

# EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY PIRACY AND BRISTOL



**BA Thesis Historical Studies**

**April 2009**

## ABSTRACT<sup>1</sup>

In 1604 King James I penned the Treaty of London with his Spanish counterpart Philip II. This brought about a sudden and abrupt end to a War that had dominated the latter half of the Elizabethan era. The war, that had been fought almost exclusively at sea, had resulted in a trebling of the maritime population from just 16,000 in 1582 to over 50,000 by 1603<sup>2</sup>. The subsequent years resulted in a dramatic disparity between the number of mariners and jobs.<sup>3</sup> In the wake of this surge in maritime unemployment, the motives to engage in piracy were significantly increased. While the English had already acquired a pan European reputation as “Arch-Pirates”, these years saw the beginning of a large scale illegal industry that would haunt the coasts of England for several centuries to come.<sup>4</sup>

This thesis, through engagement with primary sources, will seek to uncover the extent to which the illicit business became an institutionalised practice within Seventeenth Century Bristol. It will investigate whether government officials and the prosperous merchant class became involved either directly, through financing operations, or indirectly, by trading with pirates. On top of this, it will seek to gauge public sentiment towards the illicit trade, before drawing conclusions on what piracy did for the community.

---

<sup>1</sup> Front cover photograph from *The Bristol book of Trade (1598-1693)*

<sup>2</sup> Senior, C.M *A Nation of Pirates* (Devon 1976) p.9

<sup>3</sup> Berckman, E. *Victims of Piracy* ( London 1979) p.5

<sup>4</sup> Senior, *Nation* (Devon 1976) p.11

# **CONTENTS**

Introduction	.....Page 4
Chapter 1). Background	..... Page 9
Chapter 2). “Direct” Engagement	..... Page 21
Chapter 3). “Indirect” Engagement	..... Page 29
Conclusion	..... Page 39
Appendix I-A Definition of Piracy	.....Page 43
Appendix II-Documents relating to Piracy	.....Page 45
Bibliography	.....Page 59

## INTRODUCTION

This study will evaluate the extent to which Bristol's Seventeenth Century society was affected by piracy (see appendix I for a definition of piracy), and whether Bristol benefitted from the sudden surge in piracy which occurred in the first few decades of the Jacobean Era. It will evaluate whether the local admiralty, merchants and government officials benefitted either directly, by either taking part in or financing piratical operations, or indirectly, through the purchasing or pirated goods.

While the early Seventeenth century saw the beginnings of widespread piracy in England, the concept was by no means a new phenomenon. Throughout the Hundred Years War, "every port in the West of England had its chief pirates, who came and went as they liked, always hand in glove with the local magnates and county landowners". While this was to continue well into the reign of Henry VIII, incidents on the whole remained small-scale and infrequent.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, there were several cases of pirated goods being shipped from Ireland to Bristol in the Sixteenth Century.<sup>6</sup> However, there is little reason to suggest that piracy either caused widespread problems to Bristol's trade, or provided a useful supplement to the commercial exploits of Bristol men. This was to change in the early Seventeenth Century.

From the early years of James' reign, reports of widespread piracy began to appear throughout *the Calendar of State Papers, Admiralty Records* and many other sources. Six proclamations against piracy, the first time in nearly a hundred years, were issued in the first decade of the reign alone.<sup>7</sup> In 1618, the arch-pirate Henry Mainwaring, in a discourse on piracy presented to the King, noted that "there have been more pirates by ten to one than were in the reign of the last Queen".<sup>8</sup> From 1603 to

---

<sup>5</sup> Senior, C.M, *A Nation of Pirates* (Devon 1976), p100

<sup>6</sup> In the 1590's, for instance, The Lion of Roscoff was taken by English pirates and brought to Ireland. The pirate, Hicks, was taken by one of the Queen's ships and a London merchant, Mr Richard Staper, bought a portion of its cargo of hides, and sold them in Bristol. Also, Ralph Hurst a Bristol grocer confessed that he knew a William Davys had been transporting pirate loot from Ireland to Bristol. Also William Pinner confessed he knew Davys to have taken c.300 pieces of raisins to Bristol from Appleby, J. C. (Ed.) *A Calendar of Material relating to Ireland from the High Court of Admiralty Examinations 1536-41* (Dublin, 1992), p.41 and 54

<sup>7</sup> Larkin, J. F. and Hughes, P. L., *Stuart Royal Proclamations Volume I* (Oxford, 1973) and Larkin, J. F., *Stuart Royal Proclamations Volume II* (Oxford, 1983)

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p.13

1640, there were eighty-six indictments for piracy committed on the English Coast.<sup>9</sup> Given the notorious difficulty in catching pirates, this number probably represents just a fraction of those that were active in the crime.<sup>10</sup> The French ambassador claimed that as many as fifteen French vessels were taken in the eighteen months to January 1608.<sup>11</sup> The Spanish ambassador reported that thirty English and Dutch pirates lay off the Spanish coast.<sup>12</sup> While foreign ambassadors were motivated to overemphasise such threats these cases demonstrate the magnitude of the problem of piracy. In Bristol, the story was much the same. In February 1610, Peter Easton was in the Kingroad and threatening the trade of Bristol.<sup>13</sup> In a previously un-transcribed document from the Bristol book of Trade (1598-1693) it is apparent that twenty eight ships were taken by pirates between 1610 and 1620.<sup>14</sup> Piracy had swiftly evolved into a very significant problem.

### **Historiography and Primary Sources**

Rather unusually for such a captivating topic, historiography on the subject is sparse. As a result it is necessary to conflate historiography focusing on Bristol in general and piracy in general. Studies by C.M. Senior and Evelyn Berckman, based on archival work with the *Admiralty Records*, provide the most useful background secondary literature on piracy in the era.<sup>15</sup> In addition there are numerous references to the Seventeenth Century within broader studies, the most useful of which, produced by Philip Gosse, will be used to provide background references.<sup>16</sup> However, with the exception of Senior, these studies are rather more narrative and sensational than analytical and reflective. Moreover, they tend to focus on the nature of the business rather than its implications within local communities. It must be stressed that this dissertation is primarily focused on the implications of the practice within the city rather than following the careers of pirates. Given this, the most relevant historiography comes from the selection of studies of Bristol's municipal and mercantile community, by Jones, Vanes, Jenks and McGrath.<sup>17</sup> Dr Jones' investigation into Sixteenth Century smuggling remains the

---

<sup>9</sup> Senior, C.M. "An investigation into the activities and importance of English Pirates 1603-40 (PhD Thesis Bristol, 1972), p.169

<sup>10</sup> Only the Captains and occasionally Masters of ships were indicted. Therefore these represent 86 different crews.

<sup>11</sup> Senior, "Investigation" p.324

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.325

<sup>13</sup> C.S.P. Domestic 1603-10, (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>) p.586

<sup>14</sup> The names of certain shippes which with their merchandise belonging to merchants of the port of bristoll have been lost from the yeere 1610-1620 (Document 79 in *The Bristol book of Trade*) See appendix II

<sup>15</sup> Berckman, E. *Victims of Piracy* (London 1979) and Senior, C.M, *A Nation of Pirates* (Devon 1976)

<sup>16</sup> Gosse, P. *The History of Piracy* (New York, 1932)

<sup>17</sup> Jones, E.T, *Inside the illicit economy: Reconstructing the smugglers' trade of 16<sup>th</sup> Century Bristol* (Unpublished, Bristol 2007), J Vanes (ed.), *Documents Illustrating the Overseas Trade of Bristol in the*

most relevant thesis.<sup>18</sup> He successfully highlights how smuggling and embezzlement was common in Bristol's Sixteenth Century society. He demonstrates the involvement of the major merchants and government officials of the time, such as John Smyth and the Tyndall brothers, while depicting the implications of the trade to the city. This dissertation will look to see if piracy, another illicit business in a later era, had similar implications for the City.

One of the greatest causes of such limited piratical historiography is the reluctance of historians to focus on primary sources. On the whole they use little more than plagiarised copies of their predecessors' archival work as the pillars of their essays. This dissertation will not fall into the same trap. There is a selection of useful printed sources, produced by Patrick McGrath, which will be intermittently used.<sup>19</sup> However, for the most part, the sources used will come from records transcribed personally (see appendix II). The most important document uncovered is a letter charging the Admiral of the Narrow Seas, Sir Thomas Button, with piracy.<sup>20</sup> The subsequent uncovering of his relationship with Bristol's municipal and mercantile community provides the greatest inspiration for this study. Beyond this, previously un-transcribed sources from *The Bristol Book of Trade, Mayor's Audit Book* and the *1608-9 Bristol Port Book* will be used. Finally the *Calendar of State Papers* and the *Records of the High Court of the Admiralty* will supplement the local records available in the Bristol Records Office. Throughout this dissertation, almost every piece of information will come from a primary source, of which the majority are available for the first time.

### **Methodology**

In light of this, this study will take the following form. The first section will deal with the background of piracy as well as the local administration, commercial orientation and nautical background of the port of Bristol. It will demonstrate why it is not unreasonable to ask questions about Bristol and

---

*Sixteenth Century* (Bristol, 1979); E.M. Carus-Wilson (ed.), *The Overseas Trade of Bristol in the Later Middle Ages* (Bristol, 1937) and Jenks, S., *Robert Sturmy's Commercial Expedition to the Mediterranean, 1457/8* (Bristol 2006)

<sup>18</sup> Jones, *Illicit*

<sup>19</sup> McGrath, P., *Merchants and Merchandise in Seventeenth Century Bristol* (Bristol 1955)

<sup>20</sup> The Admiralty was organised as follows. Underneath the Lord Admiral (at this time Lord Nottingham) was the Admiral of the Fleet (Sir Robert Mansel). Below this were admirals for the North, South, East and West Coasts, as well as an Admiral for the Narrow Seas and Ireland. The Narrow Seas refers to the area between Bristol, Cornwall and Ireland. Below these Admirals were Vice Admirals, one per county. Since Bristol was not within a county they did not have a Vice Admiral, but claimed to be exempt by Ancient Royal Charter. Oppenheim, M "The Royal Navy under James I" in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 7, No. 27 (Jul., 1892), p.502

piracy. It will introduce themes important for the better understanding of the second two sections. Although the topics covered could constitute a dissertation in themselves, the section highlights points relevant to the following sections.

The second chapter will analyse the extent to which the major mercantile and municipal figures of the era became directly involved in piracy. It will focus on evaluate the corruption of the Admiralty. As is well known, the beginning of the Jacobean Era was underpinned by naval corruption. This came to such a head that two commissions were set up to investigate piracy among the Admirals, both with startling findings.<sup>21</sup> While many figures were highlighted as operating illicit business, Bristol did not feature. This chapter will demonstrate that while not investigated, Bristol had one of the most corrupt Admirals, who colluded with pirates and merchants alike. On top of this, it was common for the merchant elite to have had interests in commerce, governance and privateering. The way that they managed their conflicting agendas will be considered in relation to piracy.

The third chapter will provide a more focused analysis of the “indirect” engagement. It will primarily focus on attempts to demonstrate incidents of merchants trading with pirates, particularly in Ireland. It will begin by demonstrating that a regular supply of pirated goods found their way from Ireland to Bristol in the late Sixteenth Century. From here, it will evaluate whether this was still in existence in the early Seventeenth Century. This will provide the most challenging section of the dissertation. While there are several accounts in the *Admiralty records* that show that such a supply chain was in existence, the officials on the whole tend to neglect the trade in pirated goods. It is not clear why, especially since in the previous few decades the movements of goods were tracked with some precision. It is probable that the sheer number of cases that the officials had to deal with meant that they could not allocate as much time to investigating traders of pirated goods. With this in mind, after a short section that documents the few cases where direct example of merchants trading with pirates, a more creative approach to evaluating the trade will be undertaken. Firstly, the *Port Books* will be used to see if any “exotic goods” were traded from Ireland to Bristol. Since Ireland did not have a developed re-export market, cases of “exotic” goods being exported could constitute pirated goods. This, however, is a far from ideal approach, and the significant limitations of it will be evaluated. Secondly, it will look to see if the sheer quantity of certain goods suggests an excess in Ireland, as a result of piracy. In particular, fish imports will be studied. This is because fishing ships were the favoured prize of pirates, presumably because of the ease with which defenceless ships could be

---

<sup>21</sup> The Commissions of 1608 and 1618. McGowan, A. P., *The Jacobean Commissions of Enquiry*, 1608 and 1618 (Navy Records, 1971), p.227

taken. Again, this also has its limitations. Yet the dearth of source material means that only second best techniques can be employed.



## **BACKGROUND**

This chapter will introduce the background and context of Seventeenth Century piracy in Bristol. Rather than analysing all factors in a subject of significant size, it will remain focused on presenting a background relevant for the next two chapters, “Direct” and “Indirect” engagement. For this reason it will present research on piracy in general, the main pirate haunts, Bristol’s previous illicit business and public sentiment towards piracy. Finally it will look at other cases where elite figures were found to be dealing with pirates.

### **Reasons for the increase in Piratical Activities**

While historical analysis of piracy is limited, there is some debate as to why such an increase in piracy occurred. C.M. Senior argues piracy became prevalent because of the rapid dispersion of the Navy, in the wake of peace with Spain.<sup>22</sup> Since 50,000 men were employed as privateers, naval sailors or on merchant vessels, the result was widespread unemployment.<sup>23</sup> Sailors hard pushed for work now found their only options aboard pirate ships. Undoubtedly, this was a major cause. The ex-pirate Captain Smith wrote; “King James, who from his infancie had reigned in peace with all nations, had no imployment for those men of warre, so that those that were rich rested with what they had, but those that were poor..., turned pirats”.<sup>24</sup> In fact, even the Crown was aware that the dispersion of the Navy was likely to result in piracy. In a proclamation in June 1603 rescinding all letters of Marque, the laws of piracy were reiterated.<sup>25</sup> In modern terms, one would refer to this problem as *structural unemployment*.<sup>26</sup> James’ disregard for the Navy was to continue. Within four years, naval spending had fallen by some 57% to just under £20,000 per annum.<sup>27</sup> The result was trained mariners with no employment at sea, and few skills for employment elsewhere. There can be little doubt that these disempowered mariners turned to piracy since, from a sample of those indicted for piracy in the first forty years of the Century, 73% were proven to have been previously employed at sea.<sup>28</sup> The

---

<sup>22</sup> Senior, *Pirates* p13-42, Pennell, C. R., *Bandits at Sea: A pirate reader* (New York, 2001), p. 118, Gosse, *Pirates* p.116-25

<sup>23</sup> Pennell, *Bandits* p.118,

<sup>24</sup> Barbour, P., (Ed.) *The Complete works of Capt. John Smith* (London, 1984), p. 914

<sup>25</sup> Larkin, J. F. and Hughes, P. L., *Stuart Royal Proclamations Volume I* (Oxford, 1973) p.30

<sup>26</sup> Structural unemployment refers to a long term problem caused by a restructuring of industry. In this case the dispersion of the Navy meant trained sailors were to find no maritime employment and their skills became obsolete.

<sup>27</sup> Oppenheim, M “The Royal Navy under James I” in *The English Historical Review, Vol. 7, No. 27 (Jul., 1892)*, p.502

<sup>28</sup> Senior, *Pirates* p.15

disinterest that James showed towards his Navy is a major cause of the increase in piracy seen throughout our timeframe.<sup>29</sup>

However there are other factors that contributed to the rapid increase in piracy that have received rather less attention from Historians. From the middle of the Sixteenth century there was a rapid expansion of nautical commerce.<sup>30</sup> In Bristol, for example, imports increased from £12,469.62 in 1562/3 to £50,059.70 in 1624/5, an increase of over 300%.<sup>31</sup> This increase was partly due to opportunities in the New World, but also due to a general growth in intra-European trade. This increased frequency in trade, increased opportunities to gain prize from piracy. On top of this, the need to build ships to cross the Atlantic meant that there was a dramatic increase in the size of ships. As new ship building technology became prominent on all trade routes, the average prize per ship increased. This dramatically altered the risk reward ratio for pirates and is therefore contributed to the problem.

While these reasons demonstrate that piracy was to some extent driven by the need for individuals to make a living and the increase in opportunities, they sit uncomfortably within capitalist notions of business. Economies are on the whole demand-led. To this end, it must be considered that piracy was in part driven by demand for booty. It is somewhat surprising that no historians examine the possibility that there was a demand for pirated goods. Since pirates, on the whole, did not live from hand to mouth it is reasonable to expect their booty to have been sold for profit. The ability of many pirate-captains to offer large sums for their pardons demonstrates that there must have been a significant level of profitable trade. The pirate Pierce, for example, gave 1,000 crown to the Venetians and Captain Stockwell offered £20,000 to the English for their pardons.<sup>32</sup> This paper will perform the first assessment of the trade in plunder and the first assessment of public opinion towards the business. While it will focus on the effects of piracy in Bristol, it is likely that new light will be shed on the demand-led incentives of pirates.

---

<sup>29</sup> Oppenheim, M “The Royal Navy under James I” in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 7, No. 27 (Jul., 1892) P. 471

<sup>30</sup> Between 1563-4 and 1600-1 Bristol’s imports increased from £12,469.62 to £33,842.55 from Stone, G.R., “Bristol’s Trade before the Civil War” (PhD Thesis, University of Bristol), p.21

<sup>31</sup> Stone, R., “The pre-Civil War development of Bristol’s Overseas trade” (Unpublished Bristol. 2009) p.7

<sup>32</sup> Senior, *Investigation*, p.428

## Pirate Bases

While an evaluation of the nature of operations is not within the scope of this dissertation, it is worth noting that two areas became significantly frequented by pirates. In a letter from the Lords of the Privy Council, Barbary and the West Coast of Ireland were highlighted as the main pirate strongholds.<sup>33</sup> The Barbary Coast was the larger of the two haunts, and the majority of losses to pirates were attributed to the “Turks” of the Barbary Coast.

The term “Turk” is somewhat misleading. It refers to inhabitants of all Islamic lands. In this case it refers to pirates from the North Coast of Africa (Barbary). However, even those that came from Barbary were more often than not English or Dutch renegades. Some famously even “Turned Turk”, adopting Islam as well as traditional clothing and rituals.<sup>34</sup> England’s most infamous pirate captains, Mainwaring, Ward, Bishop and Verney, as well as the Bristolians Easton and Nutt all made Barbary their base. Between 1616 and 1642 over 400 prize vessels were brought into Mamora (one of the most affluent Barbary ports) by a pirate fleet of over 150 ships with a thousand guns.<sup>35</sup> The area subsequently became an important trading post in pirated goods.<sup>36</sup> Traders flocked to the Barbary Coast to buy goods at cheap prices. The Italians in particular built up a large trade with the pirates.<sup>37</sup> However there were of course the ever-present intrepid English merchants, who dared to travel further afield in search of booty. One such Englishman was James Duppa. Duppa sent several ships to Mamora to trade with the pirates, where he had substantial contacts among the pirate community, his brother being a leading pirate captain in the region.<sup>38</sup> While the *Bristol Port Books* show that local merchants were trading in Barbary, for example *The Harry* of Bristol left port for Barbary on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 1609, this dissertation will primarily focus on Ireland.<sup>39</sup>

While little is known of the trade in booty at Barbary, even less is known of Ireland. The most useful source for how developed the pirate base became is a book presented to James by the arch-pirate

---

<sup>33</sup> C.S.P. Ireland 1611-14, p.238

<sup>34</sup> Senior, *Pirates* p.43

<sup>35</sup> Clark, G.N., “The Barbary Corsairs in the Seventeenth Century” in *Cambridge Historical Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1944), pp. 22-35

<sup>36</sup> Pennell, C. R., *Bandits at Sea: A pirate reader* (New York, 2001), p. 110

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p.53

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, p.53

<sup>39</sup> PRO E190/1136/8

Henry Mainwaring as a “thank-you” for the granting of his pardon.<sup>40</sup> Mainwaring notes that the Irish would far rather align to the pirates than the King; “in regard of the benefit the Country receives by the one, and the prejudice, or incumber as they count it, of the other.” He describes Ireland as the “Nursery and Storehouse of Pirates, in regard of the general good entertainment they receive there, [including the] supply of victuals and men”. He also notes that Ireland had developed as the main pirate centre due to its “conveniency” both geographically and in terms of its local jurisdiction. The South and West of Ireland were sparsely populated and full of small “Harbours without command”. As well as this, the local inhabitants were so adverse to local civil jurisdiction that they had no qualms about trading with the pirates.<sup>41</sup> Even the local officials had “some connivance” with the pirates. What is more, a legal ambiguity meant that, unlike every other Vice-Admiralty in the Kingdom, pirates could not be charged locally but had to be sent to the mainland.<sup>42</sup> Finally, Mainwaring states, “Where besides that they have all commodities and conveniences that all other places do afford them, they have also good store of English, Scottish, and Irish wenches.”<sup>43</sup>

The *Calendar of State papers* demonstrates the accuracy of Mainwaring’s claims. Southern Ireland became the pirate capital of the Isles and home to 300 ships with 1,000 pirates.<sup>44</sup> The threat was so great that the Lord President of Munster, Lord Danvers, confessed that he was too afraid to venture to sea because of the strength of the pirates, who he claimed could land a force of 300 marines at any time.<sup>45</sup> What is more, as the Venetian ambassador in London reported in 1610, the pirates were safe in the seas about Ireland ‘for there is no force in these waters able to give them battle’. In the summer of 1611, the tiny village of Leamcon, which was home to no more than a few score citizens, had a pirate fleet consisting of nine ships, four hundred men and two hundred and fifty guns.<sup>46</sup> As a result, the prize taken was significant. In the summer of 1610 alone, more than 100 fishing ships were taken and

---

<sup>40</sup> Mainwaring, H. & Perrin, W.G. (Ed.), *The Life and Works of Sir Henry Mainwaring* (Navy Record Society, 1922)

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, p.16

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, p. 20 Because of the time taken, cost of keeping prisoners and the potential for foodstuffs to perish on board captured ships, local officials often took matters into their own hands. To some extent they were forced to but this meant that it was all the more complex to coordinate local officials and punish those that strayed. From Appleby, J.C. and O’Dowd, M., “The Irish Admiralty: Its Organisation and Development, c. 1570-1640” in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 95 (May, 1985), pp. 299-326, p.301

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, p.39

<sup>44</sup> Pennell, C. R., *Bandits at Sea: A pirate reader* (New York, 2001), p. 111

<sup>45</sup> C.S.P. Ireland 1608-10, p.130

<sup>46</sup> C.S.P. Ireland 1611-14, p.99

sent home empty handed.<sup>47</sup> Richard Bishop, in his admiralty indictment of 1611, was accused of being pirate-Admiral of a fleet of 1,000 men and 10 ships, and having “brought many prizes into the vicinity of Baltimore”.<sup>48</sup> The pirate Jennings was accused of carrying goods worth £2,000 to Leamcon in 1610.<sup>49</sup> As well as becoming the favoured haunt for English and Irish pirates there is evidence to suggest pirates hailing from all over Europe and the Mediterranean frequented Ireland. Ireland became the “summer base” for the Turks and the *Calendar of State Papers* increasingly shows cases of Dutch and French pirates appearing in Ireland.<sup>50</sup> Southern Ireland had become the second most sophisticated pirate base in the World, with pirates using it to victual their ships, and disseminate their loot.

Another reason why pirates flocked to Ireland, already noted by Mainwaring, was due to the support they received from local officials. Numerous examples demonstrate how complicit local officials were in piratical businesses. For instance, a letter from Sir Arthur Chichester, the Lord Deputy of Ireland, outlines how he received an Admiralty seal to apprehend the Deputy Vice-Admiral of Munster, Sir Ralph Bingley, to face charges of piracy and conspiring with pirates.<sup>51</sup> What is more, two previously un-transcribed letters (See Appendix II/I and II/III) demonstrate this point further. While considerable attention will be given to these two sources as this dissertation progresses, it is worth noting that the Admiral of the Narrow Seas, Sir Thomas Button, was charged with colluding with pirates, illicitly taking a prize and trading in pirate goods.<sup>52</sup> As Admiral, Button was in charge of all areas between Bristol, Cornwall and Ireland. For him to be charged with such illegalities demonstrates how deep this corruption ran. It is likely that many landowners and local officials supplemented their wages with piratical activities. A letter outlining those that bought goods off a pirate lists Sir Lawrence Parsons (the Attorney General of Munster and later Judge of the Admiralty Court) and Sir William Hull (Deputy Vice-Admiral of Munster).<sup>53</sup> The level of corruption meant it was almost impossible for the Crown to use their officials in the suppression of piracy. The only solution to bear any fruit occurred

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 386

<sup>48</sup> Senior, Investigation, p.378

<sup>49</sup> Senior, Investigation, p.407

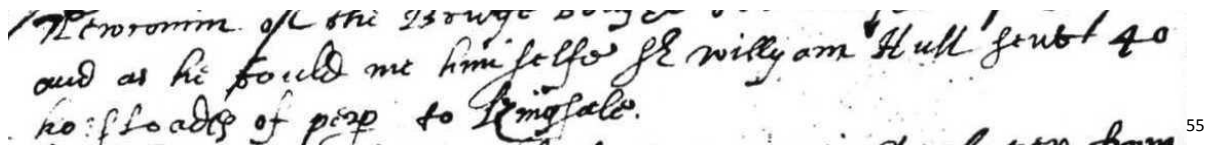
<sup>50</sup> For Example, The Dutch pirate Lambert Flaurik frequented Ireland in 1616, C.S.P. Ireland 1615-25, p. 132 and the Frenchman Andreas Niennart in 1623 C.S.P. Ireland 1615-25, p. 407

<sup>51</sup> C.S.P. Ireland 1608-10, p. 353. In Munster, because of the threat of piracy, four Deputy Vice Admirals were employed.

<sup>52</sup> Appendix II/I

<sup>53</sup> Ball, F. E., *The Judges in Ireland, 1221-1921* (London, 1926), p.830 Appleby, J.C. and O'Dowd, M., “The Irish Admiralty: Its Organisation and Development, c. 1570-1640” in *Irish Historical Studies, Vol. 24, No. 95* (May, 1985), pp. 299-326

when the Lord Deputy was forced to pardon all pirates in return for their services in the King's ships.<sup>54</sup> Because of the support pirates received from the local government and the difficulties in their punishment, there was little chance of pirates having their operations disrupted by government officials.

A snippet of a handwritten manuscript in cursive script. The text is partially obscured but clearly legible. It reads: "and as he found me him selfe of willyam Hull sent to ke: floods of peop to Kingdome." The number 55 is written in the bottom right corner of the snippet.

and as he found me him selfe of willyam Hull sent to ke: floods of peop to Kingdome. 55

Ireland became a sophisticated piratical haunt, with pirates, landowners, villagers and local officials all engaging in the business. Indeed, in some areas it is unlikely that locals relied on other commerce at all. The inhabitants of the county of Mayo's "only dependence [was] upon the depredations and spoils of pirates".<sup>56</sup> The pirates brought hundred's of prizes to Southern Ireland. While some of these were only there in transit before they could be shipped to Barbary, and others were disseminated among the local population. It is certain that plunder made its way to England.<sup>57</sup> Since Bristol was Ireland's most important trading partner, it is important to investigate this pirate trade. Ireland went from providing only 3% of Bristol's imports in 1600/1 to around 25% in 1625/6. In real terms imports increased from £400 in 1575/6 to £12,300 in 1625/6.<sup>58</sup> This period of increased trade has been attributed to general Irish economic development throughout the era.<sup>59</sup> However it is important to consider whether ill-gotten booty inflated these trade figures. Once the extent to which Ireland adopted piracy is taken into account, and the significant growth of Bristol-Irish Trade is considered, the reasons for supposing that Bristol gained significantly from pirate booty become clear. The question that this dissertation will address in the penultimate chapter will be whether plunder came to Bristol from Ireland.

### **Public Sentiment**

It is important to consider that people might not have traded with pirates on moral grounds. However, an analysis of the way piracy was viewed at the time shows that this was not the case. While the previous section demonstrates that Irish society abetted the trade, little is know of English attitudes to

---

<sup>54</sup> C.S.P. Ireland 1608-10, p. 186-7

<sup>55</sup> An extract from noting the Deputy Vice-Admiral Sir William Hull. From "The Names of those that bought goodes of the pyrat Campane at lymecon in the West of Ireland, in 1625". Appendix II/III

<sup>56</sup> C.S.P. Ireland 1615-25, p.580

<sup>57</sup> 13 November 1612 the Lords of Council wrote to Chichester outlining this. From C. S. P. Ireland 1611-15 p. 301

<sup>58</sup> Stone, G.R., "Bristol's Trade before the Civil War" (PhD Thesis, University of Bristol), p.21

<sup>59</sup> Gillespie, R., "The Transformation of the Irish Economy, 1550-1700" in *Studies in Irish Economic and Social History* (1998) p. 19-29

the sea marauders. If, in England, it was condemned by the population in the same way as it was by the Crown, there could have been little scope for a thriving trade in booty. However, despite a succession of proclamations forbidding the illicit business and numerous hangings, it seems that there were no moral qualms attached to pirates across the Narrow Seas.<sup>60</sup>

In Bristol, the infamous Captain Coward's son received a highly sought after apprenticeship in a Goldsmiths, despite his father being hanged for piracy just a few months earlier.<sup>61</sup> The admiralty records show that the wives of two pirates approached the Marshall of the Admiralty and implored him to charge an "acquaintance" who was supposed to have brought them money from their husbands in Barbary. The sheer audacity of this, as well as the way that pirate families were received into society, demonstrates that piracy was not a crime condemned by the public, even if it was deplored by the Crown.

Contemporary popular culture promulgates an image still perpetuated today. The extremely popular play, Heywood and Rowley's *Fortune by Land and Sea* (1607-9) depicts the same swashbuckling and romanticised image present in screenplays such as *Pirates of the Caribbean*.<sup>62</sup> The play interweaves the stories of two young men reduced to rags, one pursuing a career on land, the other as a pirate. The pirate is portrayed as the far more heroic and benevolent character. The book presents a daring image of pirates. Finally the book compares piracy to the previous naval triumphs of Elizabeth. In celebrating a pirate victory the author writes:

*"Oh the Naval triumphs that thou and I have seen,  
Nay ourselves made, when on the sea at once  
Have been as many bonfires as in Towns,  
Kindled upon a night of jubilee,  
As many Ordinance thundering in the Clouds"*

This is testament to the way piracy was perceived as glorious, enchanting and chivalrous, especially when it was focused towards foreign powers. Robert Dabourne's play *A Christian turned Turk* (1612) promotes a similar image, only portraying those pirates that adopted Islam in a negative light. The same is true for Irish popular culture. Most famously the exploits of the Irish "Queen Pirate", Grainne

---

<sup>60</sup> Larkin, J. F., and Hughes, P. L. (Ed.) *Stuart Royal Proclamations: Volume 1, 1603-25*(Oxford, 1973) p. 145

<sup>61</sup> Senior, C.M. "An investigation into the activities and importance of English Pirates 1603-40 (PhD Thesis Bristol, 1972), p.67

<sup>62</sup> Cited in Jowitt, C., "Piracy and Politics in Heywood and Rowley's *Fortune by Land and Sea*(1607-9) in *Renaissance Studies* Vol. 16 No. (2002)

O'Malley have been documented in song, poetry and print. There can be little doubt that piracy was perceived as glamorous, and therefore there is little reason to believe the public would not engage in trade with pirates on moral grounds. While some would have been unwitting accomplices, unaware of the origins of their goods, since there would have been little way of determining the legitimacy of a load once it had been brought to market, others are known to have bought goods directly from pirates.

### **Bristol's commercial and illicit background**

While the background to piracy has already been given, it is also important to give some background to the City of Bristol, in particular its Municipal and Mercantile community. Privateering and Smuggling were commonplace in Elizabethan Bristol.<sup>63</sup> They are relevant to this dissertation because they demonstrate Bristol men's appetite for prize and the willingness with which they flouted legislation from London, especially if it was likely to disrupt their commercial exploits.

Privateering became exceedingly popular in Elizabethan Bristol. Between the years 1589-91, Bristol took prize from twenty seven ships valued at £31,148 with a further ten of unknown value.<sup>64</sup> With this in mind, the total taken for the twenty four month period could have totalled £42,684.<sup>65</sup> This sum is in fact in excess of the total value of all recorded wine imports, Bristol's most important inbound trade, which stood at roughly £33,379, for the same period.<sup>66</sup> It is likely that privateering was engaged with, at least in part, to recoup losses that would have occurred through trade embargos with Iberia, one of Bristol's prime trading partners. However, beyond this, privateering proved immensely profitable and

---

<sup>63</sup> Privateering was a legal form of piracy, where royal letters of Marque were granted in times of war to allow private merchants to attack foreign ships, in effect working as an outsourcing of naval duties to the public sector.

<sup>64</sup> Andrews, K. *Elizabethan Privateering 1585-1603*(Cambridge, 1964) p258-61

<sup>65</sup> This figure is based on the average prize per ship of those ships where total prize was known times the total number of ships.

<sup>66</sup> Jones, E.T, *Inside the illicit economy: Reconstructing the smugglers' trade of 16<sup>th</sup> Century Bristol* (Unpublished, Bristol 2007) p.228 This figure is impossible to accurately calculate since there are no Customs Records due to the farming of the Custom's to Walsingham (1585-90). However Jones estimates average imports p.a. to have been 1151 tuns (five year average from the 1590's) while a price estimate of £14.5/ton is accepted. Simon, A., *The History of the Wine trade in England Volume II* (Holland Press, London 1964) and Jones *Illicit* p.240. These figures do not include the substantial illicit trade, highlighted by Jones. It would, however, be reasonable to suspect that privateers attempted to hide their prize from customs officials in the same way as the smugglers. Although a quantifiable comparison is beyond the scope of this dissertation at this stage these two figures provide a useful comparison. To this end they should be considered in relation to each other rather than as stand alone, accurate figures.



a useful diversification of a merchant's interests. This appetite to privateer was not diminished over the two decades between James I rescinding all letters of Marque in 1603 and Charles I reissuing letters as war broke once again between England and Spain. In the five years of war that followed, letters were given to Bristol men on seventy six occasions.<sup>67</sup>

Two examples in the preceding few decades demonstrate the reluctance of Bristol men to give up profitable enterprises because of legislation from London. Firstly when War broke with Spain in 1585 it has been well documented that Bristol men broke trade embargos with Spain.<sup>68</sup> In 1587 a ship left Bristol for Ayamonte, and "furnished the King of Spain with all kind of provisions". While this refers predominantly to grain and hides, it was probable that Ordinance cast in South Wales, and lead used for ordinance from the Mendips, were also shipped to the peninsula.<sup>69</sup> Imports from Spain were often brought into Bristol and merely entered as coming from either French or Irish ports. The 1600/1 *Port Books* demonstrate that £194 of Seville Oil and £116 of Seck was shipped from Ireland. This in fact constituted 28% of all imports from Ireland.<sup>70</sup> Considering Bristol men were willing to victual ships that would ultimately fight their fellow countrymen, it seems unlikely that they would not buy pirate loot on moral convictions. Secondly, Bristol men consistently flaunted royal proclamations and engaged in smuggling. In 1558, in the face of significant customs increases, Bristol men quickly reverted to the illicit importing of Wine, possibly importing illicitly as much as was recorded in the customs books.<sup>71</sup> Throughout the next few decades, the merchant's appetite for evading customs charges was not to subside. There was a Royal inquiry into the illegal export of butter and other goods in 1636 and 1637, by various Bristol merchants. A number of merchants were found guilty, and had to report to the Star Chamber to face charges.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, it was suspected that Bristol men had hidden prize taken under letters of Marque between 1625-30. In 1635 an inquiry was launched into the

---

<sup>67</sup> [Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles I, 1629-31](http://www.british-history.ac.uk) (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>) p.151-56

<sup>68</sup> Croft, P., 'Trading with the Enemy, 1585-1604', in *The Historical Journal*, 32, 2 (1989) pp. 281-302 and Jones, E.T., *Inside the illicit economy: Reconstructing the smugglers' trade of 16<sup>th</sup> Century Bristol* (Unpublished-Bristol 2007), p.267

<sup>69</sup> Croft, P., 'Trading with the Enemy, 1585-1604', in *The Historical Journal*, 32, 2 (1989) p.294

<sup>70</sup> PRO E190-1136-6 "List of commodities imported from Ireland 1638/9" from Stone, G.R., "Bristol's Trade before the Civil War" (PhD Thesis, University of Bristol), p.79-83

<sup>71</sup> Jones, E.T., *Inside the illicit economy: Reconstructing the smugglers' trade of 16<sup>th</sup> Century Bristol* (Unpublished-Bristol 2007), p.228

<sup>72</sup> CSP 1635-6 p. 240 and CSP 1639-40 p. 39-40

matter.<sup>73</sup> The Merchant Venturers took particular offence to this, demanding that the customs officials Dowle and Shuter should “surcease any further prosecution and molestacion”.

The ease with which Bristol reverted to smuggling was testimony to the welcoming local geographical and social factors, many of which meant the region was suited to piracy as well as smuggling. Firstly, the port had evolved into somewhat of a unique commercial hub, ruled and governed by the merchants that promoted the city's most prolific industry. The city had re-established the Society of Merchant Venturers in 1605.<sup>74</sup> In the Seventeenth Century 65% of all Mayors, 56% of all aldermen and 65% of all MPs for Bristol were members of the Merchant Venturers. The archetypal image of a Bristol man, as it had been for the previous century, was of a merchant with significant political interests. One such man was Robert Aldworth. The Aldworth family had profited significantly from privateering in the Elizabethan era, with Robert being involved with the Privateer ship the *Consolation* as late as 1603.<sup>75</sup> Aldworth was made a sheriff in 1596, rose to Mayor in 1609, Alderman in 1613 and was a Senior Alderman from 1628.<sup>76</sup> As was common in the era, he was also one of the most influential merchants, holding offices within the Society of Merchant Venturers. He was listed as a member when the society's position was reaffirmed in 1605 and was Master in 1609-10, 1612-13 and 1624-5. Because of such overlapping mercantile and municipal responsibilities, Bristol merchants commanded “considerable independence from municipal control” and were able to ensure that mercantile profits above all else governed the city's objectives.<sup>77</sup> Secondly, Bristol did not sit within a Vice-Admiralty.<sup>78</sup> It was sometimes held by either Gloucestershire or Somerset, but in reality neither ever could exert any jurisdiction over the port since Bristol claimed to be exempt from the Lord Admiral's jurisdiction by charter until 1637.<sup>79</sup> The ease with which it ignored Admiralty jurisdiction was highlighted when, in March 1629, Sir Rodney wrote to Nicholas that Bristol “will not

---

<sup>73</sup> P.R.O SP. 16/302, no. 109 cited in McGrath, Records relating p. 238

<sup>74</sup> “Order of Common Council reorganising the Bristol Merchant Adventurers, 31 Dec 1605” in McGrath, Patrick, Records relating to the Society of the Merchant Venturers in the City of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century (Bristol 1952), p.3

<sup>75</sup> Andrews, Elizabethan Privateering p.146-8

<sup>76</sup> Beavan, Rev. A. B, Bristol Lists: Municipal and Miscellaneous (Bristol 1889) p.184, 196 & 222

<sup>77</sup> McGrath, Patrick, *Records relating to the Society of the Merchant Venturers in the City of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century* (Bristol 1952) p. xxvii

<sup>78</sup> Marsden, R. G., “The Vice-Admirals of the Coast” in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 23, No. 92 (Oct., 1908), p. 9. Each seaside county had a Vice Admiral to support its local municipal bodies in nautical issues such as wars, pirates and cases of smuggling.

<sup>79</sup> R. G. Marsden “The Vice-Admirals of the Coast” in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 23, No. 92 (Oct., 1908), pp. 736-757

give way to his deputies mustering their ships and mariners, pretending that the Admiral has no jurisdiction there.”<sup>80</sup> Instead, Bristol answered directly to the Admiral of the Narrow Seas, Sir Thomas Button. The next chapter, through an analysis of a previously un-transcribed document, will show that Button participated, both directly and indirectly, in piracy. Finally, on top of the Municipal and Mercantile community consisting of largely the same names, a vast number of Elizabethan privateers became members of the Merchant Venturers and City officials. John Whitson, Robert Aldworth, Thomas James and John Hopkins to name but a few, were all mayors and former privateers. In fact, in the first ten years of James’ reign eight mayors had privateered.<sup>81</sup> In summary, Bristol men ruled their city to extract profit above all else and had already shown a willingness to trade with the enemy, take ships at sea and flaunt royal jurisdiction. It is therefore likely that they were willing to ignore the legislation that redefined their legitimate privateering operations into illicit piratical exploits.

### **Piracy and local officials elsewhere**

The numerous references to privateers in other parts of the country continuing their business demonstrates that historians must evaluate whether the same was true in Bristol. For example, a London Merchant Adventurer called Gerson Manning managed to obtain a Marque from the Dutch authorities to continue Privateering against the Spanish. He invested heavily, putting several ships to sea until he was tried by the High Admiralty court in 1607.<sup>82</sup> Similarly local authorities were consistently charged with engaging with piracy. One such case occurred in Milford Haven when, in 1577, it was reported that more than ten tons of wine had been purchased from the pirate Edward Harberd by George Devereux, one of the most established land owning families of South Wales, and John Wogan, commissioner for the suppression of piracy.<sup>83</sup> Again in 1588 John Vaughn, customer of the port, was forced to pay back £166 in compensation after buying a Scottish ship, the *Elizabeth*, in the knowledge that it had been obtained illegally through piracy.<sup>84</sup> Devereux and Wogan were again indicted for this incident. In 1608 and 1618 commissions were organised to investigate the numerous

---

<sup>80</sup> C.S.P. Domestic 1629-31 (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>) Sir Edward Nicholas was Buckingham’s secretary.

<sup>81</sup> Cross referencing of names from Andrews, Kenneth Elizabethan *Privateering* 1585-1603 (Cambridge, 1964). p. 258-61 and Beavan, Rev. A. B, *Bristol Lists: Municipal and Miscellaneous* (Bristol 1889), p.222

<sup>82</sup> HCA 13/97/2-4 cited in Senior, C.M. “An investigation into the activities and importance of English Pirates 1603-40 (PhD Thesis Bristol, 1972)p.1

<sup>83</sup> TNA SP 12 Vol. CXI No. 37 cited in Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 9: 1586-88 (1915), pp. 509-531 & 642-664 cited in Taylor, Duncan “Milford’s Sixteenth Century Maritime Trade” (Unpublished Thesis, Bristol 2008)p 29

<sup>84</sup> Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: volume 9: 1586-88 (1915), pp. 509-531 & 642-664 cited in Taylor, Duncan “Milford’s Sixteenth Century Maritime Trade” (Unpublished Thesis, Bristol 2008)p. 15

claims of illicit activities by the Admiralty. Piracy featured prominently in both.<sup>85</sup> Among the names connected with piracy in the first commission was Richard Hawkins, Vice Admiral of Devon and son of the famous Elizabethan privateer Sir John. Hawkins had connections with every local pirate and profited mainly by selling pardons and confiscating loot.<sup>86</sup> It was commonplace for local governments, landowners and merchants (who in Bristol tended to be the same people) to benefit from piracy.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the background of the city of Bristol and the context of Seventeenth Century piracy show that an investigation into the piratical practices of the city must be undertaken by historians. In the previous few years the City had come to rely more and more on income from Privateering. Bristol had demonstrated its willingness to flaunt royal proclamations, particularly if they were likely to encroach on their maritime profits, by trading with the enemy and engaging in illicit smuggling.<sup>87</sup> What is more, the municipal community had come to be dominated by individuals who had profited from Privateering and had significant maritime interests. The willingness of Bristol men to returned to the business in 1625 demonstrated that they still perceived sea marauding as a lucrative business. Similarly, the continuation of illicit smuggling operations in the Seventeenth Century demonstrates that a local appetite for profit, even when activities were officially outlawed, had not diminished. The significant amount of piratical abuses by noted figures throughout the era further suggests Bristol men would have had the means, ability and appetite to engage in piracy. What is more, in an era that saw Southern Ireland reduced to an uncontrollable pirate base, Bristol's trade with the region increased nearly ten times.<sup>88</sup> It is therefore important to analyse the extent to which this increase in Anglo-Irish trade was the result of a trade, whether knowingly or unknowingly, in pirated goods.

---

<sup>85</sup> McGowan, A. P., *The Jacobean Commissions of Enquiry, 1608 and 1618* (Navy Records, 1971)

<sup>86</sup> Senior, *Nation* p.132

<sup>87</sup> Jenks, *Commercial*; Jones *Illicit* and Carus-Wilson, *Overseas Trade* all depict the mercantile community as prudent and astute. They emphasised commerce above all else and were reluctant to give up lines of business outlawed by royal proclamation (Eg. Jones, *Illicit* p.228-44 shows limited acceptance of new prisage imposts on wine)

<sup>88</sup> Ireland went from providing only 3% of Bristol's imports in 1600/1 to around 25% in 1625/6 in Stone, G.R., "Bristol's Trade before the Civil War" (PhD Thesis, University of Bristol), p.21

## **DIRECT ENGAGEMENT**

The beginning of the Seventeenth Century was notable for a rapid surge in piracy. Piracy became so commonplace that merchants often claimed that their trade was hampered.<sup>89</sup> Nowhere was this truer than in Bristol.<sup>90</sup> However, in this period Bristol's trade grew consistently, evident from the Customs accounts of the City.<sup>91</sup> It seems rather contradictory that a period, which saw many merchants claim that they were too fearful of pirates to put to sea, simultaneously saw a significant growth in trade. What is more, despite widespread claims of piratical engagement by merchants, townsfolk and (in particular) members of the Admiralty throughout England, few have identified such operations in Bristol. This chapter will revise this. It will evaluate the activities of the Admiral of the Narrow Seas, Sir Thomas Button, who consistently used Bristol and Ireland as his two bases to conduct his Admiralty duties. It will demonstrate that Button was significantly involved in piracy and that it is likely that Bristol men were, in some way, involved with Button's illicit activities. Finally it will examine whether there is any evidence to suggest Bristol men financed pirate operation in a quasi-privateering manner. However, due to the nature of illicit businesses, sources are rare. Individuals would have tried to cover their illegal tracks. For this reason, it will conclude that, while incremental evidence suggests such an engagement in piracy, it is not possible to provide watertight evidence to support this, at least until more personal records alluding to the exact nature of operations can be transcribed.

### **Sir Thomas Button**

One of the significant reasons why piracy was allowed to flourish in this era was because of the corruption seen throughout the Admiralty.<sup>92</sup> The crown was acutely aware that the body charged with reducing offences had become entirely involved in the problem. Two commissions were set up, one in 1608 and another in 1618 to investigate the extent of corruption.<sup>93</sup> The results are startling. As has already been stated, one of the most famous indicted in the inquisition was Sir Richard Hawkins, Vice Admiral of Devon. But he was not alone. Thomas Norris, writing to Coke, claimed that "To say truth

---

<sup>89</sup> Complaints by the merchant classes were commonplace. For example, on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 1617 Sir Fernando Georges claimed the trade of Plymouth was significantly disrupted by Mediterranean pirates. C.S.P Domestic, 1610-18 (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>)

<sup>90</sup> from the Bristol book of Trade (1598-1693) it is apparent that twenty eight ships were taken by pirates between 1610 and 1620 (See Appendix II)

<sup>91</sup> Bristol's total imports increased from £33,842.55 in 1600/1 to £50,059.70 in 1624/5 from Stone, R., "The pre-Civil War development of Bristol's Overseas trade" (Unpublished Bristol. 2009), p.18

<sup>92</sup> Peck. L.L., Problems in Jacobean administration: Was Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, a reformer? In *The Historical Journal*, 19, 4 (1976), pp. 831-858

<sup>93</sup> McGowan, A. P.(Ed.), *The Jacobean Commissions of Enquiry, 1608 and 1618* (Navy Records, 1971)

the whole body is so corrupted as there is no sound part almost from the head to the foot; the great ones feed on the less and enforce them to steal both for themselves and their commanders”.<sup>94</sup> However, it is unlikely that anywhere suffered as much from the corruption of their Admiralty representative as Bristol. Bristol benefitted from a long standing administrative ambiguity that left the city exempt from Admiralty Jurisdiction. Bristol sat sometimes within the Vice-Admiralty of Somerset, and sometimes within Gloucestershire. However, it is unlikely that either were able consistently to impose their authority. Instead, the city answered to the Admiral of the Narrow Seas, Sir Thomas Button.<sup>95</sup> This was not surprising. As the last mainland port before reaching Ireland, many admiralty ventures to Ireland were launched from Bristol. Button consistently wrote from Bristol, outlining such things as the landing of his fleet from Ireland in the City and the deployment of troops to Ireland through the City.<sup>96</sup> Button was a local man, hailing from South Wales and consistently used Bristol as his main base. He was readily contacted by his “loving friends” the Merchant Venturers of Bristol to aid them in the suppression of Piracy (See Appendix II/IX). In 1613, He coordinated two ships called the *Concord* and *True Love* searching for pirates in the Severn.<sup>97</sup> The following year the merchants doubled their force by deploying four ships under Button. Again in 1623 he was contacted by the merchants. However, it seems Button was acting as little more than a pirate himself.

Even before he came to Bristol his exploits were examined. In the 1608 commission into the Admiralty, Button was examined for his involvement with pirates. Button, having come across a pirate ship in the Severn, had loaded some of the pirate’s prize in sugar aboard his own ship and sent it back to his home in Wales to be sold.<sup>98</sup> However, this illicit embezzlement of what should have become the Crown’s goods was not the end of the matter. Button was working in conjunction with a notorious pirate called Ford, probably using the ship as an illicit joint stock privateer. He paid Ford £100 in gold and allowed the master of Ford’s ship, the *Answer* to escape imprisonment by taking him

---

<sup>94</sup> Cited in Oppenheim, M “The Royal Navy under James I” in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 7, No. 27 (Jul., 1892), p.478

<sup>95</sup> The Narrow Sea refers to the area between England and Ireland, as well as the Severn Channel.

<sup>96</sup> EG, A letter outlining how Button should take a ship from Bristol, and pursue a pirate and bring him into Bristol. 15 April 1624 (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>). Admirals under Mansell, Admiral of the Fleet, were appointed on the North, South, East and West Coast as well as for the Narrow Seas and Ireland. They were above the local Vice admirals, which were appointed per county. Oppenheim, M “The Royal Navy under James I” in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 7, No. 27 (Jul., 1892), p.476

<sup>97</sup> This is apparent from the accounts of the Merchant Venturers in Bristol Book of Trade 1598-1693 cited in McGrath, Patrick, *Records relating to the Society of the Merchant Venturers in the City of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century* (Bristol 1952), p.178

<sup>98</sup> McGowan, A. P.(Ed.), *The Jacobean Commissions of Enquiry, 1608 and 1618* (Navy Records, 1971) p.228

aboard his own ship.<sup>99</sup> Later, Button similarly allowed Ford to be discharged, against the will of his seniors. The events with Ford culminated in 1605 when it was discovered that Ford had taken a cargo of ninety eight chests of Sugar from a ship belonging to the Spanish Ambassador. Button, working with Ford, had sold the goods.<sup>100</sup> Another reference to Button's misdemeanours came when *The Hope*, one of the "Queens's" ships in the Narrow Seas, took a pirate ship with her prize. Button and one William Jones went to one of the crew of the Naval vessel (probably either the Captain or Master although it is unclear) and "challenged him" for seizing the goods. Button offered him "£60 in money or one of the bags" to "keep council". The mariner refused.<sup>101</sup> Button was also a friend of Henry Mainwaring, the arch-pirate already mentioned, although it is unclear as to whether this relationship preceded Mainwaring's pardon in 1618.<sup>102</sup> Even before Button became involved with the Bristol merchant community it is clear that he was willing to act with, and gain from, pirates.

Button's abuses continued through the time that he was associated with Bristol. It is likely that he received his title in around 1612, and this is when he became the intermediary between the Admiral-less Bristol and the naval authorities.<sup>103</sup> His title, Admiral of the Narrow Seas, was more an accolade than a job that brought any official obligations. It was probably acquired due to Button marrying the niece of The Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Robert Mansel.<sup>104</sup> Button was clearly highly regarded by his new uncle; he accompanied him on an expedition against the Turks in 1621 where he served with Richard Hawkins and was also involved in a failed voyage to discover the North West Passage.<sup>105</sup> However, this was not to end his naval abuses. Despite an extensive biography of Button, written by G.E. Clark, the relationship he built with the Merchant Venturers of Bristol, and his subsequent charging with piracy, were never mentioned. It seems Clark was not aware of a letter presented to Button a few months before his death, in 1634 (see appendix II/I). This letter charged the Admiral with, among other things, new counts of piracy. It is the uncovering of this letter, nestled deep in the

---

<sup>99</sup> From the Deposition of John Carpenter, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1609 McGowan, A. P., *The Jacobean Commissions of Enquiry, 1608 and 1618* (Navy Records, 1971), p. 250

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, p.250

<sup>101</sup> From the deposition of Richard Green, of Rochester, 17<sup>th</sup> May 1609 (It is unclear when this incident took place, but since it makes reference to the "Queen's" ship, and in reference to the chronology of other depositions in the Commission, it is likely to have occurred in 1603) McGowan, A. P., *The Jacobean Commissions of Enquiry, 1608 and 1618* (Navy Records, 1971), p.248

<sup>102</sup> C.S.P Domestic 19 September 1628 and C.S.P Domestic 17 March 1628 (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>)

<sup>103</sup> In 1628 he speaks of having held the office for over 15 years. G. T. Clark, *Some Account of Sir Robert Mansel and Admiral Sir Thomas Button* (1883), p. 61

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, p. 54 and C.S.P Domestic 26 July 1612 (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>)

<sup>105</sup> C.S.P Domestic 26 July 1612 (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>)

*Calendar of State Papers* that has provided the cornerstone and inspiration to this dissertation. Its findings have finally made it clear that Bristol acutely suffered from the corruption seen throughout the Admiral officials elsewhere.<sup>106</sup>

Most importantly as far as this dissertation is concerned, Button was charged with taking a Dunkirker ship laden with salt. Although this could have been performed legally, since War with Spain had resulted in Charles I reissuing marques to Privateers, it is unlikely that it was. Button did obtain three marques for his Bristol based ships, the “*St Anne*”, “*George*” and “*Bonaventure*”. However, he took the Dunkirker with another ship, the “*Convertive*” which suggests opportunism rather than legality.<sup>107</sup> What is more important is that he embezzled the salt, shipping it to his home in South Wales, still a common exploit for those trying to evade the Bristol Customs officials.<sup>108</sup> The crown was aware, and concerned with Button’s embezzlement, as evident from a series of complaints in the *Calendar of State Papers*, however Button seems to have mitigated these complaints by arguing that he was in arrears for victualling a ship in Ireland.<sup>109</sup> Another charge in the same letter asserts that he was charging for victuals for more men than he employed and another source demonstrates that he had been in receipt of a double pension for some years owing to an accountancy error and therefore had no claim to the salt. These both suggest that Button had succeeded, for some time, in further deceiving the Crown.<sup>110</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup> Button died before his charges could be brought to court, but it seems unlikely that he would have been expunged. His wife, Elizabeth, spent the subsequent years attempting to claim over £5,000 from the Crown which was in arrears to her late husband. (C.S.P Domestic 8 May 1635 (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>)) It is unlikely that she ever received this payment since her will, proved in April 1637, suggests she died a poor woman (Appendix II/II). What is more, the Crown was aware of each charge brought against Button in 1634 at the time of its occurrence. Button had only managed to evade indictment due to his connection and persistent lies (Discussed shortly).

<sup>107</sup> Clark, G. E., Some accounts of Sir Robert Mansel and Admiral Sir Thomas Button (Dowlais 1883) p.70.

<sup>108</sup> This was a well documented ploy of smugglers in the latter Elizabethan era Jones, E.T., Inside the illicit economy: Reconstructing the smugglers’ trade of 16<sup>th</sup> Century Bristol (Unpublished-Bristol 2007) p. . While such exploits were reduced due to the reshuffling of the Customs in Wales, the fact that the Merchant’s of Bristol complained that their Wine trade was “impoverished” due to the favourable customers in Wales (1619). In A Collection of some reasons that may be alleadged to show that 1000 contribution for Bristol is as good proporcion as much as 4000 for London in McGrath, Records p.182

<sup>109</sup> 6 December 1630, C.S.P. Domestic, Charles I 1629-31 (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>)

<sup>110</sup> EG Also there is some controversy over Button victualling ships with fewer men than he was supposed to, thus saving money for his own pocket, before. In the 1608 commission it was stated that he had employed only 60 men aboard his ship, the *Acquittance*, but charged the crown victualling money for 90 men. From the



That Sr Thomas Button in the yeare 1630 did take aboarde the Kings  
Shipp wherein he was then commander and Captaine Scras, who was  
arrested, & pursued for pyracie & Murder & refused upon notice from the  
Chiefe Justice of Munster to render him to Justice.

Beyond this, he was charged with allowing his nephew, Sir William Thomas, who had previously tortured the gunner of the Dunkirker, to take his command while he was absent (against orders from the Admiralty).<sup>111</sup> Thomas also took a prize valued at £6,000, probably reclaimed from pirates. Although the wording of the letter is somewhat unclear it seems the prize was eventually sold to the Deputy Vice-Admiral of Munster as a way of avoiding having to give a significant portion of the cargo to the Crown.<sup>112</sup> More importantly, it seems “some of Nutts companie” were used as intermediaries in the deal. Nutt was one of the most infamous pirates to frequent Southern Ireland. Interestingly, he was also a Bristollian. The identification of a business relationship between Nutt and Thomas (and therefore Button), further suggests that Button had business operations with pirates. Indeed, another charge shows how Button had aided the pirate Scras, who was “charged and persued for pyracie and murder”. Button, despite Royal orders to apprehend the pirate, had boarded Scras’ ship. This again suggests Button was colluding with pirates. However, it must be reiterated that the exact nature of Button’s relationships with Nutt, Ford and Scras is unclear. This will unfortunately remain so until personal records can be uncovered. Yet the consistent relationships Button held with pirates suggests that he was in illicit collusions of one sort or another.

That the said Captaine Thomas (beinge by him thus employed  
contrarie to their loyall direction) did take away by force and shot  
a Portugall Shippe w<sup>th</sup> (beinge worth 6000) was rendered by  
some of Nutts Companie for his Ma<sup>tyes</sup> use to Sr Thomas Hartes  
Deputie vice Adm<sup>l</sup> of Munster) who had her in quiet possession by  
w<sup>th</sup> means since beinge carryed to Sea by Captaine Thomas) was  
cast away and made not worth about 250. at most.

---

Deposition of Edward Willis, 19<sup>th</sup> September 1608 in McGowan, A. P., *The Jacobean Commissions of Enquiry, 1608 and 1618* (Navy Records, 1971), p.227

<sup>111</sup> C.S.P. Domestic 9 April 1630 (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>). A letter, written from Bristol by Thomas, demonstrates to Button mentions that Button is his Uncle.

<sup>112</sup> At the time, all prize was supposed to be deposited in England so as the crown could take its fair share. This was much despised by the officials there. From Appleby, J.C. and O'Dowd, M., “The Irish Admiralty: Its Organisation and Development, c. 1570-1640” in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 95 (May, 1985), p. 316

### **Button and Bristol men**

As has been demonstrated, the pattern for piratical corruption was for Admiralty officials to be hand in hand with the local elite. In Milford, the landowner Devereux and the Commissioner for the suppression of piracy, Wogan, had both been operating with the pirate Harberd. In Ireland it was much the same. A letter noting those who bought goods of the Pirate Campané included the prominent landowner Lawrence Parsons and the Deputy Vice Admiral for Munster, Sir William Hull (See Appendix II/III). In Bristol, it seems much the same pattern was in operation. Sir Thomas Button had led at least two operations against pirates for the Merchant Venturers, both of which were resounding failures.<sup>113</sup> However, following the naval commission of 1618, Button was on the verge of being charged for abuses committed in Bristol (The nature of these “abuses” are unfortunately not documented). The only reason he evaded punishment was due to a letter, written by the Merchant Venturers which concluded;

“after conference and full deliberation  
of the said societie, and others frequenting this citty and porte in the  
trade and recourse of merchandise, we have inquirde of the promised and  
cane noe way find the saide Sir Thomas Button culpable thereof.”<sup>114</sup>

The Merchants had exculpated an Admiral who had proved so inept and clearly demonstrated a willingness to collude with pirates. It is clear that Button was providing a service of some use to the Bristol men. Button was certainly in the pocket of the Merchants. In the years 1614 and 1615 the accounts of the merchant Venturers list two entries for “the presents and enterteynment bestowed vpon Sir Thomas Button”, totalling £25 4s and 4d.<sup>115</sup> Again, since the exact nature of the charges remains unrecorded the exact nature of the relationship between Button and the Society is not known. It is not possible to confirm that the Society and Button were jointly involved in piracy. However, as

---

<sup>113</sup> In 1613 and 1614 from the accounts of the Merchant Venturers in Bristol Book of Trade 1598-1693 cited in McGrath, Patrick, *Records relating to the Society of the Merchant Venturers in the City of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century* (Bristol 1952), p.178

<sup>114</sup> A letter “To the right honourable the lord and others of his majasties most honourable privie counsel and to the right worshipful commissions for his majasties royall navie”, from *The Bristol Book of Trade 1598-1693* (See Appendix II for full transcription)

<sup>115</sup> The accounts of the Merchant Venturers in Bristol Book of Trade 1598-1693 cited in McGrath, Patrick, *Records relating to the Society of the Merchant Venturers in the City of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century* (Bristol 1952), p.179

the next section will demonstrate, it is unlikely that Bristol men and Button were financing piracy. Rather, it is likely that the relationship with Button was related to the trading of re-captured prize, which was required to be deposited in Bristol.

### **Financing Piracy**

It has been suggested that Bristol men continued to finance pirate operations, in the same way as they had financed privateering operations. Certainly Bristol men did collude with pirates, but it is unlikely they were operating joint stock ventures. Button's relationship with Nutt (mentioned previously) and Robert Aldworth's relationship with the pirate Easton (examined in the next chapter) are particularly suspicious, but it would be wrong to conclude without further evidence that they were financing piratical operations. There certainly would have been a possibility to finance operations. Some of the most infamous pirates of the era came from Bristol, such as Captains Coward, Nutt and Easton. Little is known of the pirates, and nothing can be concluded with regards to their operations and continued relationship with Bristol. Yet, the pirates all held particularly close relationships with each other. For instance, Coward, having been captured and released by the Admiralty, was made captain of one Easton's ships.<sup>116</sup> A similar fate awaited the pirate Ford, who became Easton's "Lieutenant" on the Irish Coast.<sup>117</sup> While the Bristol pirates certainly worked together, and some evidence suggest Bristol men working with Bristol pirates, the nature of such relationships remains a mystery. One reason why the merchants did might not victual pirates in return for booty is due to the risks involved. Once pirates were at sea, having been victualled by a merchant, they were unlikely to return any pirated goods to their financier. On top of this, it seems pirates were loathe to work for others. The pirate Jennings, on being commanded to go to sea by the Earl of Thomond, refused to rob for others and threw himself at the Kings mercy.<sup>118</sup> While evidence of dubious commercial relationships between Button, the Merchant Venturers and the pirates exist, the nature cannot be confirmed.

While not an example of financing piracy, there is one more case of a Bristol Merchant attempting to collude with pirates. In a bizarre account, the Bristol merchant Christopher Webb was indicted for insuring his ship for a false amount, whereupon he planned to "saile into Barbary amongst the piratts, and either sinck his ship, or combine with the piratts to be taken." His ploy failed and as a result he turned to outright piracy in the Barbary Coast.<sup>119</sup> This is perhaps an isolated example of intrepid, yet

---

<sup>116</sup> Senior, *Investigation*, p.386

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*, p.394

<sup>118</sup> H.C.A. 1/5/68.80.99.203 cited in Senior, *Investigation*, p.407

<sup>119</sup> H.C.A 1/6/72 cited in Senior, *Investigation*, p.440

illicit, opportunism by a Bristol man. However, it further demonstrates that the merchant class were willing to operate with pirates.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Bristol suffered from the widespread Admiralty corruption seen throughout the country. Button was certainly involved in business operations with pirates. However, the exact nature of such operations is unclear. It does, however, seem more likely that Button was involved in the trading of pirated goods, rather than financing operations in the old privateering style. This will be examined in more detail in the next chapter. What is more, it seems likely that this corruption was abetted by the merchants and ruling classes of Bristol. Until a definitive private source can be found to further demonstrate that the Bristol men were acting with Button this cannot be wholeheartedly asserted. It must be noted, however, that such a source is unlikely to exist. The problem with proving any illicit business is that evidence, even at the time, is likely to have been concealed and destroyed. Whereas historians concerned with the previous century benefit from personal sources such as *The Ledger of John Smyth*<sup>120</sup>, Seventeenth Century merchants certainly demonstrated more caution towards the recording of any illicit activities than their predecessors. Indeed they would have been wise to do so. In 1637, during a Royal Commission into the customs dues paid by the Society, an agitated commissioner tried to seize “a certain chest standing in Merchant Hall wherein (amongst other things as it is deposed) there are kept severall bookes and accompts specifying diuers matters examinable”.<sup>121</sup> Recording illicit activities was clearly unwise. With this in mind, it is unlikely that conclusive evidence, of a similar nature to *Smyth's Ledger*, will ever be found regarding Button, the Merchant Venturers and pirates. From here, the next step in evaluating the nature of piracy in Bristol would be to contribute to the still largely neglected set of *Admiralty records*, contained in the National Archives. These, as of yet, have not been examined to any great length, save some analysis by the historian Clive Senior. This section has gone some way to proving the piratical activities of the Admiral of the Narrow Seas. What is more, it has suggested that Bristol men were involved in business relations with their piratical Admiral and possibly even other Bristol based pirates. Yet until a definitive source is uncovered this cannot be affirmed.

---

<sup>120</sup> Where references to the payment of Customs officials and the export of prohibited wares are common. Vanes, J., (ed.), *The Ledger of John Smyth 1538-1550* (London, 1975)

<sup>121</sup> 18 January 1628 in McGrath, Patrick, *Records relating to the Society of the Merchant Venturers in the City of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century* (Bristol 1952), p. 241

## INDIRECT ENGAGEMENT

By the Seventeenth Century, Ireland had become the “Nursery and Storehouse of Pirates”, with the local inhabitants victualling ships and buying prize.<sup>122</sup> Although there is evidence of Bristol men trading in the other pirate stronghold-The Barbary Coast, this section will evaluate whether pirated goods were traded from Ireland to Bristol. Individuals were keen to obtain pirated goods at cheap prices and there is little to suggest that they would have steered clear of such goods on moral grounds.<sup>123</sup> Throughout the early 1600’s Bristol’s trade with Ireland boomed, increasing from £1,112.70 in 1600/1 to £3,911.33 in 1608/9.<sup>124</sup> Bristol men were known to have laundered illicit goods through Ireland in the past, most notably throughout the Elizabethan war with Spain. The 1594/5 *Port Books* demonstrate that as much of 18% of the Bristol-Irish trade consisted of Spanish “seck” wine, laundered through Ireland to evade the embargo.<sup>125</sup> With this in mind, it is important to consider whether some of this increase in trade, apparent from the *Bristol Port Books*, can be attributed to the trade in pirated plunder.

This section will analyse whether Bristol benefitted from trading in pirated goods. Despite Senior conceding that “the main beneficiaries of piracy were the merchants and other opportunists who trafficked in pirate goods”, there is little consideration by historians as to the effects of this trade.<sup>126</sup> This section will begin by showing how goods eventually found their way to England. It will subsequently develop two ways of evaluating whether Bristol benefitted from this trade. Firstly it will look at direct evidence, where members of Bristol’s mercantile and municipal community were found to be trading with pirates. This will be done through a selection of previously un-transcribed sources and notes on the *Records of the High Court of Admiralty* (the authority that tried and punished pirates). Secondly, the *Port Books* of the era will be used to evaluate any commodity anomalies. This again will be undertaken for the first time since two previously un-transcribed *Books* will be used.

---

<sup>122</sup> Mainwaring, H. & Perrin, W.G. (Ed.), *The Life and Works of Sir Henry Mainwaring* (Navy Record Society, 1922)

<sup>123</sup> See the “Public Sentiment” section in “Background”

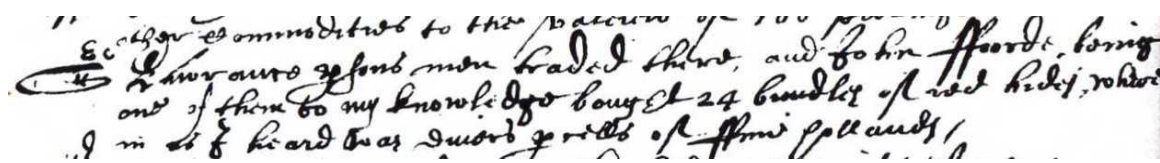
<sup>124</sup> PRO E190-1136-8 and Stone, G.R., “Bristol’s Trade before the Civil War” (PhD Thesis, University of Bristol), p.36

<sup>125</sup> PRO E190-1131-10

<sup>126</sup> Senior, C.M. “An investigation into the activities and importance of English Pirates 1603-40” (PhD Thesis Bristol, 1972), p.265

## The Nature of the Trade

Before an analysis of whether goods made their way to Bristol, it is important to evaluate the trade mechanisms present in Ireland. A vast amount of new information regarding the nature of the trade has come from a personally transcribed letter, listing those who bought goods of a pirate, named Claes Campane, who brought a prize into Leamcon in 1625 (See Appendix II/III).<sup>127</sup> The letter demonstrates how sophisticated the trade in pirated goods was. Goods were bought off pirates by intermediaries, who further disseminated goods across the country. From Claes' ships, at least eighteen hundred weight of pepper was taken to the small village of Bandon Bridge.<sup>128</sup> This was far more pepper than could ever have been sold in the local community, and is therefore evidence of local intermediaries taking goods to be sold elsewhere. Other merchants came from the ports of Kinsale, Baltimore, Waterford and Cork. This means goods were brought to ports either to be sold to merchants or to be shipped directly by those that bought the goods initially. What is more, there is an example of an English merchant buying goods to be transported to England. Mr Richardson of Plymouth, had a significant amount of loot shipped to the port of Baltimore, from where they would have been sent home. On the 13 November 1612 the Lords of Council wrote to Chichester and affirmed that the West coast of Ireland was "inhabited..... by persons from our own nation who have taken places there with the express purpose of commencing with those pirates."<sup>129</sup> Mr Richardson is an example of one such "person".



The image shows a snippet of handwritten text in cursive script. The text is somewhat faded and difficult to read, but it appears to be a list or record of transactions. It mentions 'John ffordc' and '24 bundles of red hick'. The handwriting is dense and characteristic of the early 17th century.

The list also gives insight into how local officials promoted such a trade. Sir Lawrence Parsons and Sir William Hull are both listed as having traded with the pirate. Parsons was the Attorney General of Munster and later Judge of the Admiralty Court.<sup>130</sup> Hull was the Deputy Vice-Admiral of Munster,

<sup>127</sup> The Prize was called the George of Colchester, and was taken on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April, off Lands End. Due to the amount of goods, it is likely that the pirate combined several goods from several prizes for shipping purposes. From Appleby, J. C. (Ed.) *A Calendar of Material relating to Ireland from the High Court of Admiralty Examinations 1536-41* (Dublin, 1992). This letter is the first such list commissioned by the Admiralty. While the government was concerned with regaining prize above all else, the names of those that bought the goods were not generally kept officially, presumably since it was assumed that the loss of their goods constituted punishment enough. Therefore, there was little need to keep records of their names, and therefore little evidence for historians to work with.

<sup>128</sup> Thomas Neale bought 700, Mr Luxtone 300, Mr Newcorrin 800 as well as unknown amounts by Henry Turner and Alexander Dwelling and unknown destinations of several more buyers.

<sup>129</sup> Cited in C. S. P. Ireland 1611-15 p. 301

<sup>130</sup> Ball, F. E., *The Judges in Ireland, 1221-1921* (London, 1926), p.830

based in Leamcon.<sup>131</sup> Hull was in fact to face charges of piracy throughout his career and is a classic example of admiralty officials contributing to the problem of piracy.<sup>132</sup> Sir Thomas Button and William St. John were both questioned for allowing pirates to trade their goods, and it is clear that Admiralty officials' involvement in the trade was an important feature of how goods were disseminated.<sup>133</sup> Sir Richard Bingley had even employed three fishermen at 20s per month, to bring piratical goods to his naval ship the *Dreadnaught*.<sup>134</sup> Pirates were able to rely on officials to aid the selling of their goods. Indeed officials themselves readily traded the ill-gotten goods. The wealth that pirates helped officials amass was so vast that they were able to rely on official support. For instance, when a Bristolian pirate Coward was captured, he had enough influence to evade deportation to the Courts of London, where he would have faced death by hanging. He was instead employed by the Earl of Thomond to aid him with his quests against pirates.<sup>135</sup>

### **Direct Evidence**

There is significant evidence of trade in booty from Ireland to Bristol throughout the late Sixteenth Century, demonstrated by the records of the *Admiralty Court*. William Davys, a Gloucestershire merchant, was accused of such dealings on several occasions. In April 1587 a Bristol Grocer confessed that he had bought raisins off Davys, in the knowledge that they had originated from a prize in Ireland.<sup>136</sup> Again, in April 1588 another man confessed that he knew Davys to have traded with a Man-of-War before bringing his goods to Bristol.<sup>137</sup> While these examples show that recipients were sometimes aware of the origins of goods bought, this was not always the case. For instance, in September 1588 one Thomas Fulshawe of Oxford had wool, skins and other goods bought in Bristol reclaimed, because they had originally been part of a prize. Fulshawe claimed that he had no

---

<sup>131</sup> Appleby, J.C. and O'Dowd, M., "The Irish Admiralty: Its Organisation and Development, c. 1570-1640" in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 95 (May, 1985), pp. 299-326

<sup>132</sup> C.S.P. (Ire) 1625-32, p. 227 and 17 Aug. 1626 (P.R.O.,S.P. 63/243/421) In 1623 Hull and Sir Lawrence Parsons were accused of victualling Captain Yoape from Appleby, J.C. and O'Dowd, M., "The Irish Admiralty: Its Organisation and Development, c. 1570-1640" in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 95 (May, 1985), pp. 299-326

<sup>133</sup> See Appendix II/I and C.S.P Domestic 12 March 1631(<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>).

<sup>134</sup> The Deposition of Rockwell, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1614, from Appleby, J. C. (Ed.) *A Calendar of Material relating to Ireland from the High Court of Admiralty Examinations 1536-41* (Dublin, 1992), p.41

<sup>135</sup> CSP 1608-10, p. 100

<sup>136</sup> H.C.A 13/26 28 April 1588. The Deposition of William Pinner of Chepstow. From Appleby, J. C. (Ed.) *A Calendar of Material relating to Ireland from the High Court of Admiralty Examinations 1536-41* (Dublin, 1992), p.54

<sup>137</sup> H.C.A 13/26 11 May 1587. The Deposition of Ralph Hurte of Bristol. From Appleby, J. C. (Ed.) *A Calendar of Material relating to Ireland from the High Court of Admiralty Examinations 1536-41* (Dublin, 1992), p.58

knowledge of the origins of his goods.<sup>138</sup> Goods reclaimed by the authorities also found their way to Bristol.<sup>139</sup> Thomas Packer, later alderman of Bristol, was able to buy a cargo of re-claimed pirated hides off the Lord President of Munster.<sup>140</sup> The *Lion* of Roscoff was taken by English pirates and brought to Ireland. However, it was intercepted by one of the Queen's ships. Subsequently a London merchant, Mr Richard Staper, brought a portion of its cargo of hides, and sold them in Bristol.<sup>141</sup> These cases represent only a fraction of those mentioned in the records of the High Court of the Admiralty. However, the next regime's disregard for the eventual destinations of pirated goods means that for the subsequent century, the *Admiralty records* rarely record what happened to pirated goods.

Bristol men were certainly still benefitting from the trade in the Seventeenth Century. In April 1612, the pirate Baughe took a prize and disposed of it in Kinsale<sup>142</sup>. Among the booty were forty nine chests of sugar, and the accounts of the *Admiralty Court* track the subsequent movement of this sugar. Firstly, the pirates sent a chest to the *Lion's Whelp* and another two to the *Speedwell*, both of which were the King's ships based in Bristol. Another twenty two chests were brought to Bristol by a London merchant, Paul de Culper. In support of the assertion that Ireland had developed a sophisticated trading mechanism involving intermediary merchants and significant governmental figures, Captain Hull and Skipwith (both Deputy Vice-Admirals of Munster) as well as the President of Munster, Lord Danvers, and his Vice President, Richard Morrison, were all examined for their involvement in the incident with Baughe. It appears that the Captain of the King's Ship, William St. John, was questioned for allowing the trading of Baughe's booty. Another piece of direct evidence of

---

<sup>138</sup> H.C.A 13/27 17 January 1589. The Deposition of Thomas Fulshawe of Oxford. From Appleby, J. C. (Ed.) *A Calendar of Material relating to Ireland from the High Court of Admiralty Examinations 1536-41* (Dublin, 1992), p.58

<sup>139</sup> The local Vice-Admiral had a claim to a portion of all reclaimed goods. Also, goods were sometimes sold to pay back alien merchants in cases where goods could not be preserved. However this was a particularly complicated matter owing to the ambiguous legislation and the existence of traditional rights which allowed some local landowners to keep a portion of regained prize. The matter was made even more complicated by the Farming of the Irish Customs (1603-13), from Treadwell, V., "The Establishment of the Farm of the Irish Customs 1603-13" *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 93, No. 368 (Jul., 1978), pp. 580-602

<sup>140</sup> Bristol list p. 222 and Calendar of Material relating to Ireland from the high court of Admiralty examinations p. 42

<sup>141</sup> H.C.A 13/23 11 January 1578. The Deposition of Richard Staper, Citizen and Merchant of London From Appleby, J. C. (Ed.) *A Calendar of Material relating to Ireland from the High Court of Admiralty Examinations 1536-41* (Dublin, 1992), p.41

<sup>142</sup> 1 March 1613. The Deposition of Henry Skipworth From Appleby, J. C. (Ed.) *A Calendar of Material relating to Ireland from the High Court of Admiralty Examinations 1536-41* (Dublin, 1992), p.129



the continuation of the trade comes from a ship taken in January 1614. The *Hope* was captured by Peter Easton's *Morning Starr* and brought to Ireland. John Plunton, a mariner aboard the *Hope*, confessed under examination that he had heard that Robert Aldworth, the prominent Merchant Venturer and Mayor of Bristol, had arranged to buy the goods, around 45 tuns of Muscatels, from the pirate.<sup>143</sup> Finally, Button was also charged with allowing a French pirate to trade his goods in Ireland. In fact, Button himself bought some of the goods and when the legal owners of the prize arrived to reclaim their goods, it was found that Button had managed to sell the goods, and they were consequently too "dispersed" to be reclaimed.<sup>144</sup> These cases demonstrate that, despite the apparent end to recording the details of those that bought pirated goods, the trade route between Ireland and Bristol was once again being used to transport pirated goods. There can be little doubt that pirated goods were eventually brought to Bristol, either illicitly by merchants or legally by government officials.

### **The Bristol Port Books**

As mentioned, the absence of official records concerning piratical trade means that a creative approach must be taken. One technique is to analyse the Bristol imports to see if there were any oddities, for instance non indigenous goods, such as sugar or indigo. Since Ireland did not have a sophisticated re-export market, the way that such goods came to Ireland is questionable. Only two *Books* have already been transcribed from the early Seventeenth Century. The first is the 1624/5 by David Sacks, however since Sacks does not distinguish between commodities, it is of little use.<sup>145</sup> Secondly, Richard Stone has transcribed the 1638/9 accounts.<sup>146</sup> While useful, these are unfortunately just outside the period regarded as Ireland's most "piratical", identified as 1608-1630 by Senior.<sup>147</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to use two previously un-transcribed books. These are the *Port Books* for the years 1608-9 and 1621-22, the only other two *books* to survive from the early Seventeenth Century in any kind of shape. They both suggest a trade in "exotic" goods.

The 1608/9 book is littered with examples of exotic goods being re-exported from Ireland. For instance, on "The last day of January 1608" a merchant called Robert Bonham, paid poundage of "£II IIIs IIIId" on "II tons and a di of Punice oyle" and "One cheest of Indico". These goods had been

---

<sup>143</sup> The Deposition of John Plunton of Ratcliffe, 26 July 1614, from Appleby, J. C. (Ed.) *A Calendar of Material relating to Ireland from the High Court of Admiralty Examinations 1536-41* (Dublin, 1992), p.141

<sup>144</sup> Appendix II/I

<sup>145</sup> Sacks, D.H. *The Widening Gate: Bristol and the Atlantic Economy 1450-1700* (California 1991), p.41

<sup>146</sup> Stone, R., "The pre-Civil War development of Bristol's Overseas trade" (Unpublished Bristol. 2009)

<sup>147</sup> Senior, *Nation*

shipped on the *Exchange*, from Baltimore. Given that “poundage” was usually 1/20<sup>th</sup> of the total value, this represents a significant amount of indigo imports.<sup>148</sup> Again, in December 1607 a London Merchant shipped 23 shillings worth of “Spanishe Woll” from Wexford.<sup>149</sup> Another entry shows “the *Guift of God*” transported “Sevill oil” from Dublin and the Yougall merchant Robert Aurther, shipped Portuguese salt to Bristol.<sup>150</sup> Although less frequent, the 1621/2 accounts show a trade in “exotic” goods. For instance, Robert Dolston of Bristol shipped four hundred weight (a little over a chest) of Madeira Sugar on board the Gabriell of Newnam from Youghall.<sup>151</sup>

Before these can be asserted to have been the result of piratical trade, there are a few limitations to this methodology worth considering. Although Ireland did not have a substantial intermediary trade business, there was the possibility that goods were traded between Merchants who happened to find themselves in Irish ports. This means that exotic goods entered in the *Port Books* as originating in Ireland may never have even reached land. Also ships could have been making a several stop voyage. The *Port Books* only label the port of origin rather than all ports visited. It is therefore possible that ships came from, say, Portugal to Ireland and then onto Bristol. However, most of the ships laden with such goods were small Irish owned ships, suggesting this to be improbable. Finally, there is the possibility that ships wrecked on the Irish coast were forced to sell goods in Ireland that eventually made their way to Bristol. However if this was the case one would expect a short period of several ships bringing the same goods across. This was not the case. Instead, the re-exported goods are entered into the books sporadically and with little identifiable pattern. They usually supplement cargos of traditional goods, such as Freeze or Tullow.

The best evidence that these examples of re-exported goods came to Ireland illicitly comes from a comparison with the 1638/9 *Port Book*. These make no mention of any “exotic” goods passing from Ireland to Bristol, save one entry of rice.<sup>152</sup> Since piracy was assumed to have long since ceased to be

---

<sup>148</sup> PRO E190-1133-8, The 31<sup>st</sup> January 1608, p.28. It is unclear what “punice oil” is, however an entry in the 1600/1 accounts suggests it to be pomegranate oil, imported from France and very valuable (ie. certainly not a native commodity of Ireland). This, and information regarding “poundage” from Flavin, S. & Jones, E.T., ‘Glossary of commodities, weights and measures found in the sixteenth-century Bristol customs accounts’ (University of Bristol, ROSE, 2009)

<sup>149</sup> PRO E190-1133-8, The 29<sup>th</sup> of December 1607 p.27

<sup>150</sup> PRO E190-1133-8, The 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1608 p.27

<sup>151</sup> PRO E190-1133-11

<sup>152</sup> PRO E190-1136-6 “List of commodities imported from Ireland 1638/9” from Stone, G.R., “Bristol’s Trade before the Civil War” (PhD Thesis, University of Bristol), p.79-83

an issue by this time, it suggests that the cases of “exotic goods” coming from Ireland were a result of piracy. In fact, these accounts show that “exotic” goods had begun to flow the other way, from Bristol to Ireland. This was to be expected since Ireland was not a major trading post, and therefore goods were on the whole brought to Bristol before being shipped to more remote outposts such as Wales, the North West Coast and Ireland. Unfortunately, owing to the majority of exports to Ireland being listed as “wares” there is no way of telling whether this trade in “exotic goods”, from Bristol to Ireland was occurring in 1608/9. The argument that “exotic” re-exports were being shipped from Ireland to Bristol as the result of piracy would be strengthened if it could be proved that, in the years of heightened piracy, exotic exports from Bristol to Ireland fell. As it stands, it cannot be affirmed that such goods were piratical, only suggested.

The *Port Books* can also show evidence of pirated goods through general quantifiable trends. This is useful since “non-exotic” goods would have constituted the vast majority of pirated goods, particularly since any prize taken from ships returning from Ireland or England would only be carrying traditional and indistinguishable commodities. What is more, fishing ships were some of the most common prey of pirates, presumably because they would not have had the ability to defend themselves. Peter Easton who regularly bought his prize to Ireland focused his exploits on fishermen, taking as much as £4,600 of fish in 1612 alone.<sup>153</sup> Also, in the summer of 1610 alone, more than 100 fishing ships were taken and sent home empty handed.<sup>154</sup> In 1612, The Newfoundland Company claimed they had lost £40,000 to pirates and later that the English fisheries were entirely at the mercy of Dutch pirates, who accrued £100,000 profit from them.<sup>155</sup> While these were probably exaggerated to help the merchants gain protection from the Crown, it is evident that fish was one of the most frequent targets of pirates. Fish would not show up in the methodology that tries to identify “exotic” re-exports.

Fish is particularly interesting since imports from Ireland increased dramatically in the first few decades of the Century. The 1621/2 accounts show that in the first two months of the year, over 8,000 barrels of herring were listed as being imported, as well as 120 meise of Red herring and forty two barrels of pilchards.<sup>156</sup> This bucks a trend which had seen fish imports fall over the Sixteenth Century,

---

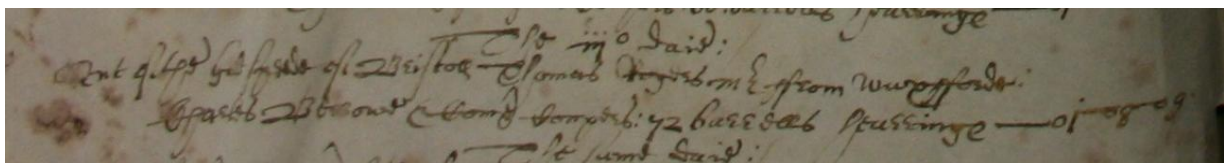
<sup>153</sup> Gosse, P., *The History of Piracy* (New York, 1932), p.129

<sup>154</sup> C.S.P. Ireland 1611-14, p. 386

<sup>155</sup> Oppenheim, M “The Royal Navy under James I” in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 7, No. 27 (Jul., 1892) , p.483

<sup>156</sup> PRO E190-1133-8.

from constituting 78% of Irish imports in 1504 to 45% in 1563/4.<sup>157</sup> From here the Custom's accounts show fish to have fallen to 2.52% of Irish imports in 1594/5 and only 1% in 1638/9. There is some ambiguity as to whether all fish imports were recorded, but since the imports in 1621/2 were so much more than previous records it ceases to be an issue. In 1563/4, the last year of full recordings, there were only 1,144 barrels of White Herring imported. It can be firmly stated that since fish imports in 1621/2 were so much higher than this, and buck a clear trend, they must have been the result of some extraordinary factors. Since it has been demonstrated that pirates focused particularly on fishermen, and deposited their ill-gotten goods in Ireland, it is possible that this "atypical" trend is evidence of pirated goods being traded from Ireland to Bristol. This is supported by the historian Longfield who asserts that Irish fish re-exports became common after 1600, although he cannot find any reasoning for this.<sup>158</sup>



The two methods employed, analysing "exotic" re-exports and dramatic increases in the quantity of fish imports from Ireland, are not enough to constitute proof of piratical trade. There are too many other possibilities as to why such findings may exist. Until the Books can be supported with more conclusive primary sources, they only suggest rather than prove the existence of a trade. Another shortfall of the *Port Books* is that the 1608/9 *Port Book* makes no mention of wine. This is a great shame since it would have been one of the easiest commodities to highlight as piratical. All in all, despite some suggestions as to the importing of pirated goods, the *Port Books* do not provide overwhelming evidence of such a trade.

Lastly, it is worth noting that it is highly probable that pirated goods were brought into Bristol without being recorded in the *Port Books*. Sir Thomas Button, having taken a prize of Salt, upset the crown because they did not receive their dues. "hee took a greate quantitie of salt, part of which he sold, and

<sup>157</sup> From this date, imports of fish become harder to quantify, since a royal proclamation meant that fish caught by her Majesty's Subjects (which include the Irish) did not need to pay "prisage" and were therefore omitted from the port books. However, despite there being no entries for fish in 1600/1 and 1608/9, fish constituted 2.52% of Irish imports in 1594/5 and only 1% in 1638/9. "Summary of Commodities Imported from Ireland" in Stone, G.R., "Bristol's Trade before the Civil War" (PhD Thesis, University of Bristol), p.36 and E190-1131-10

<sup>158</sup> Longfield, A.K., *Anglo-Irish in the Sixteenth Century* (London 1929), p.57. From here, it would be useful to analyse fish prices in Ireland. It can be proven that this atypical export trend was related to an oversupply in fish (Demonstrated by a fall in the price of fish) then this argument would hold greater weight.

converted to his own purse, the rest he reserved as salt victuals for the ship in Ireland.” This embezzlement would not have been recorded in the *Port Books*. There is no way of telling how many other prizes were brought to Bristol in this manner. However, embezzlement was certainly still a widespread problem. In 1635 an inquiry was launched into Bristol men concealing prize taken legally nearly a decade earlier.<sup>159</sup> Eventually two Aldermen, Francis Creswicke and Giles Elbridge were charged.<sup>160</sup> Bristol had long demonstrated its ability to evade local customs officials, and this certainly did not diminish throughout the early Seventeenth Century.<sup>161</sup> Given the illegality of trading piratical goods, there was an increased incentive to hide goods from the Bristol Customer.

Also, when goods were reclaimed by the Admiralty in Ireland, they were legally required to be deposited in England.<sup>162</sup> Bristol was the easiest and cheapest place to do so. When Sir Thomas Button took a Dunkirker in 1630, the goods that were handed to the Admiralty (50 Tuns of Salt and 15 Hogsheads of AquaVitae) were sold in Bristol.<sup>163</sup> In 1612 the pirate Baughe claimed the naval captain Oliver St. John had illegally seized and embezzled his booty, selling it in Bristol.<sup>164</sup> Despite the requirement, prize was sometime sold in Ireland since officials could gain personally through selling their goods in Ireland and therefore evading payments to the crown. This is demonstrated by the case of Button’s nephew Thomas, who sold goods to the Deputy Vice Admiral of Munster to avoid having to hand the majority to the Crown.<sup>165</sup> It is unclear whether goods legally brought to Bristol in this manner would have appeared in the *Port Books*, since as they already belonged to the Crown they did not need to pay taxes. It is likely that Bristol benefitted from shipment of re-claimed prize, although it was probably the local populous, rather than the Merchants, who benefitted from an increase in imports.

---

<sup>159</sup> Evident from the **Protest against enquiry into the concealed prizes, 1635** in McGrath, Patrick, Records relating to the Society of the Merchant Venturers in the City of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century (Bristol 1952)p. 238. During the 1625-30 War there were Marques issued to Bristol men.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, p.238

<sup>161</sup> A bitter feud between the Merchants and the Customer and Searcher of Bristol continued in the early Seventeenth Century. One of the Searchers, Hugh Lewis, seized hides from a merchant, Christopher Cary, that had been illicitly smuggled into Bristol. From the [Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles I.](http://www.british-history.ac.uk) 1636-7 (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>) p. 217-242

<sup>162</sup>

<sup>163</sup> C.S.P Domestic 12 March 1631(<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>). The only reason why records survive of this example is because of a controversy over Button embezzling some of the cargo. A commission, headed by Sir Henry Mainwaring, was set up to investigate what happened to the prize and notes how the Admiralty’s allotment was disposed of in Bristol.

<sup>164</sup> Senior, Investigation P.376

<sup>165</sup> See Appendix II/I

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has, despite a dearth in source material, proved that the trade route in pirated goods from Ireland to Bristol still existed in the early Seventeenth Century. It has used predominantly untranscribed sources to demonstrate that some Bristol men did benefit from a trade in pirated goods. However, despite some support from the *Port Books*, it is impossible to evaluate how typical this was. It is a great shame that the Admiralty was not able to continue to record information regarding the end place of pirated goods. Considering this, it is incredible that any source could have been found at all. However, this chapter has been able to piece together the elaborate supply chain apparent in Ireland. Local intermediaries keen to benefit from the trade transported goods to the larger ports, from where they would have (on the whole) been indistinguishable from any other goods. The local officials, consistently in the pockets of many of the pirates, did a similar job, and there are even cases of local officials facing charges of allowing pirates to trade in Ireland.

## CONCLUSION

This dissertation has succeeded in evaluating a consistently neglected corner of history. It has evaluated the extent to which piracy affected Bristol. It has demonstrated that The Admiral of the Narrow Seas consistently engaged in piracy. It has revised the history of a man which had previously only been presented in a typical Nineteenth Century Whiggish light. A biography by the historian G. E. Clark promulgated an image of a “Great British Man” overcoming significant limitations and inadequate resources to reduce the scourge of piracy.<sup>166</sup> This was not the case. Button consistently traded with pirates, embezzled pirated goods and harboured the known pirates Ford, Nutt and Scras, presumably for personal gain. From here, this dissertation has shown that noted Bristol men supported him, through expunging him from legal charges and paying him large sums of money. However, the absence of adequate source material means that the nature of their relationships is unclear. It will remain so until new personal records surface. On top of this, it has identified that a significant trade in pirated goods between the pirate strongholds in Southern Ireland and Bristol existed in the late Sixteenth Century. It seems that this was to continue in the early Seventeenth Century, as suggested by the existence of various unexplainable re-exported goods and some personal records alluding to Bristol men trading with the pirates. However, yet again, there is not enough source material to demonstrate the extent of such a trade. In some respect, it was perhaps unreasonable, given the time and resources available, to have expected to be able to prove and quantify the trade in plunder. If such a conclusion had been proven, it would have undermined many beliefs regarding Anglo-Irish trade and the development of both countries in the Seventeenth Century.

There are a few areas that, if developed, would provide more conclusive evidence. Firstly, the relationships between the Admiral, the merchants and the pirates. Button was undoubtedly in collusion with the Bristol men and Bristol pirates. The nature of such relationships cannot be confirmed through the sources available. If such relationships could be investigated further, this dissertation would hold more weight. The second area worth investigating further is the extent to which Bristol traded in pirated goods, most importantly, the extent to which re-claimed prize was deposited in Bristol.<sup>167</sup> Boats such as the Dunkirker illicitly seized by Button were sold in Bristol.

---

<sup>166</sup> Clark, G. E., *Some accounts of Sir Robert Mansel and Admiral Sir Thomas Button* (Dowlais 1883)

<sup>167</sup> There is some confusion as to whether such lading needed to be recorded in the port books. It is probable that prize was entered into the port books but, since not needing to pay “prisage”, this is not entirely clear. Of the two Books transcribed, there is nothing suggesting that such goods were entered into the books. There is no recorded proclamation suggesting whether or not prize was entered into the port books. Larkin, J. F. and Hughes, P. L., *Stuart Royal Proclamations Volume I* (Oxford, 1973) and Larkin, J. F., *Stuart Royal Proclamations Volume II* (Oxford, 1983)

However, there is no information regarding how many and whether such boats were recorded in the Bristol Customs accounts. The value of the Crown's portion of the Dunkirker is equivalent to 6% of Irish imports for the year 1608/9.<sup>168</sup> This is just one of many ships re-claimed in Ireland, with many more of much greater wealth.<sup>169</sup> If such ships were not included in the Bristol customs, the accounts for the era would only provide a fraction of the story. Similarly the example of fish from the customs accounts could be explored more thoroughly. Fish imports in 1621/22 were abnormally high; however the ambiguity regarding their recording in the *Port Books* means that this finding is undermined.<sup>170</sup> One suggestion is that, since fish caught by "His majesties' subjects" did not need to be entered into the *Port Books*, the 1621/2 Book only shows re-exported fish. This would support the argument that the abnormal fish trade was the result of the re-exporting of piratical plunder from Ireland. However, until the complications regarding the recording of goods can be understood, little can be made of such findings. There is much that can be built on.

While the main benefits of this dissertation are in the face value of its conclusions, it will be of some use to the wider historical community. Firstly, it has transcribed a number of previously unused sources, in particular two *Port Books*, one from 1608/9 and another from 1621/2 (PRO E190-1133-8 and PRO E190-1133-1, respectively). However, the full wealth of knowledge available from these

---

<sup>168</sup> Salt is valued at 20s/tun in the 1558 Books of rates. The accounts of 1595 show that this had not changed by that year. The 1582 rates book lists aquavitaie at 40s per barrel, and therefore 320s per tun From Flavin, S., & Jones, E.T., 'Glossary of commodities, weights and measures found in the sixteenth-century Bristol customs accounts' (University of Bristol, ROSE, 2009). With this in mind, the goods landed by Admiralty officials would have been worth £170. Given that Irish imports in the year 1608/9 were £30,332.33 this represents 6% of Irish imports.

<sup>169</sup> There are numerous examples of re-claimed prize being sent from Ireland to England highlighted in a letter from the judge of the Admiralty Court, Loftus, in a complaint to the Admiralty. However the port of destination is not clear. These include a Biscayner laden with up to £4,000 in seck, the Three Kings of Enkhuizen, of 320 tons, laden with currants and other valuable commodities and the St John Evangelist of Hamburg, of 100 tons, which had been forced into Dublin in April 1630, whose cargo of sugars, Brazil wood and tobacco, was valued at £3,368. In his complaint Loftus claims that despite sending these prizes to England he did not receive his share of the profits. Appleby, J.C. and O'Dowd, M., "The Irish Admiralty: Its Organisation and Development, c. 1570-1640" in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 95 (May, 1985), pp. 299-326, p.320

<sup>170</sup> There is some confusion as to whether such lading needed to be recorded in the port books. It is probable that prize was entered into the port books but, since not needing to pay "prisage", this is not entirely clear. Of the two Books transcribed, there is nothing suggesting that such goods were entered into the books. There is no recorded proclamation suggesting whether or not prize was entered into the port books. Larkin, J. F. and Hughes, P. L., *Stuart Royal Proclamations Volume I* (Oxford, 1973) and Larkin, J. F., *Stuart Royal Proclamations Volume II* (Oxford, 1983)



sources has not been included because it is not entirely relevant to the objectives of this dissertation, but also because they are soon to be presented by another historian. What is more, a significant number of letters have been transcribed for the first time. Due to the nature of transcribing sources, their use is not always apparent until after they have been transcribed. Therefore, there are a collection of un-used, but previously un-transcribed sources, included in Appendix II. It is hoped that these will be of use to other historians pursuing other subjects.

This dissertation is useful to those studying the history of the Navy. While the level of corruption was well documented, the general consensus was that this was related to the incompetence of the Elizabethan Lord Admiral Nottingham. To this end, it was assumed that such corruption that had inspired commissions in 1608 and 1618, was to diminish after Nottingham's death in 1618.<sup>171</sup> This dissertation has shown that this was not the case, and at least the Admiral of the Narrow Seas was still committing the abuses seen in the previous two decades as late as 1630.<sup>172</sup>

On top of this, the findings of this dissertation show that piracy did not diminish, as had been perceived, in the last years of the reign of James I. Although it is likely that Ireland became increasingly frequented by Dutch and Barbary pirates, rather than English pirates, as the century progressed, there is still evidence of some pirates, particularly the Bristol men Nutt and Easton, operating into the 1630's.<sup>173</sup> Button was still involved in piratical operations at this stage in collusion with the pirates Scras and Francois. While Dutch and Turkish pirates flocked to Ireland because of its proximity to England, Spain and the Atlantic, as well as the vast number of fishing vessels that frequented the Irish seas, they still used Ireland because of the ease with which they could sell their goods. This is important to note since it revises a view promulgated by historians such as Clive Senior, that piracy was unemployment led, rather than demand-led. The fact that pirates from all over Europe still frequented Ireland is testimony to the commercial interests shown by the Irish towards the pirates.

---

<sup>171</sup> This year also saw Sir Robert Mansell, Admiral of the Fleet and Button's Uncle in Law lose his job. Mansell was regarded as the epitome of Navel corruption. Oppenheim, M "The Royal Navy under James I" in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 7, No. 27 (Jul., 1892) , p.476

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid* , p.476

<sup>173</sup> See Appendix II/I re: pirates Nutt and Scras, as well as regarding Button's exploits. See Appendix I in Senior, Investigation re: Easton. See Oppenheim, M., "The Royal Navy under Charles I in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 9, No. 33 (Jan., 1894), pp. 92-116 re: Turks and Dutch pirates.

Finally, amongst the half proven objectives, it is possible to forget what has been achieved. There are some secondary conclusions drawn along the way. For instance, the public sentiment towards piracy was evaluated and shown to be ambivalent, for the first time. Also, the elaborate trading mechanisms between the pirates in small coves, such as Leamcom, and the merchants in larger ports such as Waterford and Cork, has been uncovered for the first time and will be of use to historians pursuing this subject in the future.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **A Definition of Piracy**

It is worth noting that the defining of the term “piracy” itself causes some complications. There was at this time a thin line between the illicit and legal and nowhere was this more evident than at sea. The “*Acte for punysshement of pyrites and robbers of the see*” written in 1536 defined piracy as those acts of robbery committed within the jurisdiction of the Lord Admiral, that would have constituted a felony had it been committed on land.<sup>174</sup> However by the Seventeenth Century this term had been broadened to cover all felonies committed at sea regardless of whether it was in English waters or not.<sup>175</sup> In fact, the area of most conflict came between what constituted “at sea” and therefore whether actions should be tried in the High Admiralty court or the common law courts. For instance robbery of ships in the Thames up to London Bridge constituted piracy, however beyond this robbery on the Thames would be held accountable at the common law courts.<sup>176</sup> It is unclear as to the extent of each jurisdiction in the Port of Bristol.

Thankfully the complexity of whether actions against foreign vessels constituted privateering or piracy was removed in 1603 when James issued a proclamation reprising all letters of marque and denounced any attack on Spanish ships as piracy.<sup>177</sup> What is more this was backed up in 1605 with another proclamation that stated that any Englishman privateering under the authority of another state would be regarded as a pirate.<sup>178</sup> In effect throughout the rest of his reign there can be no confusing the two, since privateering simply did not exist. However, privateering became a factor again between 1625-30. Privateering was only legitimate when authorised by the Crown. Therefore, even in times of war, attacks on ships without such authorisation will constitute piracy.

---

<sup>174</sup> From Henry VIII “The Statutes of the Realm from the Magna Carta to the end of the reign of Queen Anne, Vol. 9, 1810-28” cited in Senior, C.M. “An investigation into the activities and importance of English Pirates 1603-40” (PhD Thesis University of Bristol, 1972)p.1

<sup>175</sup> Evident from Sir Edward Coke The third part of the Institution of the Laws of England, 1669, p. 113 cited in Senior, “An investigation” p.1

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, p.4

<sup>177</sup> Ibid p.10

<sup>178</sup> Ibid, P.11

With the ambiguities relating to the concept of “at sea” and what constituted privateering the only complexity in definition left concerns the use of violence. Sir Leoline Jenkins affirmed that the use and threat of violence resulted in “theft at sea” being upgraded to “piracy”. Similarly he asserted that even if goods were taken and the ship left intact the perpetrators would be tried for piracy.<sup>179</sup> For the purpose of this thesis piracy will be defined in this manner. That is the taking of a ships good through the use and threat of violence at sea. Wherever cases of theft at sea where no violence was committed are referred to this shall be noted. However, as will become apparent, almost all cases of theft at sea involved actual violence and so the issue of definition is almost a formality.

---

<sup>179</sup> Ibid, p.6 Jenkins was judge-assistant to the judge of the Admiralty John Exton and performed the bulk of Exton’s work.

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Documents relating to Piracy**

This section will act as an anthology of sources transcribed personally from the *Bristol Book of Trade* and *The Calendar of State Papers*.

1. A list of offences presented to Sir Thomas Button on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 1634 (*From the Calendar of State Papers*)
2. The Will of Elizabeth Button, wife of Sir Thomas Button. (*From the Calendar of State Papers*)
3. The Names of those that bought goodes of the pyrat Campane at lymecon in the West of Ireland, in 1625 (*From Calendar of State Papers :Ireland*)
4. His majasties speciall warrant to the maior and alderman of Bristoll to set forth shippes of warre to suppress pirates infesting the channell of seaverne (*Bristol Book of Trade 1598-1693*)
5. The Privie councells letter to the maior of Bristoll to deale with the merchants and owners of shipping and others of that citty for assistance towards the the suppressing of the pirats of Arguers and Tunis. (*Bristol Book of Trade 1598-1693*)
6. The Merchants certificate to the lords of his majasties counsell on the behalf of Sir Tho. Button Knighte concerning his service in his majasties shipp the Phoeinx in the channel of Bristoll. (*Bristol Book of Trade 1598-1693*)
7. The names of certain shippes which with their merchandise belonging to merchants of the port of bristoll have been lost from the yeere 1610-1620. (*Bristol Book of Trade 1598-1693*)
8. The councells letter concerning the levying of the money of the expedicon against piratts aswell as all freemen and all merchants and owners of Bristoll. (*Bristol Book of Trade 1598-1693*)
9. A letter to Sr. Tho Button captain of his treats shippes the phoenix for supplie of men for the better defence of the coast. (*Bristol Book of Trade 1598-1693*)

**1. A list of offences presented to Sir Thomas Button on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 1634, to be considered by the High Court of the Admiralty. The proceedings never reached the court as Button died just a few weeks later. He did however plead not guilty on all charges. The potential outcome is perhaps best but still his wife never received a pension despite significant appeals. The final charge was written in a different hand and probably added at a later time.**

1. For that being employed by the lords commissions for the Admiral on that Coast, hee left his charge and his majasties shippe wherein to a leiutenante contrarie to the dutie of his said place.
2. That hee put unto that his place and command captayne William Thomas Whome the lords formerlye forbade him to imploye anie more in The kings Service, for that he had tortured the Gunner of a Prize called the St. John of Dunkerke.
3. That the said Captayne Thomas (being by him thus employed Contrary to their lords direcons) did take away by force and shott A portigall Shippe, which (being worth 6000 pounds) was rendered by Some of Nutts<sup>180</sup> Companie for his Mats vse to Sir Thomas Harris Deputy Vice Admiral of Munster who had her in quiet possession by Which meanes shee (Being carried to Sea by Capteyne Thomas) was Cast away and not made worth about £250. At most.
4. That Sir Thomas Button in the yeare 1630 did take upon the kings Shipp wherein he was then commander, one Captayne Scras, who was There charged and pursued for pyracye and murder, and refusing upon notice from the Cheife Justive of Munster to render him to Justice
5. That Sir Thomas Button, having the charge of Victuallinge the Kings Pinnace the 5<sup>th</sup> Whelp employed for guard of the Irish Coast took soe little care therefor, as that shee was kepte in Harbour in Kinsale from the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 1631 to the 27<sup>th</sup> of June, in which time (the 20<sup>th</sup> of June) the Turkes committed the spoyle of Baltimore and carried away 120 of his majasties subjects as slaves to Algiers

---

<sup>180</sup> Captain Nutt was a renowned pirate originally from Bristol who frequented the Narrow Seas

6. That Sir Thomas button kepte aboard the 9<sup>th</sup> Whelp divers  
Unable for service in her in soe much as the master of her  
Wrote that unless better men were taken in their places, he durst not go to  
Sea in her.
  
7. That he beinge captayne of his Majasties Shippe the Antelope and victualler of  
Her by contracte with Sir Alan Appesley, furnished her from Chattham  
With 6 weekes victual onelye pretendinge to the master and companie, that  
The rest of her provisions were or should be readie for her in Ireland,  
But at their comminge to Kinsale they found noo order for anie thinge  
But were forced to victual day by day from hand to mouth, and for  
want of sea store, were compelled to stay in harbour by the space of  
Nyne of tenne months, most of this time there were never upon the  
Shippe about 90 or 100 men, by which means he clearly put into his purse  
60 mens victuals dayly to greate disservice of the king and state.
  
8. That he in the yeare 1629, being captayne of his majasties shippe the  
Convertive neglected to go on board her here and commanded the  
Leitennente, being his nephew, to meete him with the shippe at  
Milford Haven, where his house is, by which means the shippe lay unre-  
Guarded or wynd bound for six weekes in that porte and spent the best  
part of her provisions there to noe purpose
  
9. In the course to that porte aboute the lands end they met with a  
Dunkerker laden with salt, which they took, and bought with the into  
Milford, out of which prize without any order of direcons from the  
Lords commissions for the admiralty, hee took a greate quantitie of salt, part  
Of which he sold, and converted to hise owne purse, the rest he reserved as  
Salt victuals for the shippe in Ireland, and saved soo much in his owne purse,  
He being then the victualler for that shippe by contracte.
  
10. Lastly, notwithstanding his wilfull absence from the said shippe  
When this prize was so taken, yet he pretended a reward for his  
Service and obteyned from the kinge a moytye<sup>181</sup>, (both of the ships and salte)  
In thereof, contrarie to all equitie and reason

---

<sup>181</sup> A half share of the prize

The 21<sup>st</sup> Article of the declaration made against me in the court of Admiralty

That in the year 1630 or 1631 there came upon the coast of Ireland and into the Harbour of Kinsale, a frenchman a man called Jean Ffrancois who had by piracy Taken at sea wines and other goods, to which Jean francois the said Sir Thomas Button gave license and means to sell his said goods there, and he the said Sir Thomas Button himselfe bought or had and received from the said Jean Ffrancois some Of the said wines, and other goods so that when the proprietor, from whome the said Goods were taken, came they were by advantage of that means of sale given By the said Sir Thomas Button, soe dispersed that he could obtaine restitution But of very finall parts thereof.



## 2. The Will of Elizabeth Button

In the name of God Amen, Elizabeth Button

Widow. Being sick in body yet in perfect memorie praised be god doe make this my last will and testament as followeth them first I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, and my body to the earth to be buried at the discretion of my executors here after named. I will yet all such debt as I doe owe shallbe payd within convenient tyme after my death. And as for such temporal goods as God hath bestowed upon mee I bequeath as followeth. I doe give and bequeath unto my neece Anne Button one hundred poundes to be paid in convenient tyme. I give and bequeath upon Thomas fiftie poundes. I give to Jesan Pichard five poundes. I give to George \*\*\*\*<sup>182</sup>, my servant thirtie poundes. I give to Anne Dyer fiftie poundes. I do give and bequeath all those moneys due for my pencion and in Arrears from his Majastie being threehundred and threescore poundes due to myself unto my sonnes Richard, Robert and William with my house Cardiff to be sould out of which a hundred poundes to Sir Lecvis Mansell. I doe nominate and ordayne my sole executor of this my last will and testament my deare sonne Willie Button. I doe bequeath to my neece Anne that Bedd with all the purtenances thereunto belonging wherein my Husband Sir Thomas Button dyed. And I doe appoint my beloved cosons Henry Vaughn and Robert Button to be my overseers of this my last will and testament To see that my executioners perform it according to my meaning . I give to Mary, ould servant, at Sanderhaven five pounds. I give to Amy the bed wherein I lye with two blankets and covers where I lye.

Elizabeth Button

---

<sup>182</sup> Surname scratched from page

Witnesses Mary Southwell, Mary Croft, Robert Vaughn

*Proved c. April 1637*

**3. The Names of those that bought goodes of the pyrat Campane at lymecon in the West of Ireland, in 1625 (From C.S.P Ireland 1615-25)**

Martin Harman bought of that pyrate to the value of 200 pounds

Justice Bradye as was thought to be partner with him. The pepper cost 6 1/2 d per lb., the wax cost 6d per lb.

Thomas Neale of BandenBridge bought ii bails of pepper containenige 700 waight at 8d per lb and one hundred of barbarie hides well in the lease, A whist of honey rootes was bought of Campanie 150 weight att 5 pounds. William Hull knoweth who had them.

Joshua Boyle of Waterforde bought one chest of Camphanie, 500 waight att least, tobacco 14 roweles, pepper 1000 waight, cloves 212 waight, Eliphante teethe iii, Muscovy hides 5 dozen.

The two Whites of Corke, carriers there working, can discover asmuch, for they carried for most men, and bought much themselves.

Mr Jeremye Rosten neere Kinsale bought tobacco and pepper, As he confessed to me himself.

Mr Luxtone neere bandon bridge bought 300 weight of Pepper.

Mr Newcomin of the Bridge bought 800 waight of pepper and as he told me himsleve

Mr Willyam Hull sent 40 Horsloads of pepper to kinsale

Mr Richardson of Plymouth sent 500 waight of pepper forBaltimore, which he bought of Campanie. Witness James Stanley, searcher there.

Mr Nicholas Astwood of Corke confessed to me that the Deputye had from this piratt 600 waight of pepper and 2000 waight of wax.

Mr Henry Turner of Bandon Bridge bought much pepper and Tobacco.

Mr Alexander, dwelling neere castle bridge bought tobacco and other commodities of the value of 100

Sir Lawrance Parsons men traded there, and John Fforde, beinge one of theme to my knowledge, bought 24 bundles of red hides, wherein, as I heard, was diver parcille of Hollandes

Mr Nicholas Astwood of Corke had 360 waight of pepper.

Mr Symson had a payle containing 350 waight of pepper, or there aboute.

Liuetenant Jaques of Corke bought from Campanie 16 pounds waight in massie gould, was questioned for itt and upon examnation, confessed. admision thereof was made of men of Power thereof.

Met carriages of goods whereof the Chief was for the deputies man, Mr Gaye.

Mr Jenkin Conoway from Kilmaire hath broo coverings for beds with Coverings suitable to them which came out of a ship which came from the canary Islande. Mr Bates. the marshall of munster, will give a relation at large of that business. Bates lives at X24 miles from Corke, and could discover more abuses done to my Lord than any other.

Mr Henry Hull bought 1000 waight of pepper.

William Parmer, of X, carrier, bought many things of campane, and carried many men goods.

Mr Harman and Brady were joined partners in the Bargain

**4. His maties speciall warrant to the Maior & Aldermen of Bristoll, to set forth shippes of warre to suppress Pirates infesting ye Channell of Seaverne**

**James R:**

Trustie and wellbeloved wee greate you well where wee are informed from you that certeyne pirats are of late come vnto the River of Seaverne to trouble the trade of our good subiects of that Citty, and of other the parts thereabouts against whome you and our people of that Citty are so well disposed as that you mind forthwith to set forth some shippe of your owne to apprehend and bring them to punishment yf you had warrant from us soe to doe, your purpose therein is soe commendable and savoureth so much both of dutie to us and zeale to justice and the welfare of our people as wee cannot but commend the same as justly it doth deserve, And wee doe hereby warrant and aucthorize you according to your owne good purpose both ship and man such as you shall think fit to prepare, and to ymploy them against the said pirats, and them to assayle apprehend and take to the best of your power, And for your better assistance and encouradgment, and the speedy freeing of that coast from such malefactors ymediately upon the receipt of this informacon from you wee have given order to Sir William St John Knighte who is at Portsmouth with our ship called the Dreadnaughte goinge with certeyne provisions of ours into Ireland that he shall with all speed enter into the River of Seaverne and visit it and the coast thereabouts, and seeke out the said pirats, and doe his best to apprehend them, and to join with you for the more speedy distressing of them, which wee assure our selves hee will carefully pforme. Given under our signet at Charlton the thirtith day of July in the ?Seventh year of our raigne of England France and Ireland and of Scotland the Seaven and fortith And for the better encouragemt of such people as shall goe to sea wee are pleased that such goods as they shall gett upon the pirats shall be distributed amongst them for their reward.

To our trustie and wellbeloved  
the mayor and Aldermen of the Citty  
of Bristoll

**6. To the righte honourable the lord and others of his majasties most honourable privie counsel and to the right worshipful commissions for his majasties royall navie**

Wheras wee (The wardens and comminaltie of the societie and company of the merchant adventurers of the citty and porte of Bristoll whoes names are subscribed) have bin given to understand of his misdemeanour objectes against Sir Thomas Button Knight and captian on his majasties shipp the Phoenix now being in the porte concerning his behaviour and *carriage* amongst us and others of the out porte within the channell and river of serverne. There are therefore (in his behalfts to signifie and declare unto your honourable lordship and others his commissions for his royall navie whome their *dispute* shall or may concerne, that after conferrence and full deliberation of the said societie, and others frequenting this citty and porte in the trade and recourse of merchandise, we have inquirde of the promised and cane noe way finde the saide Sir Thomas Button culpable thereof. in his government or charge of the said shipp, or of his majasties affaire nor in any of his entercourses or dealings with any of the inhabitants of this Citty or porte or any other his majasties subjects or oughte wee know or have heard, but doo finde that the saide Sir Thomas Button hath allwais worthely behaved himself aswell in the service of his majastie as in his other affaires and business. And for our owne *xts* wee confidently affirm that he hath in no wise wronged or oppressed any of us, but rather by his good endeavours and care wee have bine freed and defended from the depredations and spoils of pirats frequenting this channell who before his coming did much trouble and infest us. In witness whereof we have caused our common goale to be hereunto sett and affirmed and have alsoe subscribed our names dated at our common hall the XXVIth day of june in the year of our lord god 1619

**7. The names of certain shippes which with their merchandises belonging to merchants of the port of Bristol have been lost from the yeere 1610-1620**

The Charitie of Bristol Burthen 60 tons taken by the turkes  
The Little vinorne of Bristol Burthen 60 tons taken by the turkes  
The Minion of Bristol Burthen 60 tons taken by pirats  
The Centaure of Bristol Burthen 70 tons taken by the turkes  
The Desire of Bristol Burthen 70 tons taken by the turkes  
The Centaure of Bristol Burthen 60 tons taken by the turkes  
The Ffortune of Bristol Burthen 60 tons taken by the turkes  
The Wyne of Bristol Burthen 50 tons taken by the turkes  
The Sea Lyon of Bristol Burthen 150 tons lost at sea by fire  
The Affection of Bristol Burthen 40 tons lost at portugall  
The True Love of Bristol Burthen 80 tons lost at Genoa  
The Sea Fflower of Bristol Burthen 60 tons taken by the turkes  
The Mary of Bristol Burthen 40 tons lost at koane  
The Concord of Bristol burthen 80 tons lost at Cadiz  
The Zabulon of Bristol burthen 150 tons lost at Carmarthen Bay  
The pleasure of Bristol Burthen 80 tons lost at Gibaltare  
The susan Constance of London Burthen 200 tons taken by turkes  
The Bon esperance of Bristol Burthen 60 tons lost at the Canaries  
The ould Daysie of Bristol Burthen 40 tons lost at the porte  
The New Daysie of Bristol Burthen 50 tons taken by Turks  
The John of Bristol Burthen 80 tons lost upon Silly  
The dove of Bristol Burthen 60 tons robbed by Pirats  
The semxviva of Bristol Burthen 30 tons taken by Turks  
The damiell of Bristol Burthen 40 tons lost upon Lunday  
The little george of Bristol Burthen 40 tons taken by Turks  
The Parience of Bristol Burthen 50 tons lost in Kochell  
The husband of Bristol Burthen 70 tons taken by Turks  
The Eliphant of Bristol Burthen 100 tons taken by the Turks  
The Blessing of Bristol Burthen 60 tons taken by the Turks  
The felowship of Bristol Burthen 60 tons taken by Turks  
The Elizabeth of Bristol Burthen 60 lost at the Straights  
The Peregirme of Bristol Burthen 90 tons lost in Ireland  
The John of Bristol Burthen 60 tons lost going to London  
The Harry of Bristol Burthen 45 tons robbed by Turks

The Primerose of Bristoll Burthen 50 tons robbed by Turks  
The Susan of Bristoll Burthen 50 tons taken by Turks  
The Benjamin of Bristoll Burthen 60 tons taken by Turks  
The Mary Post of Bristoll Burthen 100 tons taken by Turks  
The Mary of Bristoll Burthen 30 tons robbed by Turks  
A Bark of George Whittingtons Burthen 40 tons taken by Turks  
The Joseph of Bristoll Burthen 60 tons robbed by Turks  
The Love of Bristoll burthen 60 tons lost in Gibaltare  
The Swallow of Bristoll burthen 60 tons Taken by Turks  
The Bon Sporange of Bristoll burthen 100 tons taken by Turks



**8.The councells letter concerning the levying of the money of the expedicon against piratts  
aswell as all freemen and all merchants and owners of Bristoll**

After our hartie commendations whereas wee understand by Mr Whitesone  
Alderman of that citty whoe hath attended us with this you  
Concerning the moneys to bee raised there fore the furtherance and  
advancement of the the expedicon against pirats That there are  
divers in that citty aswell *as* merchants and owners of shipping, as others  
whoe (though they bee not meore merchants yet are psons of abillitie  
and good meanes and take benefitt by trade and commerce) doe  
utterly refuse to contribute with the rest to the great prejudice  
and hinderance to the service wee have thought good hereby to  
will and require you to take good bonds of such merchants and  
owners of shipping as upon admoicon shall still refuse to  
contribute therein to make then personall apperance before  
us to shew cause of that then w\*\*\*sall<sup>183</sup>, And for the rest  
though the scope and purpose of our former lord did  
principally aime at merchants and owners of shipping,  
as more imediatelie interest in the successe in this expedicon  
then amid others, yet it is noe way ment that others  
of abillitye that reside in that porte and take comfit  
thereof should be exempted thereof from a charge soe much  
concerning the common sociertie of trade and commerce, and  
therefore wee doe require you to proceed to the levying  
and collecting of the moneys allotted upon that porte by  
our former addresse aswell from the merchants and owners  
of shipping as from the others either freemen or strangers  
as reside there and receiving benefitt are fit to contribute  
to the undertaking. And so we bid you heartily farewell  
from Whitehall July 1620

You Lo: Friends  
John Digby  
Maior of Bristoll

---

<sup>183</sup> Ineligible due to damage

**9.A letter to Sir. Tho Button captain of his treats shipps the phoenix for supplie of men for the better defence of the coast**

Bristoll, the 25<sup>th</sup> Aprill anno 1623

Sir, wee understand that your selfe withe Phoenix are appointed to Pursue a pirate which hath latlie surprised a shipp on the coast of Cornewall laden with tyn and other commodities. In whos service wee Wishe you all happie successe as heretofore you have found in actions of The like nature four better accomplishment whereof and for the further good Service of the ship on the coaste of Ireland and river of severne We do advise and pray you to move his majasties commissions For the navy royall that the Phoenix her proportion of men being three score May be augmented ffor we knowe that the ship hath incurred Imminent danger within these two years for want of men, the coast Of Ireland and channel of Severne being very dangerous in Wintertime with all we have heard that some pirats have lately Contempned the strenghte of your ship. The premises considered we Doubt not but that the commissioners will in their wisdom may prevent such Inconveniencies that soe we may continue quiet and free from the spoyles And depredation as by means of the phoenix Her service wee hath done theis five years last past upon the coste of Ireland and Channel of seaverne for with benefitt wee pray so god And do most thankfully acknowledge his majasties favour and the careful endeavour Of his instruments particularly your selfe unto whome wee recommend our Respectful salutations and doe remain your loving friends

William Yong, Maior

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **Primary Sources**

The *Bristol Book of Trade, 1598-1693* (Bristol Records Office)

Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles I ([www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk))

Calendar of State Papers Domestic: James I ([www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk))

Robert Dabourne's *A Christian turned Turk* (1612)

Heywood and Rowley's *Fortune by Land and Sea* (1607-9)

PRO E190-1133-8

PRO E190-1133-11

PRO E190-1136-6

Mainwaring, H. & Perrin, W.G. (Ed.), *The Life and Works of Sir Henry Mainwaring* (Navy Record Society, 1922)

The Mayor's Audit Books, 1600-1640 (Bristol Records Office)

### **Published Primary Sources**

McGrath, Patrick, *Records relating to the Society of the Merchant Venturers in the City of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century* (Bristol 1952)

Vanes, J., (ed.), *The Ledger of John Smythe 1538-1550* (London, 1975)

Vanes, J., (ed.), *Documents Illustrating the Overseas Trade of Bristol in the Sixteenth Century* (Bristol, 1979)

Bickley, F. B., (ed.), *The Little Red Book of Bristol, Volume I* (Bristol, 1900)

Bristol Port Survey, 21 May 1565 Transcribed by Evan Jones (2003) Manuscript: PRO E159/350

Survey of Smuggling in Bristol, 15 May 1565 Transcribed by Evan Jones (2003) Manuscript: PRO E159/350

Latimer, J., (Ed.), *The History of the Society of Merchant Venturers of the City of Bristol* (Bristol, 1903)

Beavan, Rev. A. B., *Bristol Lists: Municipal and Miscellaneous* (Bristol 1889)

Mainwaring, H. & Perrin, W.G. (Ed.), *The Life and Works of Sir Henry Mainwaring* (Navy Record Society, 1922)

Larkin, J. F. and Hughes, P. L., *Stuart Royal Proclamations Volume I* (Oxford, 1973)

Larkin, J. F., *Stuart Royal Proclamations Volume II* (Oxford, 1983)

Appleby, J. C. (Ed.) *A Calendar of Material relating to Ireland from the High Court of Admiralty Examinations 1536-41* (Dublin, 1992)

Russell, C.W. and Prendergast, J. P. (Ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Ireland 1608-10* (London, 1874)

Russell, C.W. and Prendergast, J. P. (Ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Ireland 1611-4* (London, 1877)

Russell, C.W. and Prendergast, J. P. (Ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Ireland 1615-25* (London, 1880)

Mahaffy, R.P. (Ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Ireland 1603-32* (London, 1900)

Barbour, P., (Ed.) *The Complete works of Capt, John Smith* (London, 1984)

McGowan, A. P., *The Jacobean Commissions of Enquiry, 1608 and 1618* (Navy Records, 1971)

### **Articles**

Jones, E. T., 'Illicit business: accounting for smuggling in mid-sixteenth century Bristol', in *Economic History Review*, LIV, 1 (2001) pp. 17-38

Carus Wilson, E.M., "The overseas trade of Bristol" in E. Power & M.M. Postan (eds.), *Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1933)

Pitt, C., "The Wine Trade in Bristol in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries" (Unpublished MA Thesis University of Bristol, 2006)

Croft, P., 'Trading with the Enemy, 1585-1604', in *The Historical Journal*, 32, 2 (1989) pp. 281-302

Mallet, George "The Economics behind the illicit wine trade in Elizabethan Bristol" (Unpublished BA Essay, University of Bristol 2008)

Senior, C.M. "An investigation into the activities and importance of English Pirates 1603-40 (PhD Thesis Bristol, 1972)

Taylor, Duncan "Milford's Sixteenth Century Maritime Trade" (Unpublished Thesis, Bristol 2008)

Sacks, D.H, "The Corporate Town and the English State: Bristol's "Little Businesses" 1625-1641" *Past and Present*, No. 110 (Feb., 1986)

Treadwell, V., "The Establishment of the Farm of the Irish Customs 1603-13" in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 93, No. 368 (Jul., 1978), pp. 580-602

Jessop, W., "Privateering in Elizabethan Bristol: A Case Study on John Hopkins" (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Bristol 2003)

Oppenheim, M., "The Royal Navy under James I" in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 7, No. 27 (Jul., 1892), pp. 471-496

Oppenheim, M., "The Royal Navy under Charles I" in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 9, No. 33 (Jan., 1894), pp. 92-116

Appleby, J.C. and O'Dowd, M., "The Irish Admiralty: Its Organisation and Development, c. 1570-1640" in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 95 (May, 1985), pp. 299-326

Kenny, R. W., "Parliamentary Influence of Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham, 1536-1624" in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Sep., 1967), pp. 216-232

Marsden, R. G., "The Vice-Admirals of the Coast" in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 23, No. 92 (Oct., 1908), pp. 736-757

Woodward, D., 'Documents and sources: Irish trade and customs statistics, 1614-1641' *Irish Economic & Social History*, 26 (1999)

Walton, J., 'The merchant community of Waterford in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' in P. Butel & L.M. Cullen (eds.), *Cities and Merchants: French and Irish perspectives on urban development, 1500-1900* (1986)

Treadwell, V. 'The establishment of the farm of the Irish customs, 1603-13' in *English Historical Review*, 93:368 (1978)

Stone, R., "The pre-Civil War development of Bristol's Overseas trade" (Unpublished Bristol. 2009)

Gillespie, R., "The Transformation of the Irish Economy, 1550-1700" in *Studies in Irish Economic and Social History* (1998) p. 19-29

Crave, W.F., "The Earl of Warwick, a Speculator in Piracy" in *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Nov., 1930), pp. 457-479

Peck, L.L., Problems in Jacobean administration: Was Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, a reformer? In *The Historical Journal*, 19, 4 (1976), pp. 831-858

## Books

- Childs, W.R., *Anglo-Castilian Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester, 1978)
- Ramsay, G.D., *English Overseas Trade during the Centuries of Emergence* (London, 1957)
- Carus-Wilson E.M., *Medieval Merchant Venturers* (London, 1954)
- Carus-Wilson E.M., *The Merchant adventurers of Bristol in the fifteenth century* (London, 1962)
- Sacks, D.H. *The Widening Gate: Bristol and the Atlantic Economy 1450-1700* (California 1991)
- Jones, E.T., *Inside the illicit economy: Reconstructing the smugglers' trade of 16<sup>th</sup> Century Bristol* (Unpublished-Bristol 2007)
- Williams, N. J., *The Maritime trade of East Anglian Ports 1550-1590* (Oxford 1988)
- Andrews, Kenneth *Elizabethan Privateering 1585-1603* (Cambridge, 1964)
- Senior, C.M, *A Nation of Pirates* (Devon 1976)
- McGrath, Patrick, *Merchants and Merchandise in Seventeenth Century Bristol* (Bristol 1955)
- McGrath, Patrick, *The Merchant Venturers of Bristol* (Bristol 1975)
- Berckman, Evelyn *Victims of Piracy* ( London 1979)
- Gosse, P., *The History of Piracy* (New York, 1932)
- O'Brien, G., *The Economic History of Ireland in the Seventeenth Century* (Dublin, 1919)
- G. T. Clark, *Some Account of Sir Robert Mansel and Admiral Sir Thomas Button* (London, 1883)
- Ball, F. E., *The Judges in Ireland, 1221-1921* (London,1926)
- Pennell, C. R., *Bandits at Sea: A pirate reader* (New York, 2001)
- Longfield, A.K., *Anglo-Irish in the Sixteenth Century* (London 1929)