with ports along the southern coast of Ireland from New Ross to Kinsale, so it is notable that two vessels went well up the Irish Sea to Dublin. The *Ann* is unusual as she was laden neither in North Devon, nor Ireland but in Topsham, which at this time was very active in the Newfoundland trade. The *Eagle* is also of interest in that she came via the Cape Verde Islands and brought salt and wine. The *Adventure* too brought salt, although her port of loading was unknown.

Ship	Port of loading	Goods brought	Goods outbound	Destination
Adventure	Unknown	Salt	Oil; fish	Bideford
Ann	Topsham	Provisions	Fish	Barnstaple
Barnstaple Merchant	Dublin	Provisions and necessaries	Oil; fish	Barnstaple
Bideford Merchant	Bideford	Necessaries	Fish	Mediterranean
Eagle	Cape Verde	Salt; wine	Fish	Porto
Fidelity	Waterford	Provisions	Oil; fish	Bideford
Levant	Dublin	Provisions	Fish	Bilbao
Ruby	Youghal	Necessaries	Fish	Mediterranean
Sapphire	Bideford	Necessaries	Oil	Bideford

Table 3. Origins, destinations and cargoes of North Devon ships at Caplin Bay and Ferryland in 1698.

All of the ships left Newfoundland carrying either cod-liver oil or salted fish. Five of them were bound for North Devon and would presumably have sold to, or placed under contract in sack ships, the bulk of the fish caught. Probably some of the fish brought to North Devon would subsequently be traded on. Two ships, the *Bideford Merchant* and the *Ruby* were to sail for the Mediterranean, in all likelihood to Italy but it was also the custom for ships to sail to an Iberian port to await instructions as to the final market destination within the Mediterranean. Both ships were among the larger ones at Newfoundland that year. Two ships were bound for the Iberian Peninsula, the *Eagle* to Porto, and the *Levant* to Bilbao. These were not particularly large ships. Bilbao was an important source of iron, which would then probably have been forged into hooks, nails and barrel staves back in North Devon for dispatch to Newfoundland the following season. Porto, then as now, was a centre of the port wine trade and it is again highly probable that some of the cargo brought home would have been carried out to Newfoundland the following season. Tavenor (2010) also notes that wine was a cargo of opportunity in Spain for ships in the Newfoundland trade, with better quality wine finding a market in England and poorer quality wine being shipped to Newfoundland. Throughout the seventeenth century, a large volume of the wine imported to North Devon from France, Portugal and Spain was then forwarded to Bristol and Ireland.

THE DEMISE OF NORTH DEVON'S INVOLVEMENT WITH THE MIGRATORY FISHERY

The Newfoundland fishery had its own dynamics, not least of which was natural variation in the size of the cod shoals and the ebb and flow of warfare between England and France. The seventeenth century had concluded with some significant French victories on land in Newfoundland, including the temporary elimination of all English settlements in 1696, but English sea-power ensured that the French were not

able to consolidate this position and victories at sea and by armies in Europe meant that the French were forced to concede sovereignty over Newfoundland to the English and operate only in summer from the so-called French Shore. These were the provision of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. In later wars between England and France, fishing ships were always vulnerable to attacks by French naval units and French privateers, and St Malo was as much involved with the latter as with the traditional fishery in Newfoundland. At the outbreak of war, the Royal Navy sought to impress more seamen and the Admiralty often delayed the sailing of ships to Newfoundland so that the manpower requirements of the navy could be fulfilled. This was a distinct incentive for seamen and fishermen to remain in Newfoundland over winter. The discomfort of a Newfoundland winter was almost certainly preferable to the harsh conditions on a warship with the risks of being killed, maimed or captured. Given the success of French privateers in picking off English fishing ships, capture was an all too present risk on the voyages to and from Newfoundland. Thus the resident population grew slowly but steadily and by the mid eighteenth century, Newfoundland residents were catching perhaps as much fish as the migratory fishermen. Merchants too began to appreciate that it was just as profitable to carry by-boatmen and supplies to Newfoundland and buy fish there for trading as it was to send a fishing expedition. The period from c 1710 to the mid-1720s also saw a significant reduction in the numbers of cod coming inshore and there were successive seasons when the fishing was poor.

All the historians of Newfoundland tend to agree that North Devon was conservative in its approach to the Newfoundland fishery and perhaps failure to adapt to new conditions, including the effective domination of the migratory fishery now by by-boats rather than fishing ships and the rise of the sedentary fishery carried on by Newfoundlanders, was behind North Devon's effective withdrawal from the fishery after the mid-1760s.

Some indication of the problems North Devon experienced can be seen in a petition sent in 1758 to the Board of Trade by 18 Bideford merchants. This opens with the statement that in recent years Bideford regularly sent 25 ships and some thousand men to Newfoundland but "for some years past, trade decayed and sunk here to the lowest ebb". It goes on to request that naval escort be provided both earlier in the year and from Milford Haven, which would be more convenient for the ports of the Bristol Channel. There are predictable complaints about the French, both directly for catching so much fish that the price in markets is depressed and perhaps an indirect complaint about the government tolerating the French Shore. The merchants protest about the losses they have made and repeat the familiar refrain about the Newfoundland fishery being the great nursery for seamen.

It is also tempting to speculate that Bideford had a particularly bad run in the opening years of the Seven Year's War, losing ships and men at sea to French privateers and then being unable to recoup losses by profitable trading. Whilst there was a tradition that master mariners could obtain written exemptions from being taken by press-

gangs, perhaps fewer of these were offered or possibly that fewer were honoured. Thus if Bideford and North Devon annually lost say 30 experienced master mariners, the mates, boatswains and carpenters, for several successive years, then the capacity of the port to mount fishing expedition would be severely compromised. Expeditions were usually financed by more than one merchant so that losses would not unduly burden an individual, but if Bideford were to have lost a number of its ships in successive years, then the whole merchant community would have been impoverished. Whatever the reasons were, North Devon all but dropped out of the Newfoundland trade after the Seven Years' War, but Dartmouth and Poole continued to prosper. Even Waterford, which had been introduced to the Newfoundland trade through North Devon, flourished and it looks as if North Devon's demise left scope for competitors to flourish.

Table 4 is taken from Starkey (1992) and shows how North Devon compared to the other ports in the Newfoundland trade at the end of the eighteenth century. The trade had clearly become the effective preserve of Devon and Poole, with Dartmouth now the leading port in all England. North Devon's trade, which a century earlier had rivalled that of most of the South Devon ports, was a mere shadow of its former level after the Seven Year's War and would appear more or less to have failed to come through the American Revolutionary War.

Port	1770	1772	1774	1788	1790	1792
Barnstaple	0	2	2	0	0	0
Bideford	6	3	4	1	1	1
Dartmouth	61	65	74	118	90	85
Exeter	67	58	56	55	41	43
Plymouth	0	0	0	8	3	1
Liverpool	6	8	8	11	12	11
London	19	19	7	17	18	19
Poole	81	68	66	80	84	65
Southampton	7	7	5	2	1	2
Weymouth	6	5	2	0	0	0
All other	0	1	4	10	6	3
Total	253	236	228	302	256	230

Table 4. Ships clearing for Newfoundland, 1770-1792

Often with merchant families, the temptation is to divert profits away from trading and into land, both as a secure investment and for the status its ownership confers. One of the Bideford Newfoundland merchant families was the Bucks. The Tithe Survey of c 1840 reveals Lewis William Buck (1784-1858) of Daddon in Bideford as the third largest land-owner in north-west Devon, with over 13,000 acres. He had also become MP for Exeter serving from 1826 to 1832 and then MP for North Devon 1839-1857. He was one of the so-called Ultras, who vigorously opposed Catholic Emancipation in 1829,

an ironic stance for one whose ancestors had made their money from Catholic dietary requirements.

THE NEWFOUNDLAND CARRYING TRADE

The American War of Independence, then the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars from 1775 to 1815 marked a complete break in the English association with Newfoundland. New England had come to play a pivotal role in many aspects of Newfoundland life, particularly in the supply of food for winter and the comforts of rum and tobacco. After independence Americans were excluded from trade with Newfoundland and the island struggled to re-orientate towards Canada. The fishing fleets effectively stopped coming to Newfoundland and merchants risked a great deal in the traditional supply trade. By the end of the war, the trans-Atlantic commuting of men had stopped and Dartmouth and Poole merchants had moved their headquarters to London, Liverpool and Glasgow or sold their Newfoundland operations to residents. With peace, a resumption of North Atlantic trades began, but now on very different lines. North Devon's ships began trading with Quebec and then with other parts of eastern Canada, most notably, Prince Edward Island. (Gifford and Greenhill 1967) Less well-known, is the re-entry of Bideford to the Newfoundland trade, this time carrying salt cod under contract from Newfoundland merchants to the traditional markets in the Mediterranean.

Bideford was not alone in entering what was called the Newfoundland carrying trade, for many ports that had had no previous tradition in the migratory fishery also saw opportunities and shipyards started turning out schooners specifically for this trade. They had to be good seaworthy ships for the Atlantic crossings, yet able to enter the many small harbours around the Newfoundland coast to collect the salt cod cargo for the traditional markets of Italy, Portugal and Spain. Another trade that had employed schooners in the earlier part of the nineteenth century was that in fruit from Portugal and Spain and the Atlantic islands. Fruit, especially oranges, were picked green and then shipped to England where they could be sold ripe. Indeed, this quickly became a Christmas tradition. This trade soon succumbed to steamers but, as the schooners were quick and sea-worthy, their owners found new employment in the Newfoundland trade (Bouquet, 1959).

Ports like Falmouth and Fowey had hardly participated in the migratory fishery but were soon sending ships to Newfoundland once the carrying trade picked up in the middle third of the nineteenth century. Welsh ports, such as Cardigan and above all, Porthmadog, also entered the trade, again with no history of involvement with the migratory fishery. Given the role of Glasgow merchants in Newfoundland in the early nineteenth century, it is less surprising to see Scottish ports around the Firth of Clyde becoming involved in the carrying trade.

Appledore, Barnstaple and Bideford, as well established centres of ship-building constructed several vessels for the Newfoundland trade. Most were schooners,

although a few were barquentines, like the *Kalmia* of 173 tons built at Bank End in Bideford in 1872. More typical was the *Dahlia,* a 129 ton schooner, also built at Bank End the following year. The *Mary Walters,* a schooner of 142 tons was built at East-the-Water by John Johnson in 1877 and lost off Newfoundland the following year (Rogers, 1947). One of the last ships to be built specifically for the Newfoundland trade was the *Rosie,* a schooner of 100 tons built at Appledore by Robert Cock in 1885 (Farr, 1976). She went ashore off Labrador in 1894 and was then purchased by Captain Dedwith of Porthmadog, who sailed her for a further 18 years in the Newfoundland trade (Greenhill, 1968). Perhaps the most remarkable of all the ships built on the Torridge for the Newfoundland trade was the *Sedwell Jane* (Figure 15). She was initially rigged as a barquentine and soon re-rigged as a schooner. What is fascinating about her is that she was built in 1869 by the Rolle Canal Company at Annery Sea Locks, on the river just below Landcross. Of course, at this time Pillmouth railway bridge had yet to be built, but the hull of the 220 ton *Sedwell Jane* had to be floated down to Bideford and then through Bideford Long Bridge, using the fourth arch from the East-the-Water side and she was fitted out and rigged at East-the-Water.

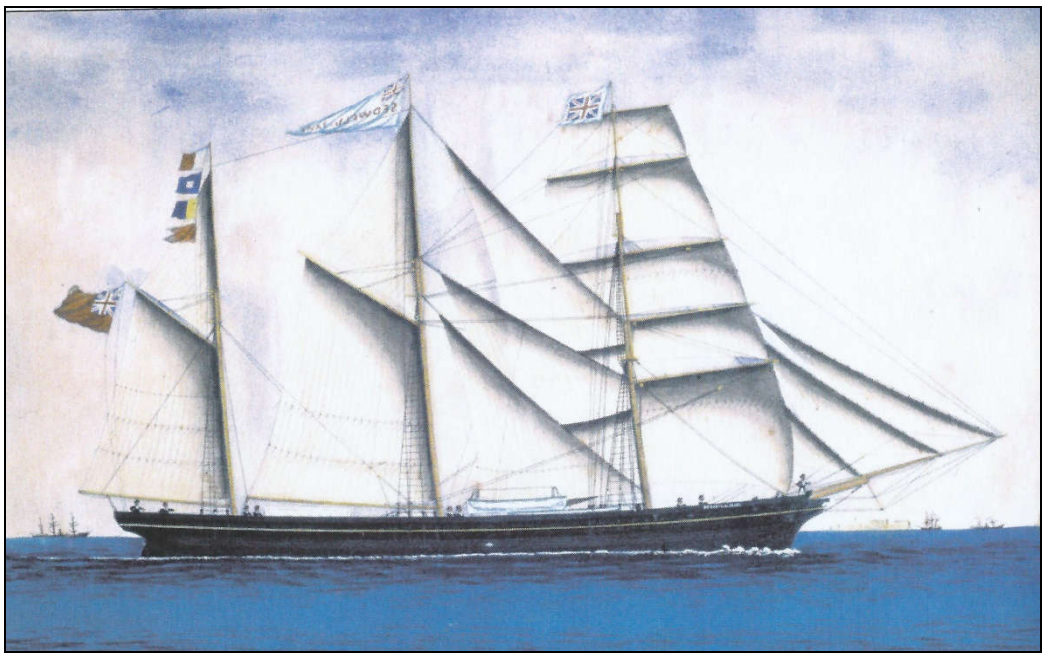

Figure 15. The *Sedwell Jane* as originally rigged as a barquentine.

The North Devon-Newfoundland links of the late nineteenth century have two further dimensions. In the years immediately after World War II, there were still living a few old men who had sailed to Newfoundland and fortunately North Devon's own indefatigable maritime historian, Vernon Boyle, sought them out and recorded some of their experiences (Boyle, 1950). The other connection is through the remarkable story of Captain W J Slade, whose family were prominent ship-owners in twentieth century

Appledore. The Slade family specialised in acquiring in wooden ships from a variety of former trades and then employing them in the coastal trade of England and Ireland and among their preferences were schooners and ketches that had been in the Newfoundland trade. One of the men Boyle interviewed was William Quance, one of Captain Slade's uncles. He told of a voyage in October 1888 aboard the *Fanny*, a schooner of 205 tons built in 1875 by Westacotts in Barnstaple. They made a crossing of 23 days to St John's from Appledore and loaded 300 tons of salt cod in barrels. This was taken to Pernambuco, now called Recife, in north-eastern Brazil. From there they sailed to the Turks Islands in the West Indies to bring a cargo of sea-salt to St John's where they finally loaded cod-liver oil for Liverpool. As the season was now well advanced, the vessel had to struggle through sea-ice on the homeward voyage. Boyle felt that the last voyage by a North Devon ship to Newfoundland was probably just before the First World War. He also reported his memories of former Newfoundland ships at Appledore, *Progress, MA James, William Ashburner, Snowflake,* and *Lady of Avenel,* the first two being among the vessels owned by the Slade family.

In an appendix compiled by Oliver Hill for Captain Slade's autobiography, four of the twenty-two ships owned by the Slade family 1888-1948 were shown as being once in the Newfoundland trade (Slade, 1959). These vessels are shown in Table 5.

Name	Rig	Where built	When built	Tonnage	Period of Slade ownership	Fate
Alpha	Ketch	Truro	1871	60	1897-1912	Lost 1
M A James	Schooner	Porthmadog	1900	97	1930-1948	Abandoned as hulk
Progress	Ketch	Kingsbridge	1884	76	1912-1946	Abandoned
Ulelia	Ketch	Truro	1877	58	1899-1916	Lost 2

1. Lost in Bideford Bay, 1933
2. Lost at Ross Carbery, Co Cork, 1930

Table 5. Former Newfoundland trade ships owned by the Slade family 1888-1948

The *M A James* is one of the last tangible links with the Newfoundland trade, for her mouldering hulk can still be made out on the foreshore just south of Boat Hyde, about half-way between Appledore and Bideford on the west bank of the Torridge. She was sailed from Porthmadog in the Newfoundland trade for many years and then sold to the Plymouth Co-Operative Society, from which Captain Slade and his father purchased her in 1930. They were delighted with the ship and employed her in the coastal trade in the Bristol Channel and across to Ireland. Along with most of the wooden ships at Appledore, she was requisitioned in 1940 for war service. In her case this was as a floating tether for barrage balloons in Carrick Roads at Falmouth. As barrage balloons were an RAF responsibility, then the crew for the ships also came from that service and none had any idea of the care of a wooden ship. Thus, at the war's end, the *M A*

James was returned to Appledore in a very sorry state. The Slades were able to keep the hull and received £4,000 in compensation for their loss. Discussions with P K Harris, Appledore's ship-builders, suggested that repair to full working order could not be done for under £5,000 and so the Slades sold the ship to P K Harris for £700. As Captain Slade remarked, this was not such a disaster for the family. Harris's removed the auxiliary engine which had been fitted in the 1930s and sold this on and, after removing other useful fittings, towed the hulk to her final resting place. It is probable that the hulk will be completely lost through a mixture of decomposition and silting within the next two or three decades. The *Progress* was also used in the coastal trade and, in Figure 16, she is shown loading coal at Lydney. She fared slightly better in that she did return after World War II in a half–fit state from barrage balloon work and was sold by the Slades and eventually passed to P K Harris who refitted the ship. By the mid-1960s she was out of work and tied up at Angle Bay, on the southern shore of Milford Haven (figure 17).

Figure 16. *Progress* loading coal at Lydney, 1937.

Figure 17. *Progress* at Angle Bay, Milford Haven 1967.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE COLONY OF AVALON AT FERRYLAND

Ferryland features large in any account of North Devon's role in the Newfoundland trade and is among the places in Newfoundland with the longest known history of European settlement. It has also seen some of the most intensive archaeological investigation of any site on the island. Ferryland lies about 80 kilometres south of St John's and as figures 4 and 5 show, it is one of the more easterly points in Newfoundland and its distinctive topography and its good natural harbour must have made readily recognisable and sought after for ships arriving from Europe. Ferryland Head is attached to the mainland by a tombolo of sand and shingle, now known as Ferryland Downs, and this gives a good natural harbour with shelter from southerly and westerly winds, whilst the rocky reefs and the Île aux Bois give a degree of shelter from northerly and north-easterly winds. Figure 18 shows this local setting of Ferryland. The modern settlement of Ferryland makes much of its history as the site of the colony of Avalon, although much of the tourism pitch is of Ferryland as the heart of Irish Newfoundland, an episode which transformed the settlement after the period from 1630 to 1750 when its character was distinctly Devonian. The whole island of Newfoundland likes to celebrate its culture as a unique fusion of Irish and Devonian dialect, folk song and traditions.

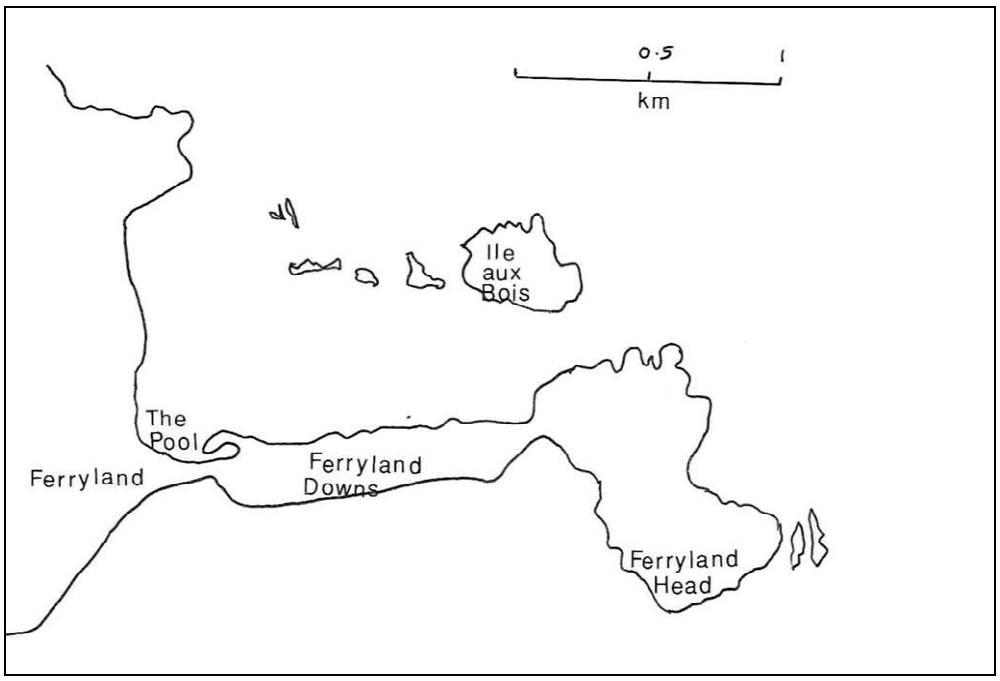

Figure 18. Sketch map of Ferryland

In the nineteenth century there had been various finds on the beach, including silver snuff spoon with the initials SK, most probably Sarah Kirke, the wife of Sir David. Some test pits were dug in the 1930s and more in the 1950s. These latter were sufficient to convince the Canadian Federal Government to declare Ferryland one of the National Historical Sites of Canada in 1953. Systematic excavation started in 1981 under the direction of Dr James Tuck and Dr Barry Gaulton. This is now one of the longest running archaeological digs anywhere in Canada and is the largest in Newfoundland. The following account relies on the Annual Reports from the Newfoundland Provincial Archaeological Office from 2004 (Gaulton and Hawkins, 2014; Gaulton and Hawkins, 2015; Gaulton and Hawkins, 2016; Gaulton and Tuck, 2008; Gaulton and Tuck, 2009; Gaulton and Tuck, 2012; Gaulton and Tuck, 2013; Gaulton, Tuck and Miller, 2010; Gaulton, Tuck and Miller, 2011; Tuck and Gaulton 2004;

Work has focused on the area around the Pool (figure 18) which lies at the head of Ferryland Bay and on the eastern side of the main coastal highway, with the modern centre of Ferryland strung out along it. Figure 19 is an annotated oblique air photograph of the Pool and its excavation sites viewed from the west-north-west and figure 20 shows the same area, this time viewed from the west. Excavation of the former beach has found some cooking sites and stone arrows and scrapers used by the Beothuk people and a few more organised hearths possibly from cook-rooms built by early European visitors. These hearths also contain fragments of cooking pots and these have been suggested to have been of possible Breton origin. The remains of a wooden landing stage have been found and the presence of clay tobacco pipes in this debris suggests a date towards the end of the sixteenth century or the very beginning of the seventeenth century. Above these layers is a cobbled stone pavement, probably used to dry fish. On this pavement was found the first evidence of a North Devon

presence with sherds of North Devon gravel-tempered ware. All this is regarded as being prior to the settlement of Ferryland as the Colony of Avalon in 1621.

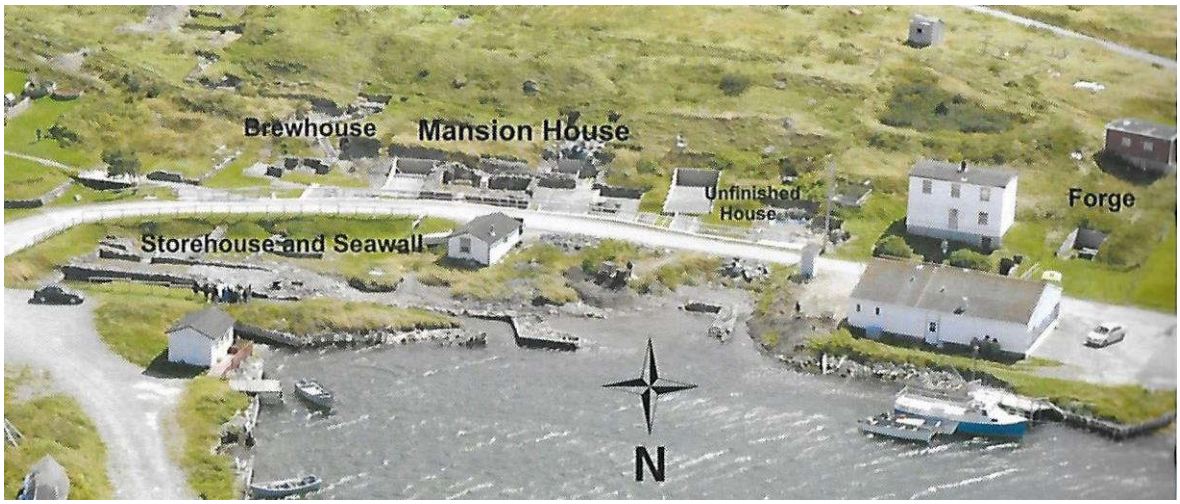

Figure 19. Ferryland annotated air photograph of the Pool and principal excavation sites

Figure 20. Ferryland aerial view from the west

Possibly the earliest structures of the Colony of Avalon to have been excavated are the seawall and a probable storehouse. There is also a slip-way adjacent to the sea-wall. The storehouse was built of stone, about 17 metres long by 5 metres wide, with the western end having a flagstone paved floor and a dirt floor at the eastern end. It had a slate roof. Finds conclusively from the Calvert era at Ferryland have been limited, but as noted above, a small crucifix, almost certainly from a set of rosary beads, has been found.

The so-called Mansion House, was built by Sir David Kirke almost immediately after his arrival at Ferryland in 1637. This is a substantial building about 21 metres long by 7 metres wide. This is shown in typical Newfoundland weather in figure 21.

Figure 21. The Mansion House.

Just north of the Mansion was a midden and from this some fragments of high quality ceramic ware have been recovered, including tin-glazed Delft ware from the Netherlands and Portuguese *terra sigillata*, which has been found on no other site in North America.

A planter's house to the east of the Mansion has been excavated and is thought to date from the middle third of the seventeenth century. This site has yielded a variety of North Devon gravel-tempered ware, including a bed-pan. This house, along with the

rest of Ferryland was destroyed in the French raid of 1696, but, unlike the settlement itself, was not rebuilt. Work at Ferryland continues and perhaps not much more than 30% of the probable site of seventeenth century Ferryland has yet been excavated, although modern structures occupy some of the ground.

CONCLUSIONS

The Newfoundland trade was a very important three hundred year episode in the maritime history of North Devon. Indeed, for much of this period from c 1590 to c 1890, the Newfoundland trade was central to marine commercial activity in Barnstaple and Bideford. The migratory fishing fleets must have employed a very significant proportion of the ports' tonnage and the demand for crew was such that surrounding villages were drawn in. The catching and processing of cod in Newfoundland also required a great deal of organisation and support which tied in with older traditional trading partners in Ireland and Iberia. Provisioning the fleet and the men in Newfoundland was soon a focus for further supplementary trades. Salt meats, cheese and butter came from south east Ireland as well as from North Devon. Casks and ceramic jars for these foodstuffs were produced in North Devon, as is testified by the volume of North Devon coarse ware found in archaeological excavations in Newfoundland. The men both at sea and on land needed leather clothing, sea-boots and aprons so hides from Ireland supplemented local sources as the basis of leather production. It is also probable that some of the coarser woollen cloths produced in North Devon were destined to outfit men for the Newfoundland trade.

North Devon's traditional links with southern Europe had involved export of woollen cloth and import of wine and iron. The iron soon found its way into the Newfoundland trade in the boats, the fishing stages and flakes and above all the fish hooks required iron. Wine was sent to Newfoundland as it tended to travel better than beer. Iberia and Italy soon also became destinations for the salt cod and wine, salt, and fruit became return cargoes.

North Devon ships favoured the southern part of the Avalon Peninsula, about 70 kilometres south of St John's and indeed seem rarely to have ventured further north. The unique migratory nature of the fishery and the system of Fishing Admirals made places like Ferryland virtual adjuncts of Barnstaple and Bideford, with magistrates in the home ports ultimately responsible for justice on the other side of the Atlantic. Permanent settlement in Newfoundland grew only slowly as Newfoundland offered very little beyond the fishery. Throughout the first two centuries of North Devon's involvement with Newfoundland, England was more often at war with France than at peace. Newfoundland was one of the principal theatres of war and in 1696, Ferryland, along with other English settlements was destroyed by the French. Warfare and above all the risks of seamen at home in England being impressed by the navy, caused gradually increasing numbers of men to over-winter in Newfoundland, and some of these remained on a more permanent basis. By the mid-eighteenth century, Newfoundland residents were catching nearly as much fish as the migratory fishermen. This, and the

intensification of war with France, produced a different environment for the Newfoundland fishery and North Devon seems to have found adjustment difficult and its participation fell away markedly after the Seven Year's War. However even the surviving ports especially Dartmouth Poole and Teignmouth, found conditions progressively harder and by the end of the Napoleonic War in 1815, there was virtually no migratory fishery and control of the fish trade itself had switched to London, Liverpool, Glasgow and St John's.

The mid-nineteenth century saw a completely new phase in the Newfoundland trade and one where ships from many English and Welsh ports, some of which like Porthmadog, had no previous tradition joined those from North Devon in carrying salt cod on commission from Newfoundland to the old markets in Iberia and Italy. This survived just into the first decade of the twentieth century and then the rise in refrigeration made salt cod no longer a commodity of necessity but one of taste and frozen fish reduced salted cod to niche markets.

The connections to the Newfoundland trade survived until the mid-twentieth century when the last men from North Devon who had voyaged to Newfoundland passed away and the last ships from the trade became memories or gaunt skeletons mouldering on the mud in the Torridge

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