# RICHARD WHITBOURNE'S BALLAST

by

**Tor Fosnæs**

*Mobilewords* Limited

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Cover image from wikipedia – The *Ark Raleigh* was built in 1587 for Walter Raleigh. It was purchased by Elizabeth I that year as part of Raleigh`s debt settlement and renamed *Ark Royal*; in 1608 it was renamed the *Anne Royal* by James I after his consort, Anne of Denmark. 103' long by 37' beam she was 800 tons and was classed as a 42-gun royal ship carrying as many as 55 guns, 260 sailors 32 gunners and 100 soldiers.

Whitbourne would have known the Ark Royal as she was in constant service until 1637 serving as Lord High Admiral Howard's flagship during the Spanish Armada.

Whitbourne's commands would have been smaller, merchant ships, of about 300 tons, in 1583, and 220 tons in 1611. These were "big" ships for the trade as many were 100 tons or less. Whitbourne was a fish trader who bought up dried fish for transport to Europe.

In nearly 50 years of seafaring, he claimed,

I have been often in France, Spaine, Italy, Portugall, Sauoy, Denmarke, Norway, Spruceland, the Canaries, and Soris Ilands: and for the New-found-land, it is almost so familiarly knowne to me as my owne Countrey.

His first voyage to Newfoundland was in 1579 or 1580.

In http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ballast is found:

Full Definition of ballast
*1* : a heavy substance placed in such a way as to improve stability and control (as of the draft of a ship or the buoyancy of a balloon or submarine)
*2* : something that gives stability (as in character or conduct)
*3* : gravel or broken stone laid in a railroad bed or used in making concrete
*4* : a device used to provide the starting voltage or to stabilize the current in a circuit (as of a fluorescent lamp)

of which 1. was of interest to Whitbourne and 2. is of interest about Whitbourne.

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## THE WHITBOURNE LEGACY

Richard Whitbourne, was one of four great 17th century *Newfoundland Discourse* writers along with Mason, Vaughan and Eburne. A sailor, adventurer, merchant, and plantation governor, he was deeply involved in the Island's early settlement. In Newfoundland terms, he was *an able man*.

Like many of his contemporaries little remains of besides his basic facts; birth, home, death and some career highlights, all contained in a few letters, reports, books and writings. His place in society, the Royal Court, or schools is obvious, but his history has faded through time, he and his contemporaries usually disappeared within a generation of their death.

Whitbourne's lasting legacy was his *Discourse* and its many reprints and references to it, mostly through the past century and a half. Without it, he would be a long forgotten sea captain like so many hundreds of others who sailed the broad Atlantic.

Historians and biographers all rely on the same, oft quoted, original documents. This work reviews current knowledge about Whitbourne and offers in conclusion a brief outline of his Newfoundland *Discourse*. Like all modern things it starts with Wikipedia, not always accurate in contemporary information, but fairly reliable about historical facts:

> **Sir Richard Whitbourne (1561 – 1635) was an English colonist, mariner and author.**
>
> **Richard Whitbourne was born near Bishopsteignton in south Devon, England, where he was baptised on 20 June 1561. Whilst apprenticed to a merchant adventurer of Southampton, he sailed extensively around Europe and twice to Newfoundland *[once was in 1583 as he was a witness to Gilbert]*. He served in a ship of his own against the Great Armada *[1588]* under Lord Admiral Thomas Howard, 1st Earl of Suffolk. He spent the next thirty years *[to 1618]* in cod fishing off Newfoundland. He assisted the pirates Peter Easton and Henry Mainwaring to seek pardons from James I of England.**
>
> **Asked by William Vaughan to govern his colony at Renews in Newfoundland, he did so from 1618 until 1620 when Vaughan abandoned the venture. Whitbourne was sent to establish law and order in the colony, he was the first to hold a court of justice in North America at in 1615.**
>
> **In 1620, Whitbourne published A Discourse and Discovery of New-found-land *[followed by seven editions]* in order to promote colonisation on the island.**
>
> **Between 1589 (at latest) and 1627 Whitbourne had a house at or near Exmouth on the south Devon coast of England. Perhaps dying on a foreign voyage, he was buried at Teignmouth, on the coast near his birthplace, in August 1635 *[he was 64 years old]*.**

In Wikipedia - List_of_lieutenant_governors_of_Newfoundland_and_Labrador - he is listed as Governor at Renews 1618 to 1620.

From the Dictionary of Canadian Biography - whitbourne_richard_1E.html:

> **From the age of 15 Whitbourne was a mariner, engaged in trading to most parts of western Europe. In 1579 he made his first voyage to Newfoundland, to catch whales and trade with the Indians. After this he visited the island frequently, being a witness both of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's annexation in 1583 and of Sir Bernard Drake's raid on Portuguese shipping in 1585. He commanded his own ship and three others against the Armada in 1588, subsequently receiving letters of recommendation from the lord high admiral, Lord Howard. His voyages to Newfoundland continued and, in 1612, Whitbourne was taken prisoner by "that famous Arch-Pirate," Peter Easton, while two years later he saw the damage inflicted on the fishermen by Henry Mainwaring.**

He is well-remembered and well-respected in Newfoundland since the turn of the 20th century. By his account he'd spent more than 30 years plying Newfoundland waters and ports when he conducted his 1615 inquiry. He was remarkably well organized and energetic; he pleaded to be allowed to do the inquiry using his own resources, from the Lord Admiral, sailed to Newfoundland, conducted 170 interviews on the English Shore, and bought a boat load of fish for trade to Portugal, all before Christmas, 1615.

Where other biographies of early modern Atlantic seamen are full of harrowing escape and courageous death, Whitbourne sailed the North Atlantic routes regularly and routinely. He was beset by pirates a couple of times but never shipwrecked or set adrift. Until his death he sought seafaring work, commissions and commands. In the end, the young man who witnessed Gilbert lay claim to Newfoundland in 1583, who governed Vaughan's plantation, and who wrote a *book of Newfoundland*, was somewhat washed up, most certainly ignored by the Stuart court.

Thomas Whitburne in his 1870 *Westward Hoe for Avalon in the New-Found-Land: As Described by Captain Richard Whitbourne, of Exmouth, Devon, 1622,* stated up front that Richard was*,*

> **One of "England's forgotten worthies," …**

Whitburne went on to present a precis of Richard Whitbourne's *Discourse* including his letters promoting planting in Newfoundland. He decried the fact Richard Whitbourne had slipped into near oblivion. Some of the sentiment of Thomas Whitburne is reflected and amplified 26 years later by D.W. Prowse.

Whitbourne languished in popular opinion, despite Thomas Whitburne's attempt at salvaging his place in history, until D.W. Prowse (1896), who gave Whitbourne outright adulation.

> **Two of the most interesting figures in our early history are Gilbert and Whitbourne; both were on the Island together in 1583. Sir Humphrey came as the queen's representative, and Whitbourne, as a common sailor, took part in the function, and watched the ceremonious taking possession of the Colony, in whose affairs he**

**afterwards played such a leading part. One was a gallant gentleman, soldier, courtier, descended of an ancient family; with all respect for the courtly knight, Richard Whitbourne, West Country sailor, our historian, and Newfoundland's steadfast friend, is more to us and dearer to our hearts as colonists than even the brave and most unfortunate Sir Humphrey. Poor Richard, afterwards Sir Richard, had no friends at Court; he rose from the ranks, a sturdy lad made into a smart sailor by the hard usage and rope's-ending, the training by which every Devon mariner rises from the forecastle to the cabin. His first experience in the country was as a hand before the mast, or perhaps as mate in a worthy ship of the "burthen of 300 tons, set forth by one Master Cotton, of Southampton."**

Prowse outlined Whitbourne's service and visits to Newfoundland over the years, taken from Whitbourne's own summary, and, in a footnote, suggests a motivation for obtaining the 1615 Commission on inquiry.

**William Colston, his [Guy's] deputy governor, seems to have remained only one year, 1613 to 1614. About this time there appears to have been a good deal of disorder in the country. Guy, though nominally governor, had no force to execute laws, and it was doubtless from Colston's report on the condition of the Colony that, in 1614, Whitbourne went home to obtain some definite authority to repress disorders. The records of this period are full of information about pirates.**

Prowse made Whitbourne a highly motivated, yet ill-served, advocate for Newfoundland:

**The year 1615 marks the first primitive attempt to create a formal court of justice in Newfoundland; our old friend Sir Richard Whitbourne was sent out to hold courts of Vice- Admiralty in the Colony; it was all carried out at the poor old captain's own expense; he had not so much as a burn-bailiff to serve process, or a room to hold court in, or any power whatever to enforce his decrees. Was there ever such an absurd plan of governing a country, maintaining order, and administering justice, as this cheap device of King James I?**

After quoting the *Discourse* extensively, Prowse wrote:

**Whitbourne's book, with its quaint conceits, took the fancy of King James, himself a "Royall and noble Author"; he gave him the sole right of printing and selling it for twenty-one years, and orders were sent to the archbishops for its distribution in every parish in the kingdom. Our author seems to have made some profit out of his work, as there were no less than seven editions of the book published between 1621 and 1623.**

**The last we hear of old Sir Richard is a petition to the Stuarts for a small post under the Crown as inspector of provisions for merchant ships; he asks "To be allowed to superintend the orderly salting and preserving of victuals or the well baking of biskett bread, the tymelie and well breewing of beare, and also the filling of sweet casks for the same. In which kind of employment he has had long experience."**

**He also prays to be appointed superintendent of one of the western ports, or to get command of a ship; he proposes a method, at no charge to His Majesty or to His**

**Majesty's subjects, for keeping two men of war and pinnaces for the protection of the Newfoundland fishery.**

**Whitbourne's relations belonged to Widdecome, in Devon, where many yeomen of his kith and kin lie buried. There is no monument to mark the last resting place of the poor old battered and decayed Elizabethan hero, our constant ally and friend, Sir Richard Whitbourne.**

Prowse, in his *History*, continued to romanticize Whitbourne:

**Having carefully inquired into the disorders committed on the coast, the masters of one hundred and seventy English ships "delivered to the Court, under their hands and seals, their presentments", which in turn Whitbourne transferred to the High Court of Admiralty. These presentments are summarised under twelve heads; the most important were:**

**'Non-observance of the Sabbath Day.**
**'Injury to the Harbours by casting into them large stones.**
**'Destroying fishing stages and huts.**
**'Monopoly of convenient space.**
**'Entering the service of other countries.**
**'Burning woods.**
**'And lastly, Idleness parent of all evils.**

**The masters who put their presentments on record declared that these disorders should cease. Thus ended this legal farce. It is to be hoped old Whitbourne got through his cases in what an old bailiff used to call a "summinavy" manner, so as to enable him and his crew to get a load of fish when he threw off the burthen of his judicial dignity. Whitbourne is the Captain John Smith of our colonial history; like his great prototype the most picturesque figure in the annals of Virginia he was a devout High Churchman, an utter despiser of Brownists, Puritans, and all other new-fangled religions, a sound highhearted Englishman, devoted to his country and her ancient Colony; like Smith he was everything by turns sailor, traveller, author, judge, and colonial governor; in his last years we can fancy the fine old mariner sitting in his pleasant cottage at Exmouth, within sound of the sea he loved so well, writing with his crabbed old hand … .**

In a final footnote on Whitbourne, Prowse wrote:

**1626, November 10, in a Petition to the Duke of Buckingham, in the reign of Charles I. (contained in the Calendar of State Papers), Whitbourne was: "A traveller and adventurer into foreign countries at 15 years of age, he was captain of a good ship of his own in 1588, and rendered good service ; has often been greatly wronged by pirates in Newfoundland, where he was subsequently employed, by commission, for the reformation of abuses yearly committed there, and other special affairs on that coast ; wrote a large discourse, which was presented to King James, and ordered to be printed and distributed in every parish throughout England, to show the benefits of settling a plantation there.**

**Has been twice to that country to help advance a Plantation undertaken by Lord Falkland: encloses a certificate of his good services and losses."**

**Whitbourne was probably knighted for his "Large Discourse" and his services in the**

**Armada fight, which he stated "is to be seen recorded in the book at Whitehall." For this sturdy old sailor every Newfoundlander should feel a deep affection. His love for our island was wonderful; through good report and evil report he always stood by us; his description of the Colony is in the main a true report, and agrees with contemporary accounts of Peckham, Mason, Vaughan, Hayes, &c.; he threw in a few wonderful tales, such as the "Marmaide" and the "Mosquito" to tickle the ears of the groundlings … .**

Whitbourne deserved a couple of columns in the English *Dictionary of National Biography* but the citations given are from Prowse, Brown, and Capt. John Smith of Virginian note; the entry provides nothing new.

Lascelles wrote about Whitbourne in 1902, not as laudably as Prowse:

**In the Harrow School library are preserved several papers relating to Lord Falkland, deputy for Ireland (1622), one of the chief promoters of a scheme for the colonisation of Newfoundland.**

**These range from 1622 to 1626, and consist for the most part of letters addressed to Lord Falkland on public and private affairs, many of them from Leonard Welsted, Lord Falkland's agent in London, who had been deputed by him to manage the emigration scheme, as Whitbourne states in the appendix to his 'Discovery.'**

**In one of these letters Welsted says (25 Oct. 1622), 'Captain Whitborne hath ben with me desiring to know your Lordships pleasure about the Plantacion in the Newfound Land.' The first part of this passage has been underlined by the recipient as a memorandum. Among these papers is found the memorial here described. It is difficult to see how it came into Lord Falkland's possession, unless it was forwarded to him by the king, as being a person interested in the matter; possibly it had been intrusted to him for presentation to the king and he had neglected to present it.**

**The memorial is in book form, measuring 5 3/4 x 7 3/4 inches, and consists of four pages of paper in a vellum cover, on the outside of which is the dedication. The whole is written in a clear professional hand, including the signature.**

**The dedication is as follows:**

**To the Kinges most excellent Malie Your Maties loyatl subiect Richard Whitborne Captaine. Humblie hearewith presenteth an abstract of some material pointes in his booke of Discoverie for Newfound Land which he presented to your Matie at Huntingdon the xvij of October 1619 humbly beeseeching your Matie to peruse it.**

**Now in the first published edition of his 'Discourse' (1620) Whitbourne says in the Epistle Dedicatory that the book 'was presented to your Maiestie at Huntingdon in October last, since which time, it hath pleased such of the Lords of your Maiesties most Honourable Privy Council, at Whitehall, the 24 of July last then present, to give me encouragement' by recommending the book to the archbishop of Canterbury for public distribution.**

**From this we may perhaps be allowed to conjecture that the memorial was prepared as a stimulus to the royal memory in the interval between the presentation at Huntingdon (October 1619) and the meeting of the privy council (July 1620). As is intimated in the dedication the memorial consists of an abstract**

**of Whitbourne's scheme for the 'orderly plantation' of Newfoundland, and an exposition of the advantages to be derived therefrom. The importance of the colony as a naval base and as a nursery for seamen is set forth, and the present disorderly condition of the island and the need of a naval guard are insisted on. The cost of two good ships of war and two pinnaces could be defrayed by a tax on all fishing boats of the value of a day's catch per annum. This would be no hardship, as the fishermen would be able to ply their trade for many more days in the year than heretofore, being freed from the dread of pirates.**

**The last clause in the memorial is of interest as presenting a hitherto unknown episode in Whitbourne's career.**

**Your Matvs loyall Subiect the Author hereof did alsoe in March last, bringe from the Cittie of Liclborne [Lisbon] before your Maties principall Secretary the Right honorable Sr Robert Naunton Knight, one Thomas Robinson borne in Linn that had lived two and twenty months a Clerke vnder an English Frier one Father Foster, confessor to a Monastrey there, where are above XLTY English Gentlewomen Nunns as he saith, And the saide Robinson did there reporte vnto me and some other English Merchants such enteligence of an English Jesuit, one Flood which was come over into England. And some other very distastefull speeches which the Coinfessor tould him as he said. Whereupon according to my bounden duetie, I used my best endevors to bring him from thence, whereby to relate the same here as he hath sithence donn. For the which service and greate charge, it pleased the right honorable Mr Secretary to Comend me well for the same &c. Leauing the consideracion thereof, and other my good Endevours to your Maties most gracious fauor and reward &c.**

**One cannot but wonder whether this affair, passed over in silence by Whitbourne in his autobiographical chapter, had any influence on the action of the council (June 1621) which led to the king's issuing a mandate to the two archbishops (April 1622) that collections should be made in every parish on behalf of Whitbourne to defray the cost of printing his book, which had already been recommended for distribution.**

## AN ASIDE REGARDING THE OFFICE OF THE LORD HIGH ADMIRAL

Lloyd in *English Corsairs on the Barbary Coast* sheds some light on the situation at the Admiralty office in 1619 and a perhaps clue as to why Whitbourne's report has never come to light:

> **In 1619, however, the Duke of Buckingham replaced the corrupt and supine Earl of Nottingham as head of the navy assuming for the first time the title of Lord High Admiral instead of the old style Lord Admiral. Partly to improve the prestige of this great office of state, which had fallen dismally low in the later years of Nottingham, and partly because Buckingham, with all his faults, was more actively interested in the Royal Navy, more attention began to be paid to the complaints of the London and Levant merchants. It was hoped that involvements in the suppression of piracy in the Mediterranean would be forthcoming from the Dutch or the Spaniards.**

Lloyd's book is entertaining but only mentions Newfoundland passing as a potential location for English corsairs when times were tough elsewhere. He

gives good accounts of Peter Easton and Henry Mainwaring and shows how little control King James and King Charles had over them; Easton spurned his pardon from James, presumably a pardon secured by Whitbourne among others.

The English corsairs (most commonly called privateers), enjoyed a quasi-official sanction from the Crown, and included Raleigh, Drake, Gilbert and other famous New World explorers and adventurers. They received official disapproval only when they turned on English merchants in New World waters, Raleigh's erring captains returning from Guinea raiding Newfoundland, for example, or when they served Moslem masters in Tunis, Algiers, and other North African 'Barbary Coast' ports.

## Pinnace

This word is encountered twice in Whitbourne's Discourse; it has two different meanings; small boats used in the fishery and larger vessels used for patrols and enforcement.

From Wikipedia:

> **The full-rigged pinnace was the larger of two types of vessel called a pinnace in use from the sixteenth century.**
>
> **Etymology**
>
> **The word pinnace, and similar words in many languages (as far afield as Indonesia, where the boat "pinisi" took its name from the Dutch pinas), came ultimately from the Spanish pinaza c1240, from pino (pine tree), from the wood of which the ships were constructed. The word came into English from the Middle French pinasse.**
>
> **Pinnaces**
>
> **The English pinnace *Sunne* was the first vessel reported built at the Chatham Dockyard, in 1586. English pinnaces of the time were typically of around 100 tons, and carried 5 to 16 guns.**
>
> **The Dutch built pinnaces during the early 17th century. Dutch pinnaces had a hull form resembling a small "race built" galleon, and was usually rigged as a ship (square rigged on three masts), or carried a similar rig on two masts (in a fashion akin to the later "brig"). Pinnaces were used as merchant vessels, pirate vessels and small warships. Not all were small vessels, some being nearer to larger ships in tonnage.**
>
> **This type saw widespread use in northern waters, as they had a shallow draught. In 2009 the wreck of an English pinnace with a set of twelve matched cannon was discovered, the first of its type for the time. Vessels then carried a mixture of unmatched cannon using disparate ammunition. The matched armament is considered revolutionary, and a contributing factor to the deadly reputation of the English naval artillery. As a ship's boat the pinnace is a light boat, propelled by oars or sails, carried aboard merchant and war vessels in the Age of Sail to serve as a tender. The pinnace was usually rowed, and could be rigged with a sail for use in favorable winds. A pinnace would ferry passengers and mail, communicate**

**between vessels, scout to sound anchorages, convey water and provisions, or carry armed sailors for cutting-out expeditions. The Spanish favored them as lightweight smuggling vessels while the Dutch used them as raiders. In modern parlance, pinnace has come to mean a boat associated with some kind of larger vessel, that doesn't fit under the launch or lifeboat definitions.**

**Steam pinnace**

**With the introduction of steam propulsion came the steam pinnace. Coal burning warships were particularly vulnerable when at anchor, immobile until they could get a head of steam. Steam pinnaces were designed to be small enough to be carried by the capital ships they were allocated to and in addition to other duties were armed to act as picket boats.**

## WHITBOURNE'S 1620 *DISCOURSE*

Whitbourne's *Discourse* explicitly referenced his 1615 Commission of Inquiry:

> **In the year 1615. I returned again to New-found-land, carrying with me a Commission out of the high Court of Admiralty, under the great Seal thereof, authorizing me to impanel Juries, and to make inquiry upon oath, of sundry abuses and disorders committed amongst Fishermen yearly upon that Coast, and of the fittest means to redress the same, with some other points, having a more particular relation to the Office of the Lord Admiral.**
>
> **What was then there done by virtue of that Commission, which was wholly executed at my own charge, hath been at large by me already certified into the high Court of Admiralty. Nevertheless, seeing the same hath been [over-slipped] ever since, and not produced those good effects which were expected, I will, in some convenient place of this Discourse, set down a brief collection of some part of my endeavours spent in that service; not doubting but it will be as available for the furtherance of our intended design, as any other reason I shall deliver.**

Whitbourne's 20th-century editor, Gillian Cell reported that she *found no documents verifying this often-repeated statement of Whitbourne's*, regarding the report. Whitbourne elsewhere said his report was "overslipt", in other words, ignored. He concluded the report's validity still stood for the furtherance of settlement and plantation, an indication he believed it was still on file and, in his expectation, a part of the new Lord Admiral's brief at the time of writing the Discourse, in 1619.

There were, by Whitbourne's estimate, 250 English ships engaged in the Newfoundland fishery in 1615.He explains that, in the course of his inquiries he took 170 attestations under oath by ship captains. In a later section of the Discourse, he wrote:

> **...in the year 1615, at which time I had a Commission with me for the purpose under the broad Seale of the Admiralty, and did therewith set forth, to follow that service from the Port of Exeter, in the County of Devon, on the 11th day of May 1615, in a Bark victualed and manned with 11 men and boys at my own charge, and I did then arrive at the Coast of *New-found-land,* in the Bay of Trinity; upon Trinity**

**Sunday, being the 4th of June, and anchored the same day in the said Harbour of Trinity; and there, in the name of the holy and individual Trinity, began to the use of your most Sacred Majesty, by virtue of that Commission, to send forth a Precept, to call the Masters of those English ships, that were then riding at Anchor, and also the Masters of some other English ships that were near thereunto, and so began to hold the first Court of Admiralty in your Majesty's name, that ever was (as I believe) held in that Country, to the use of any Christian Prince, and proceeded therein according to course of Law, as the tenor of my Commission did warrant me therein; and also in other Harbors of the said Coast I did the like; Part of which abuses there committed, I have already touched: so likewise I will briefly insert a part of the several presentments of such injuries, that were then delivered unto me, as aforesaid, under the hands and seals of those 170 Masters of English Ships, to the use of your Majesty: which presentments were, upon my return from the said voyage, delivered by me into your Majesty's high Court of the Admiralty, and then by those Masters of ships there impanelled, such abuses as follow, they did acknowledge...**

## THE ABUSES

**1. First, they did all acknowledge, that there is but little difference of days observed amongst the Fishermen; some men presuming to go to Sea, and to fish with hook and line, upon the Sabbath day, as usually as upon the week days.**

Working on the Sabbath was a serious crime in 17th century England. For a fishing master, facing a limited season, however, commercial expediency ruled over religious observation; if one enterprise fished on Sunday everyone fished on Sunday. Shades of this still existed in the 20th century, with fishing, hunting and shopping on Sundays only recently being allowed. Interestingly, Whitbourne stated "all" acknowledged this breech which suggests "all" were equally guilty.

**2. Secondly, that divers of our Nation doe take into their ships very great stones, to press their dry fish withal; which work being done, they cast those stones into the Harbors where their ships use to ride at anchor; which will utterly spoil the Roads and Harbors in that Country, and be to the endangering of Ships and Cables, yea and men's lives also, if it be not reformed in time.**

Other, later, references to rock cast into harbours reference *ballast* but here Whitbourne used *great stones, to press their dry fish*.

**3. There are many men yearly, who unlawfully convey away other men's fishing boats, from the Harbour and place where they were left the year before in that Country; and some cut out the marks of them; and some others rip and carry away the pieces of them, to the great prejudice and hindrance of the voyages of such ships that depend on such fishing boats, and also to the true Owners of such boats.**

Theft of boats was common. Henry Crout, stuck in Renews on his way to Cupids in 1612, had to go to Ferryland to retrieve a boat stolen by two runaways; Whitbourne indicated the *markes* were removed so ownership claims could not be made. Small boats were left for the next season; it was obviously

quicker to steal boats than to build or carry new ones.The true *predjudice* and *hinderance* to an enterprise was the time and expense needed to provide replacements.

> **4. There are some men, who arriving there first into a Harbour, do rip and pull down Stages, that were left standing for the splitting and salting of fish the year before; and other Stages some men have set on fire: which is a great hindrance to the voyages of such men as are not there with the first in the Harbour, for that they must then spend 20 days time, for preparing new Stages, and fitting new Pinnaces , and other necessary things, in every voyage before they be settled to fish.**
>
> **5. There are also some, who arriving first in Harbor, take away other men's Salt that they had left there the year before, and also rip and spoil the [Vats] wherein they make their Train oil, and some tear down Flakes, whereon men yearly dry their fish, to the great hurt and hindrance of many other that come after them.**
>
> **6. Some men likewise steal away the bait out of other men's Nets by night, and also out of their fishing boats by their ships side, whereby their fishing, from whom it is so taken, is overthrown for the next day.**
>
> **7. They did acknowledge, that some men take up more room then they need, or is fitting to dry their fish on, whereby other men's voyages are oftentimes greatly hindered.**

Theft of bait and salt, the destruction of stages and flakes, oil vats, and other enterprise infrastructures left behind the previous season appear to have made up most of the abuses reported. Taking up too much room, ie. theft of space, was another form of "abuse".

> **8. They also found, that divers of your Majesty's subjects have come to that Coast, in fishing voyages in ships not appertaining to any of your Majesty's subjects, which they conceived worthy of punishment, and reformation.**

Englishmen commanding foreign ships and crews, presumably their cargoes were not being returned to England, was cause of complaint and required punishment and reformation he suggested. Elsewhere Whitbourne wrote of Portuguese and other foreigners buying fish from English enterprises and taking it directly to foreign ports, including Brazil. Whitbourne himself left laden with purchased fish in 1615 and went straight to Lisbon; it is not clear how this differs from the complaint, unless his ship and enterprise were based in England.

> **9. They did acknowledge, that some men rip, and take away Timber and Rails from Stages, and other necessary rooms, that are fastened with nails, Spike or Trey nails; and some men take away the Rinds & Turf wherewith divers necessary rooms are fitly covered from ground with Rails on them, whereupon men use to dry their fish; and that some set the standing Woods in the Country on fire, which have in little time burned many thousand acres; and that there are some which yearly take away other men's Train oil there by night; which they conceived worthy of reformation.**

This reiteration of the theft of stage and flake materials, making particular

mention of those that used nails to hold them together, may be more a theft of nails than stages; nails were an important and expensive resource and much could be saved by stealing them. Beothuk also burned stages and boats to obtain iron. Less believable is the report of stealing train oil by night; train oil was valuable and it seems it would have been protected, while minor pilfering after dark might have occurred, wholesale theft of vats or barrels of oil seem unlikely; unless as a prize of out and out piracy. Burning the woods doesn't seem to have any benefit for those who set the fires. Perhaps placing these three into one complaint gives consideration that these were off-beat, irregular occurrences.

Others were to condemn the *rinding* of trees as a crime as it killed off the forest without the benefit of using the wood. *Sods and rinds to cover your flakes*, the traditional words *to I'se the Bye*, was as common in Whitbourne's time as three centuries later. Eburne also decried the burning of the woods for clearing land without making use of the timber.

> **10. They found, that divers idle persons, which were hired for those voyages, when they come thither, notwithstanding that they were still in health, would not work, and were so lazy and idle, that their work was to little purpose: which was worthy of punishment.**

Laziness and idleness were condemned for good reason.

> **11. Against all these great abuses, and divers others committed in the said *New-found-land* (which they did set down in their several presentments, as by them it may at large appear, they did all condescend, and order from that time thenceforth, that no subject to your Majesty should commit any more such abuses in that Country: which may be very well remedied, seeing they tend to the advancement of the Trade, and quietness amongst the Fishermen, and to the glory of God, the honour and good of your Majesty, and the general benefit of the Common-wealth.**
>
> **12. They did further present to the use of the Lord Admiral of *England,* two small Boats, Anchors, and a small Grapple, that were found in the Sea upon that Coast, which were there prized to be worth two shilling sixpence apiece, amounting to seven shillings sixpence.**

Remorse, stated and practiced, are two different things and Whitbourne may have stated his own ideal, anticipated, reaction to the catalogue of "abuses" so readily set out by his 170 captains. If anything else is evident in the next ten to twelve decades on the part of those prosecuting the English fishery in Newfoundland, a unified attitude towards "advancement of the Trade" was definitely not obvious.

The inclusion of gifts *found in the sea* is curious. Whether Whitbourne brought them back to England or if they were to remain somewhere in Newfoundland for Admiralty use isn't clear, nor is their appraised value, nor their source. Apparently the, some or all, captains made the present.

Whitbourne's list of abuses was oft repeated.

## The Discourse outline

**from mun.ca/rels/hrollmann/relsoc/texts/whitbourne/whit.html**

**Letter to James I "my Dread Soueraign"**

**Introduction to "his Maiesties good subjects"**

**Preface rationale for interest in Newfoundland and its planting**
**brief description of the Island**

**Preface his personal experiences**
**warning about piracy and set backs**

**Discourse geography and climate**

**tractability of natives to Iberian interests**
**natural history**
**Island's use and exploitation potential**
**fishery economics**
**reasons to plant**
**use by other nationalities**
**status of current use**
**plan for planting, manpower, procedures**
**pirates and security**
**ice and fog and weather**
**reiteration of the 1615 abuses**
**conclusions and mermaid atory**

## Whitbourne's Discourse and after effects

In *The Politics of Reading in the English Parish, 1536-1642* (http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/res_rec/parishnetwork/projects/craig.doc) an unnamed writer made a case for the popularity of Whitbourne's *Discourse* in rural England.

> **A case in point is a text with a Newfoundland connection. It was only when copies of Richard Whitbourne's treatise *A Discourse and Discovery of Newfoundland* (1620) were discovered to have been purchased by parishes in Cornwall, Devon and Cambridgeshire in the early 1620s that it became clear that there had been a concerted effort made in 1621-22 to induce parishes throughout England to purchase this text. No declaration survives for such an effort but the second edition of Whitbourne's work and the parish evidence attest to this effort.**

This latter reference to Whitbourne's *Discourse* is further detailed by Lacelles which also showed the Discourse was written before 22 October 1619 when it was presented to James I.

> **One cannot but wonder whether this affair [transporting a cleric from Lisbon to England with intelligence about a Jesuit named Flood who was secretly in England], passed over in silence by Whitbourne in his autobiographical chapter, had any influence on the action of the council (June 1621) which led to the king's issuing a**

**mandate to the two archbishops (April 1622) that collections should be made in every parish on behalf of Whitbourne to defray the cost of printing his book, which had already been recommended for distribution.**

Gillian Cell treated Whitbourne's *Discourse* (and a *Loving Invitation* which followed in 1622), in *English Enterprise.* The following references, *in précis*, are annotated by the author:

**P. 104 – the Privy Council refers to Whitbourne making *sundry voyages, and some by express Commission*. He used the word *some* but there is no other reference anywhere to any Commissioned voyages other than his 1615 one.**

**P. 108 – Whitbourne refers to himself as *my poore self*.**

**P. 109 – … as I did so fix my industry upon it [NFLD], that for the qualifying of my travels, I obtained Commission from the State to proceed in it … . He wrote that he financed the 1615 voyage out of his own purse and that he got the Commission for the qualifying of my travels. How he made any money from the holding of Court isn't clear, unless remuneration was a side benefit he used to augment his fish trading, or vice versa.**

**Pp. 111-112 - *… for my own poor estate and condition …* and in 1588 [as a 24 year old Captain] he served under the Lord Admiral in defeating the Spanish Armada and then after his service he had *his favourable letters to Sir Robert Denis* to undertake more voyages to Newfoundland as shown in the *Booke at Whitehall*.**

**Pp. 112-114 – recounts his voyages to Newfoundland in 1579, 1583, 1585, then a gap to 1611, 1614 and then, in 1615, I returned again to Newfoundland carrying with me a Commission out of the high Court of Admiralty, under the Great seal thereof, authorizing me to impanel juries, and to make inquiry upon oath, of sundry abuses and disorders committed amongst Fishermen yearly upon that Coast, and for the fittest means to redress the same, with some other points, having a more particular relation to the office of the Lord Admiral.**

As Whitbourne was associated with or served ill by pirates [or *corsairs or privateers*] in earlier voyages, Easton in 1611 and Mainwaring in 1614, we can suppose his Commission was to deal with depredations committed amongst fishing enterprises by English ships taking liberties with their mandate, seizing English fish enterprises instead of non-English shipping, as well as the list of abuses he catalogued. In 1617, rogue captains from Walter Raleigh's southern expedition turned on the English fishing fleets, taking one of Vaughan's two plantation supply ships, hampering that settlement effort.

**Pp. 123-124 – He recounts his 1615 voyage under Commission, *… there were then on that coast of your Majesty's subjects about* [or above] *250 sail of ships great and small*. The sizes ranged but averaged at threescore (60) tonnes and totalled 15000 tonnes. For every threescore tonnes, he calculated (an average ship) 20 men and boys *by which computation in 250 sail there were no less than five thousand persons*. Mason, also printed in 1620, presumably based on his 1616-1617 tenure at Cupids, has 3000 English fishers in Newfoundland.**

**Pp. 127-128 – He recounts, in 1615, West Indies shipping, Portuguese and Spanish**

**ships had stopped in Newfoundland for provisions and water; how Portuguese bought fish from Newfoundland for furtherance in trade to Brazil. In particular, he wrote, *if a plantation were settled near about Trepassey* great benefits would accrue and it was close enough to England to be relieved should others attempt to take over such a plantation.**

**P. 114 – He made reference to his employment by Vaughan and his *life-long* appointment to govern Vaughan's Newfoundland enterprises, which, as demonstrated, failed by 1619; but in 1622 we find Whitbourne still touting Trepassey and Vaughan, by now re-invigorating his enterprise funds, reportedly making plans for Trepassey.**

**Pp. 130-131 – He describes the chaos of tearing down last year's infrastructures by the newly arrived fishers each year and demonstrates how by having plantations much wasted time and resources would be saved by having permanent structures and facilities in place. This flies in the face of the fishing admiral first-come practice which was sending ships out from England earlier and earlier each year with loss of ships and lives in the Atlantic February storms, ice and fog. *… and another great inconvenience followeth, by reason the voyages of the after-comers there, are often greatly hindered and prolonged … and the mariners themselves which trade to that country and commit those great abuses are thereby also much wronged, as they have acknowledged in their presentiments, by their disorderly behaviour there*. Settlement and permanent facilities, he contended, would stop this and make fishing more profitable and safer.**

**P. 136 – Whitbourne repeated his 5000 men employed and, promoted his scheme to leave one fifth behind in permanent facilities to increase experienced mariners by 5000 in five years and increase English shipping from 250 sail to 400 sail.**

**P. 137 – The wanton tree cutting, rinding and dropping of ballast stone into the harbour are described as the primary abuses which needed to be controlled.**

**P. 158-159 – Settling plantations would have benefits including good governance and a reformation of such abuses, as are there now yearly committed; wherein it is well known, that I have already used by best endeavours, when in the year 1615 ... . All had agreed to improve and to not commit any more abuses in order to advance the fish trade.**

**P. 164 – Whitbourne's second discourse, *the induce*ment mentions that English use of Newfoundland dates back four score (80) years; i.e. 1540's.**

## Ballast dumping

Richard Whitbourne's Newfoundland Discourse, 1620, based on nearly 40 years in Newfoundland, included the results of his 1615 inquiry.

Whitbourne's report is missing. He said he submitted one. He summarized the results in his discourse as a list of "abuses" perpetuated on the Island by English migratory fishing enterprises. A common abuse (complaint), also noted by Guy and others before 1615, and many others after 1620 was ballast dumping. Filling up anchorages was not tolerated so putting ballast ashore was obligatory. Whitbourne's large stones used to press fish likewise would

have compromised harbour waters. Nowadays, ballast dumping has created a serious ecological problem as Old World lifeforms are introduced to New World ecosystems.

Newfoundland boatmen can point over the local wharf at *ballast* stone. There are references to aboriginal Americans using English military flint ballast for stone tools and weapons. In a private gravel pit huge nylon sacks of sandy material offloaded from a European ship 20 years ago have alien plants spreading around them. In Atlantic Canada the green crab, in the St. Lawrence River and headwaters the zebra mussel, all across North America the purple loosestrife; alien invaders carried in ballast from over there dumped over here.

The seminal works of an ecological understanding of ballast dumping are *The Faunal Connections between Europe and North America* by Carl H. Lindroth (1957), and recent articles by Bain, King and Prevost. From Lindroth:

> **p. 14 As regards Newfoundland, this island has a key position in the understanding of the human transatlantic transport of animals and plants. p. 147 It can be stated, without any exaggeration, that Newfoundland more than any other part of North America has received an introduced element of animals and plants from Europe. It is an important task to explain why.**
>
> **p 154 ff. The Newfoundland trade - Historical review**
>
> **The trade between Newfoundland and Europe is so intimately connected with and so deeply stained by the peculiar political relations to the mother country, Great Britain, during more than four centuries, that a brief summary of early Newfoundland history seems appropriate. …**
>
> **No wonder that the colonization of Newfoundland went on very slowly. Only occasionally a few crews may have been left behind over winter for preparatory work in the ports. The first known serious attempt to establish a settlement was made by John Guy from Bristol, who in 1610, with his "Company", chose Cupids on the Conception Bay of Avalon as a permanent residence. This small colony lasted only a few years. A more successful settlement was established at Ferryland on the east coast of Avalon in 1621; this was inhabited, with interruptions, for more than 50 years.**
>
> **However, any attempt to colonize the island was met with heavy opposition from the fishermen and their customers (merchants and ship owners) in the ports of southwestern England. "From the very beginning of the sixteenth century they had**

**conducted a profitable business in organizing the annual fishing expeditions to Newfoundland. They were opposed to any permanent settlement with its consequent laws and regulations which would interfere with their authority. It suited them better to send their fleets westward each spring to take possession of the stages, flakes, and cook-rooms which they had left at the end of the preceding season, to catch and cure fish there during the summer, then to abandon the place in the autumn. If there were any settlers, they would occupy the harbours and coves which the merchants had been accustomed to use and so interfere with their business.**

**Accordingly they tried hard to prevent any settlement, or at least to keep it as low as possible" (Cochrane, 1938, p. 56). In 1633, in an influential petition from the southwestern ports, the Privy Council issued an order, called the "Western Charter", on which all subsequent regulations concerning Newfoundland were based for more than a century and a half. Among the rules laid down here was one giving the jurisdiction of every port to the "Fishing Admiral", that is the captain of the ship arriving first in the spring. Another, especially directed against settlement: "All owners of ships trading to Newfoundland forbidden to carry any persons not of ships Company or such as are to plant or do intend to settle there." A complementary rule, issued in 1637, deprived settlers the right to live less than six miles from the shore (!)**

**These and other obstacles contributed to keep the number of resident settlers very low for a long time.**

**The extraordinary conditions prevailing in Newfoundland during a period of almost three centuries were bound to stamp the trade with the mother country. The large fishing-fleets leaving the ports of southwestern England every spring were destined for a poor, almost uninhabited country, a bad market for goods of any kind. The crews' own supplies gave no full cargo. The ships sailed in ballast. At the end of the fishing season they returned fully loaded, as a rule not directly home but to the foremost consumers, the catholic countries in southern Europe, and thence back to England in the late fall, often likewise in ballast. This triangular traffic was carried on to an almost unchanged extent as long as sailing vessels ruled the sea, that is to the middle of the 19th century. The first steam-line calling at Newfoundland, connecting it with Halifax, was opened in 1842 (Harris, 1930, p. 431). Already at that time several introduced European insects had become established on the island (below, p. 215).**

**The history of the French islands St. Pierre and Miquelon has much in common with that of Newfoundland proper. Though already colonized about 1670 by the French, they later stood under British supremacy during the main part of two long periods: 1713-63, 1778-1815. I was told by Mr. Mathews, of Poole, that this Dorset port upheld an intermittent direct trade with St. Pierre, probably about 1800. From the report of the astronomer Cassini, in 1768 (Prowse, 1895, p. 570), we learn that at that time the French fishing-fleets arriving at St. Pierre every spring belonged to many different ports, from Honfleur on the Seine to Bayonne on the Bay of Biscay. However, European animals hitherto observed on St. Pierre-Miquelon are not necessarily introduced from France; the Ground-beetle *Nehria hrevicollis* F., the Lamellicorn beetle *Aegialia rufa* F., and the Weevil *Trachodes hispidus* L., unknown**

elsewhere in North America, may as well have arrived from the British Isles. Not even the period of prohibition in U.S.A., when St. Pierre served as a too well-known staple of French spirits, certainly packeted in nice straw cases, seems to have had particular importance for the introduction of European animals. This is a confirmation of the view stressed in this chapter, that transport of ballast is superior to any kind of cargo as an instrument for synanthropous dispersal.

The ballast-traffic

There are many records from Newfoundland as well as from England indicating the regular use of ballast on board the sailing-vessels of the North Atlantic trade. When, in 1611, John Guy, the founder of Newfoundland's first permanent settlement, published "Certaine orders for the ffishermen", he gave them the form of 8 rules and the first of these ran (cited from Prowse, 1895, p. 99): "Ballast or anything hurtful to Harbours not to be throwne out but be carried ashore — Penalty £5 for every offence".

This instruction was repeated as point 2 of the "Western Charter" of 1633: "No ballast to be thrown out to prejudice of harbor", and as number i of the "Lawes, Rules, and Ordinances whereby the Affaires and fishery of Newfoundland are to be governed untill the Parlam. shall take further order," of 1653: "That noe Ballast, Prest stones nor anything else hurtful to the Harbours bee throwne out to the prejudice of said Harbours, but that it be carryed ashore and layd where it may not doe annoyance." Even in 1712 the appointed Governor of Newfoundland, Sir Nicholas Trevanion, included, as No. 13, a point of similar content into his "Fishery Scheme". Among records given for 1618 by Sir Richard Whitbourne, acting as Commissioner of Vice-Admiralty, in order to illustrate various disorders committed in the Newfoundland ports, was: "Harbours frequented by English near 40 in number, almost spoiled by casting out their balast and presse stones into them".

The quotations above show sufficiently that ballast was brought to Newfoundland in great quantities, at least in the 17th and 18th centuries, and that as a rule *it was delivered on the shore*. It is easily understood that this procedure involved the best imaginable chances for fruits and seeds of plants, as well as for all kinds of animals associated with the soil, to be carried across the Atlantic. This has already been clearly realized by W. J. Brown (1940, 1950).

Those harbours of Newfoundland in the first line affected by the conditions just described were of course the oldest ones, which in a remarkable way were concentrated to the eastern coast (map, fig. 15). Apparently St. John's, the present capital of the country, predestined by its sheltered position, was the most frequented port even in the 16th century (vide for instance Prowse, 1895, pp. 70,72, 113; Rogers, 1911, pp. 19, 23, 25, 26) though probably it was not the first place to be permanently settled.

Fishing-trade and settlement were almost exclusively concentrated to the Avalon Peninsula, including the first French colony, Placentia, on its western shore. This lead of the Avalon has been kept ever since and at present it houses about 45 per cent of the population. In accordance herewith the fauna and flora of this part of the island contains a larger European element than any other district in North

**America. As already mentioned above (p. 147), this is evident in the case of Carabid beetles (map, fig. 11), of which 19 introduced species occur on the east coast of Avalon; four of them are confined to this part of the island ... . In the Iso-Myriapods, 20 introduced species (54 per cent of this element in Newfoundland) are restricted to the Avalon Peninsula.**

**p. 322**

**Species introduced from Europe into North America are about ten times as numerous as those transported in the opposite direction. This is explained by the peculiar character of ballast traffic in olden times, sailing vessels going almost exclusively in ballast on their way west, to Newfoundland and the Maritime Provinces of Canada on the one hand, to the Pacific Northwest on the other. The main area of departure for these animals, mostly belonging to the soil fauna, was southwestern England.**

## OTHER

***Asylum for Wayward Immigrants: Historic Ports and Colonial Settlements in Northeast North America*** **by Allison Bain and Gary King, in Archaeologies of the Early Modern North Atlantic Journal of the North Atlantic Special Volume 1:109-124, 2011**

**Abstract - The arrival of Europeans along the northeastern seaboard of North America heralded the introduction of Old World flora and fauna to the region. The analysis of archaeologically recovered beetle remains suggests that many species may have journeyed across the Atlantic in ships' ballast, food stores, and other provisions. The creation of artificial habitats which occurred as a result of the fisheries and the construction of settlements provided an ecological corridor that facilitated the successful invasion of the European biota. Many of these adventive or accidentally introduced beetle species are associated with synanthropic and disturbed-land habitats which would have been mimicked in the coastal colonies. The arrival of this fauna ultimately contributed to the creation of Europeanized spaces upon the North American landscape.**

**Environmental Archaeology and Landscape Transformation at the Seventeenth-Century Ferryland Site, Newfoundland, Allison Bain Marie-Annick Prévost, in Historical Archaeology, 44(3):21—3, 2010.**

**Abstract - From the 16th century onwards, English, Bretons, Basques, and Portuguese exploited the rich cod stocks of Newfound-land's Grand Banks. Several permanent settlements in eastern Newfoundland were begun in the early 17th century, including the settlement at Ferryland (1621-1696). Planter families at Ferryland fished and welcomed seasonal fishing fleets, participating in a trade network that included the West Indies, New England, the Iberian Peninsula, the Mediterranean, and Great Britain. The colonization process brought about changes to the local environment due to both the intentional and unintentional importation of European plants and animals. The presence of a substantial percentage of non-native plants and insects suggests that ballast dumping as well as the establishment of small cottage gardens contributed to the introduction of several species to Newfoundland. Data from archaeobotanical, archaeo-entomological, and faunal analyses can be used to examine processes of biological transfer, landscape**

change, and development of local household economies of Ferryland residents.

*Purple Loosestrife*, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, at_ http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/plants/loosstrf/arrival. htm


Earthworms – from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasive_earthworms_of_North_America

Most of the invasive earthworms are European or Asian and came over in soil during the eighteenth century as Europeans began settling the North American continent. The worms were originally transferred through the horticultural trade, probably in the soil bulbs of European plants being carried to the Americas. The lack of competition from native earthworms allowed the invaders to flourish. Now recreational practices and construction methods are the primary mode of transportation for the earthworms. Their movement in the soil is slow on their own, but with human transportation they can migrate much faster. The earthworms are commonly used as bait for fishing, and many escape or are released. In addition, many are moved physically in soil through construction practices. Either they can be moved in dirt loads from one location to another, or be trapped in dirt attached to wheels of larger trucks. Some propose a major mode of transportation is through logging trucks, which move from location to location with large amounts of dirt attached to their wheels.

## The other Discourse writers

Vaughan is the subject of renewed interest in recent years particularly at the 400 anniversary of his efforts to plant in Newfoundland. He printed his *Discourse* in 1626 at what appears to be the end of his colonization efforts; a last ditch effort to garner financial support, perhaps. Mason and Whitbourne both published in 1620. Eburne published his *Pathway* in 1624.

There is not a lot of variation in these four works; the weather, natural history,

geography, the military benefits of Empire, and fish predominate.

Mason's *Discourse* is the subject of a Mobilewords Limited digital publication *The Dao of Newfoundland: Mason's 1620 Discourse* available online through www.mobilewords.ca

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## RICHARD EBURNE – Mysterious