

“*Brought Him Home by Sailors*”:

Thomas Bowen and his trees from “*the Newfound land*”

Ryan Lewis

Early European descriptions of the Island of Newfoundland depict a land covered in places by thick forests of pine, cypress, spruce and fir trees that often grew to the edge of the rocky coastline.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, large numbers of these trees were used as raw material for the infrastructure of the seasonal fishing industry: platforms for drying cod, cookhouses, huts, and fire wood.<sup>2</sup> But according to a fascinating account written about a decade into the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Newfoundland “fir trees” were also transported back across the Atlantic and planted in British soil. The brief account, published in 1612, stated that

one Master Thomas Bowen of Trefloine in the County of Pembrokeshire, a gentleman of good worth, had about fifteen or sixteen years past [circa 1596] many young and small [fir trees] brought him home by sailors from the Newfound land, with some of the earth wherein they did formerly grow and planted them together with the said earth in convented places about his house, where they have since so well prospered that many of them at this present are about four foot in circuit and also very high and tapering. And they will grow upon mountains, gravelly soils, or in good earth, either by planting the young trees, or following the seed.<sup>3</sup>

The arrival of the trees from “the Newfound land” and their planting in Welsh soil was recorded in a book entitled *An Olde Thrift Newly Revived*, which, as the subtitle indicated—*Wherein is declared the manner of planting, preserving, and husbanding of young trees of diverse kinds for timber and fuel*—the book was about the husbandry of trees. *An Olde Thrift* was authored by

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<sup>1</sup> D.B. Quinn, *Wales and the West*; D.B. Quinn, “Newfoundland in the Consciousness of Europe in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in G.M. Story, editor, *Early European Settlement and Exploration in Atlantic Canada*, (Memorial University; St. John’s Newfoundland, 1982), 9-30; See also Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of The English Nation*, Vol. 12, America, Part I, (1578).

<sup>2</sup> Peter Pope, *Fish Into Wine: The Newfoundland Plantation in the Seventeenth Century*, (Williamsburg, Virginia: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 22; According to Richard Whitbourne, an early inhabitant of the island, “for our Nation, upon their arrival yearly to that Country, doe cut down many of the best trees they can find, to build their stages and rooms withall, for their then necessary occasions; hewing, rinding, and destroying many others, that grow within a mile of the Sea, where they use to fish”. Richard Whitbourne, *A Discourse and Discovery of Newfoundland* (1625).

<sup>3</sup> R. C. *An Old Thrift Wherein is declared the manner of planting, preserving, and husbanding of young trees of diverse kinds for timber and fuel* (1612), 8. The spelling in this document has been modernized.

“R. C.”, almost certainly Rock Churche, a Crown Surveyor of James I’s forests.<sup>4</sup> The book reflected a growing concern with the state of Britain’s forests, and was one of several publications on the topic to be printed around this time.<sup>5</sup> It was written in the form of a conversation between a farmer, a gentleman, a woodward and a surveyor, and was based on observations made by the author himself in the conduct of his duties as a surveyor. His outlook on the future of forests and woodlands in Britain was fairly bleak. British trees were being cut down at a shocking pace, to make room for farm land, or to be used as fuel or building material. Yet despite the “lamentable scarcity” Churche evidently found during his years in the King’s service, a significant portion of his treatise was used to describe how to successfully restock forestland with young trees.<sup>6</sup> Between his descriptions of how to plant saplings in appropriate soil, and how to ensure that they survived to maturity, he offered up the example of Thomas Bowen and his innovative tree nursery scheme involving transatlantic saplings.<sup>7</sup>

Churche’s reference to “the Newfound land” clearly suggests that this was where the trees came from, and not another part of the new continent, particularly as the term was used by contemporaries to refer to the Island or to the fishery. How many “young and small” fir trees were brought across the Atlantic is not recorded. There is little direct evidence left at Trefloine, Bowen’s Pembrokeshire estate, as there have been many changes to the land over the past 400 years. Nor do we know how much Bowen may have paid to have the trees transported to Wales. In 1611, an English landowner imported fruit trees from France for about 2s each, quite a sum at a time when a labourer was paid about 1s a day.<sup>8</sup> We do know that the voyages of discovery spawned widespread interest in the flora and fauna of the New World. Indeed, Richard Hakluyt considered the importation of non-native plants to be something of a patriotic duty, provided they were beneficial to the nation in some way.<sup>9</sup> As we will see, it was not unusual for plant and

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<sup>4</sup> The title-page of *An Old Thrift* includes the statement “tout pour l’eglise”, surely meant as a pun on the author’s name; Lindsay Sharp, “Timber, Science and Economic Reform in the Seventeenth Century,” *Forestry* (1975) No. 1, 51-86. Sharp believes R. Ch to be Robert Churton, Sharp, 55. See also James, N.D.G. *A History of English Forestry*. (Oxford; Basil Blackwell, 1981), 130.

<sup>5</sup> James, 130; Sharp, p.51-86.

<sup>6</sup> Churche, Preface.

<sup>7</sup> Churche, Preface, 8; another individual that Churche mentions is the Marquess of Huntly, who was planting trees imported from Bohemia “in the countie of Aberdeene in Scotland.” Huntly was George Gordon (1561/2-1636), a Scottish aristocrat who spent several years in exile in Europe, followed by the first four years of the 1600s “expanding his estates” including the lands and barony of Gartly, in Aberdeenshire. See J. R. M. Sizer, “Gordon, George, first marquess of Huntly (1561/2–1636)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/>

<sup>8</sup> Charles Quest-Ritson, *The English Garden: A Social History* London: Penguin Books, 2001), 40-2; Ian Friel, *Maritime History of Britain and Ireland* (London: The British Museum Press, 2003), 55-6.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 42.

tree specimens to be brought back to Britain from mainland North America and Newfoundland in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries. In this particular case, the exact species of tree is unknown, as “fir” may have referred to any kind of coniferous tree. According to William Linnard, Rock Churché’s description of the Welsh trees and their estimated growth rates suggests eastern white pine, or *pinus strobus*.<sup>10</sup> If Linnard is correct and the trees were eastern white pine, Bowen’s trees reached the shore of Britain over 100 years before Lord Weymouth transplanted the species to his estate at Longleats, Wiltshire, in 1705.<sup>11</sup> Bowen’s trees also came with soil, which probably meant that new kinds of tree fungus were introduced into Welsh woods at the same time.<sup>12</sup>

Rock Churché said he had “credibly heard” about Thomas Bowen and his trees.<sup>13</sup> As far as we know, Churché’s survey work was limited to England, and he never met Bowen. However, during the “Great Survey” of Royal forests carried out at the bequest of James I in 1608-09, over 125 surveyors were employed across England and Wales.<sup>14</sup> The surveyor who was responsible for surveying much of South Wales was the Pembrokeshire landowner and antiquarian George Owen.<sup>15</sup> Owen wrote extensively about the social history of Pembrokeshire, and owned an estate at Henllys, about 30 miles to the north of the estate of Thomas Bowen. Owen was also a map maker. One of his most memorable works was a map of Pembrokeshire, completed in 1602, which later appeared among the collected county maps of Britain in Camden’s *Britannia*. Owen included on his map the Bowen estate, which he called “Trefloin”, slightly to the west of Tenby and to the north of Penally. Owen was also aware that non-native “fir trees” were planted on local estates at this time. In his *Description of Pembrokeshire* published in 1603, he wrote that around “most houses of account and country villages pretty groves of wood, as oak, ash, maple, elm, and such like, and diverse rare timber, as the pine apple tree [pine tree], the spruce and fir trees, the mulberry and others.”<sup>16</sup> Owen’s words suggest that there may have been more than one Pembrokeshire landowner who planted exotic trees on his lands. However, coniferous trees

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<sup>10</sup> William Linnard, *Welsh Woods and Forests: History and Utilization*. (National Museum of Wales; Cardiff, 1982), 58.

<sup>11</sup> John Henry Elewes and Augustine Henry, *Trees of Great Britain and Ireland*. (Edinburgh, 1910), p1026-27. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, eastern white pine were known in Britain as Weymouth pine, and were a fashionable addition to any English garden: see Mark Laird, “The Culture of Horticulture: Class, Consumption, and Gender in the English Landscape Garden”, in Michael Conan, ed., *Bourgeois and Aristocratic Cultural Encounters in Garden Art, 1550–1850*. Vol. 23 (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture, 2002), 223.

<sup>12</sup> Linnard, 58.

<sup>13</sup> Churché, 8.

<sup>14</sup> Heather Lawrence, “John Norden and his colleagues: Surveyors of Crown Lands,” *The Cartographic Journal* 22 (1985), 54; James, 166.

<sup>15</sup> Lawrence, 55.

<sup>16</sup> George Owen, *Description of Pembrokeshire* (1603); Brian Howells, *Elizabethan Pembroke: The Evidence of George Owen*. (Haverford West, Pembrokeshire: Pembrokeshire Record Society, 1972), 45-6; for more on Owen, see B G. Charles, *George Owen of Henllys*. (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales Press, 1973).

were extremely rare in Wales in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, and there would not have been many evergreens growing around Elizabethan Pembrokeshire in the early 1600s.<sup>17</sup> Owen obviously knew where Trefloin was, as the estate appeared on his map. It was also quite likely that Owen knew of Bowen's trees, and reported to Church the information that would show up so tantalizingly in the pages of *An Olde Thrift*.

What do we know about Thomas Bowen, Rocke Church's tree-planting landowner? He was born in about 1550 in Southern Pembrokeshire. He inherited the family estate of "Trellwyn", in the parish of Penally, Pembrokeshire when his father John Bowen died in 1573. Thomas Bowen was a descendent of Thomas Ap Owen, who settled in the region in the 1490s.<sup>18</sup> Thomas Ap Owen was the third son of Owen Fychan Ap Owen, of Petre Ifan, Pembrokeshire, and was the first Ap Owen to settle in that part of Southern Pembrokeshire, near the coastal village of Penally.<sup>19</sup> Over the next hundred years or so the "Ap" prefix was dropped from the family name and the more English sounding surname "Bowen" was adopted. Over time the name of the estate also transformed from "Trellwyn" into the more anglicized "Trefloin" or more commonly, "Trefloyne." The Bowens built a large farm house with a distinctive "flemish chimney" on the Trefloyne estate, on the northern slope of the ridge that ran to the north of Penally and to the west of Tenby.<sup>20</sup> The land in this area had been farmed for centuries, and was probably the location of an ancient pre-Norman farm.<sup>21</sup> The Bowens were farmers too, and according to surveys conducted on parts of their property between 1601 and 1618, they raised livestock and grew wheat and oats.<sup>22</sup> Farming was their main source of prosperity, although rental income became increasingly profitable as the century wore on. By the later years of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, the Bowens were established, relatively affluent and influential landowners. Several Trefloyne Bowens served in public office. For his part, Thomas Bowen was appointed Justice of the Peace

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<sup>17</sup> Linnard, 58.

<sup>18</sup> Francis Jones, *Bowen of Trefloyne*, unpublished manuscript, n.d. I would like to thank Caroline Charles-Jones for sharing this with me.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid; for more on the Pentre Ifan, see Gerallt D. Nash, "Pentre Ifan Barn: The Remains of a Tudor Gentry House?" *Journal of the Pembrokeshire Historical Society* 3 (1989): 3-27.

<sup>20</sup> *Bowen of Trefloyne*; see also Coflein, "Trefloyne," Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, 2012, <http://www.coflein.gov.uk/en/search/>

<sup>21</sup> Brian Howells, "Open Fields and Farmsteads in Pembrokeshire," *The Pembrokeshire Historian: Journal of the Pembrokeshire Local History Society* 3 (1971): 7-27; "Parish of Penally", *Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire*, 295. Roman coins were found at Trefloyne.

<sup>22</sup> R.F. Walker, "The Manor of Manobier, Pembrokeshire, in the Early Seventeenth Century," *National Library of Wales Journal* 27:2 (1991), 131-174; see also B.E. Howells, "Pembrokeshire farming circa 1580-1620," *National Library of Wales Journal* 9:3 (1955), 239-250.

shortly after inheriting Trefloyne in 1575, and later served as High Sheriff of Pembrokeshire in 1603.<sup>23</sup>

Thomas Bowen expanded his holdings during his tenure as the squire of the 70 acre estate, acquiring many more acres of land around Southern Pembrokeshire, and, like many of his landowning neighbours, renting the land to tenant farmers. Many parts of Britain and Europe were adversely affected by economic instability and poor crops during the closing years of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Pembrokeshire however experienced a measure of economic growth during these years. Many of the local squires in Southern Pembrokeshire and elsewhere invested in various business and trade ventures, and some grew very rich from their investments.<sup>24</sup> Some, like the Bowens, made their money from farming, and agricultural exports from Pembrokeshire to other parts of Wales, England and further afield to France and the Netherlands were quite common. The uprising in Ireland in the 1590s had economic benefits for Pembrokeshire, and a number of local families profited by becoming royal suppliers to the Queen's armies.<sup>25</sup> Others invested in commercial ventures such as coal mining, or manufacturing agricultural fertilizer from lime kilns. Some imported commodities and "general merchandise" into Wales, including oranges, lemons and Gascony wine from France, peppers and powders, cloth, and lumber.<sup>26</sup> Some started to invest in the Atlantic fishery, and during the war with Spain in the 1580s and '90s, a few became involved in piracy against the merchant shipping of Spain and her allies.

Many yeoman farmers like the Bowens, along with local merchant and gentry families invested their new wealth in building or improving their houses, and on landscaping elaborate gardens and orchards.<sup>27</sup> The Welsh landowner Sir Thomas Hanmer's commented in the 1650s that "the rich among us are not satisfied with good houses and parks...their ambition and curiosity extends also to very costly embellishments of their gardens."<sup>28</sup> Hanmer's words applied in the 1590s as well. New trends in garden architecture filtered into Wales from England and the Continent in the later Tudor period. Wealthy Welshmen also traveled further afield, visiting European cities and observing the magnificent gardens and estates of the European nobility. As they became more aware of garden trends in the wider world, they started to emulate those trends. Initially the "range of plants available to the sixteenth century ornamental gardener was restricted largely to the west European native flora."<sup>29</sup> Landowners began to take an interest in plant species from

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid; *Bowen of Trefloyne*.

<sup>24</sup> B.E. Howells, "The Elizabethan Squirearchy of Pembrokeshire," *The Pembrokeshire Historian: Journal of the Pembrokeshire Local History Society* 1 (1959), 17-40.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>26</sup> E.G. Bowen, "Seafaring Along the Pembrokeshire Coast in the Days of the Sailing Ships," *The Pembrokeshire Historian: Journal of the Pembrokeshire Society* 4 (1972), 65-66.

<sup>27</sup> Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales, 1500-1700*. (Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 1994), 297-306.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Hamner, *Garden Books of Sir Thomas Hamner* (1659).

<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth Whittle, *The Historic Gardens of Wales*, (London: Cawd Welsh Historic Monuments, 1992), 14.

across the Atlantic as their awareness of the New World grew, and they could get access to exotic non-native plant species, thanks to a growing trade in plants and seeds.<sup>30</sup> Several works were published in the later 1500s that described the flora and fauna of the New World in some detail.<sup>31</sup> In the 1570s the Bristol merchant Anthony Parkhurst visited Newfoundland and described the kinds and numbers of trees he saw during his expeditions inland, concluding that “fir trees” were the most numerous.<sup>32</sup> Visitors to the New World collected local seeds and plant specimens to take back to Europe and grow in home soil.<sup>33</sup> This trend increased as time went on. At least one estate owner in County Waterford, Ireland planted imported Newfoundland fir trees on his lands at Ballintaylor in the early 1600s,<sup>34</sup> and in the 1630s, John Tradescant the younger’s *Musaeum Tradescantium* catalogue listed trees from the Island of Newfoundland.<sup>35</sup> Spruce trees and seeds were also brought back to Britain and Ireland from Newfoundland in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, partly for their use in the production of spruce beer.<sup>36</sup> Early records also indicate that white cedars were imported to England from Continental America in 1611<sup>37</sup> and North American mulberry, cherry, hickory and walnut trees arrived in the 1620s.<sup>38</sup>

Welsh landholders, like their English and Irish contemporaries, started to import exotic plants, fruit trees and other kinds of timber from the Americas<sup>39</sup> and from England.<sup>40</sup> Exotic conifers in

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<sup>30</sup> Quest-Ritson, 34-46.

<sup>31</sup> Michael G. Moran, *Inventing Virginia: Sir Walter Raleigh and the Rhetoric of Colonization 1584-1590* (New York; Peter Lang, 2007), 48; Russell M. Magnaghi, “Sassafras and its Role in Early America, 1562-1662,” *Terrae Incognitae, The Journal for the History of Discoveries*, 29, (1997), 10-21.

<sup>32</sup> Quinn, “Newfoundland in the Consciousness of Europe,” 18.

<sup>33</sup> See for example the career of Edward La Zouche, whose “garden at Hackney was full of plants which he obtained on his foreign travels in the 1580s and 1590s.” His collection doubtless included plants from North America, as he served as one of the first counsellors of the Virginia Company. Louis A. Knafla, ‘Zouche, Edward la, eleventh Baron Zouche (1556–1625)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com>; see also Quest-Ritson, 111.

<sup>34</sup> A.C. Forbes, “Tree planting in Ireland During Four Centuries,” *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archeology, Celtic Studies, Linguistics, Literature* 41 (1932-34), 173-4.

<sup>35</sup> Richard Beale Davis, *Intellectual Life in the Colonial South, 1585-1763 Vol. 3* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1978), 813. See the preface to John Tradescant, *Musæum Tradescantianum: or, A Collection of Rarities*. (1656).

<sup>36</sup> Nancy Cox and Karin Dannehl, eds. “Spruce” and “Spruce Beer”, *Dictionary of Traded Goods and Commodities, 1550-1820*. (Wolverhampton: University of Wolverhampton, 2007) <http://www.britishhistory.ac.uk/source.aspx?pubid=739>; Charles Smith, *The Ancient and Present State of the County and City of Waterford*. (1774), 56, for examples of imported Newfoundland trees from the 1700s.

<sup>37</sup> Laird, 70; Maggie Campbell-Culver, *A Passion for Trees: The Legacy of John Evelyn*. (London: Eden Project Books, 2006), 176.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 272.

<sup>39</sup> Whittle, 14; Linnard, 51-66.

<sup>40</sup> R.H. Rickens, “The History of the Elm in Wales,” *Nature in Wales*, 5 no.1/2 (1986), 3-11.

particular were rare in Wales, and started to appear slowly on local estates. Thomas Hamner recorded that by the mid-1600s pine and spruce from Scotland and Europe were being planted in ornamental Welsh gardens.<sup>41</sup> Several massive eastern white pine specimens at Gwydir Castle in North Wales were probably brought back from North America, many decades before they were documented in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>42</sup> We have already seen that in 1603 George Owen observed non-native trees growing on Pembrokeshire estates including pine, spruce and fir trees. At the Haroldston estate Sir Thomas Perrot, another Pembrokeshire landowner and son of Sir John Perrot, was the first landowner to import and breed pheasants from Ireland, so they could inhabit “a pleasant grove of his own planting.”<sup>43</sup> Perhaps Perrot also planted Newfoundland fir trees on his estate, although there is no record of what kind of trees were used in his grove. The Perrots owned several ships, some of which we know spent time in Newfoundland waters, and could have brought trees back to Wales. Carew Castle, the other large Perrot property in Pembrokeshire, was turned into a mansion in the 1580s, and a survey from the time “indicates a complex of gardens and courts, orchards and dovecot.”<sup>44</sup> Perrot’s power and wealth were reflected in the development of his estates, thought to be among the finest in South Wales. Other merchant families who lived near Haroldston renovated or built fine country estates, such as the Voyles, the Gwyns, and Sir Morris Canon, all of Haverfordwest.<sup>45</sup> The Devereuxes, another local family of some prestige in Western Pembrokeshire, undertook a large scale renovation of their Lamphey estate and of its surrounding gardens in the 1590s.<sup>46</sup> Lamphey, Haroldston and Carew Castle, which lay a few miles to the north-east of Trefloyne, were no doubt models for other Pembroke landowners to emulate. In the 1590s, Trefloyne looked more like an elaborate farmhouse than a stately home when it was compared to the expansive mansions on the Devereuxes or Perrot estates.<sup>47</sup> The large cylindrical “Flemish” chimney described in early works about Trefloyne was “characteristic of many of the larger Medieval-era farmhouses in the area”.<sup>48</sup> However, it was also substantially larger than many of the humble dwellings in Pembrokeshire.<sup>49</sup> The Bowens were not on the highest rungs of the social ladder, but they did aspire to live more like gentlemen, and developed the grounds of their estate accordingly. Trefloyne had a large garden, and an orchard.<sup>50</sup> Thomas Bowen had a dovecot constructed as

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<sup>41</sup> Thomas Hamner, *Garden Books of Sir Thomas Hamner* (1659). Also see Linnard, 64.

<sup>42</sup> William Robinson, *The Garden: An Illustrated Weekly Journal* Dec 10, 1887, 546.

<sup>43</sup> Howells, 23; see also Roger Turvey, “A History and Survey of Haroldston House and gardens, Pembrokeshire: An Unexcavated Manorial Complex,” *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 151 (2002), 139-158.

<sup>44</sup> Whittle, 20; B.E. Howells, “The Elizabethan Squirearchy of Pembrokeshire,” 19.

<sup>45</sup> B.E. Howells, “The Elizabethan Squirearchy of Pembrokeshire,” 26.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 37.

<sup>47</sup> Coflein, “Trefloyne,” RCAHMW, 2012. <http://www.coflein.gov.uk/en/search/>

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>49</sup> Howells, “Squirearchy”, 37-8; See B E Howells, “Pembrokeshire Farming circa 1580-1620, Pt III,” *National Library of Wales journal*, 9 no 4 (1956), 413-39.

<sup>50</sup> *Bowen of Trefloyne*.

further evidence of the growing status of the Trefloyne estate, and in 1601 he leased Manobier Castle from the Crown.<sup>51</sup> Manobier was a double-warded 12<sup>th</sup> century fortress that sat on land overlooking the sea about two miles to the west of Bowen's estate. It was uninhabited in 1601, included 72 customary acres of land,<sup>52</sup> and was an important symbol of status for an aspiring Welsh gentleman. Thomas Bowen also evidently created his own exotic grove of Newfoundland trees near his house, perhaps to rival the pheasant groves of Haroldston. But it is quite likely that while creating a unique garden was an important mark of prestige, Bowen's interest in trees was not limited to aesthetics.

Like many of his contemporaries, Bowen may have been looking for new sources of revenue<sup>53</sup> to supplement financial losses he anticipated from poor crop yields in the late 1590s. Trees could be managed like a crop. There was a growing need in Britain for raw materials for ship building, as well as a need for raw building materials to house a rapidly growing population.<sup>54</sup> In many parts of Britain, trees were cut down at a faster-than-replacement rate, and it was commonly believed that if forests were not properly managed, there would soon be timber shortages. Starting with a Royal Statute in 1543 measures had been taken to slow forest clearances, with limited success. Further legislation was enacted in 1558 and 1585.<sup>55</sup> Population pressures increased the need for more housing and for firewood, which resulted in the destruction of forest land. New industries also needed firewood to fuel their furnaces. Coal was imported from Europe and mined in Wales in the 1600s and was slowly replacing wood as fuel. But demand often outstripped supply.<sup>56</sup> As the author of *An Olde Thrift* commented prosaically, coal "beginneth to grow deere and scarce, and in many places there is none to be had".<sup>57</sup> In the 1580s and '90s, Southern Pembrokeshire was considered to be a prime location for Spanish ships to land an invasion force,<sup>58</sup> and some local woodland was cut down to bolster coastal defences, particularly around the harbour of Milford Haven.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> R.F. Walker, "The Manor of Manobier, Pembrokeshire, in the Early Seventeenth Century," *National Library of Wales Journal* 27:2 (1991), 131-174, especially 133.

<sup>52</sup> Howells, "Open Fields and Farmsteads," 27; D.J. Cathcart King and J. Cifford Perks, "Manobier Castle, Pembrokeshire," *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 119 (1970), 91-2.

<sup>53</sup> Whittle, *The Historic Gardens of Wales*. 24.

<sup>54</sup> John F. Richards, *The Unending Frontier: An Environmental History of the Early Modern World*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 224-5.

<sup>55</sup> James, 125, 140.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 121.

<sup>57</sup> Churche, Preface.

<sup>58</sup> Howells, "Pembrokeshire Farming circa 1580-1620," 313-333; Michael G. Moran, *Inventing Virginia: Sir Walter Raleigh and the rhetoric of colonization, 1584-1590* (New York: Peter Lang, c2007), 48.

<sup>59</sup> "Milford Haven" Cecil Papers 17/87 1589/90, Feb. 4

The threat of invasion, combined with population growth, land enclosures, and growing needs of industry, all took their toll on the forests of Southern Wales.<sup>60</sup> Mature trees would be needed in the future as a source of lumber, and therefore were a potential source of wealth. Some landowners were also forward-thinking enough to be aware that wood shortages would create social and economic disorder. In these years, land tenure agreements between landowners and their tenants began to include clauses about the necessity of planting quotas of trees on the leased property.<sup>61</sup> Sometimes, landlords transplanted trees on their own properties, and if Thomas Bowen had wanted to transplant fir trees, he certainly could have. Churcher stated with some certainty that fir trees “will grow on mountains, gravelly soils, or in good earth, either by planting the young tree or following of the seed.”<sup>62</sup> The Trefloyne estate was a compact 70 acres made up of deep, fertile soil, except at the northern end where the soil was rockier, punctuated in places by outcrops of limestone.<sup>63</sup> A section on the edge of the property was even used as a quarry in later years. Cleary Trefloyne had “gravelly soils” and “good earth.” Churcher also commented that fir trees “will grow on mountains.” The Bowens leased land in Southern Pembrokeshire in addition to Trefloyne. At least one of these properties was on 60 acres of elevated arable land, so-called “mountain ground,” near the village of Narberth about 10 miles north of Trefloyne.<sup>64</sup> It is not explicitly stated, but it is possible that Bowen used Trefloyne as a nursery and then replanted saplings and even seeds on other parts of his lands. But how did he get the trees from ‘the Newfoundland’ in the first place?

Some Welsh landowners such as Thomas Hamner purchased non-native species from nurseries in England.<sup>65</sup> According to Churcher, Bowen purchased his trees from “sailors”. It is unclear who the sailors were, or even if they were from local ports. Because of the increasing interest in the New World throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, voyages returning to the British Isles from the North American coast and the Caribbean were increasingly common. The sailors mentioned by Churcher may have been the crew of a ship returning from a voyage of exploration. Expeditions such as these went to the coast of North America and returned with new plant species to satisfy the medical, scientific and aesthetic curiosities of Europeans.<sup>66</sup> Or they may have been brought

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<sup>60</sup> B.F. Howells, “Pembrokeshire Farming circa 1580-1620,” 313-333; James, 120-123.

<sup>61</sup> Linnard, 64.

<sup>62</sup> Churcher, 8.

<sup>63</sup> R.F. Walker, “The Manor of Manobier, Pembrokeshire, in the Early Seventeenth Century,” *National Library of Wales Journal* 27:2 (1991), 131-174, esp p.149.

<sup>64</sup> *Bowens of Trefloyne*.

<sup>65</sup> Churcher, ; Ayesha Mukherjee, “Floræ Paradise: Hugh Platt and the Economy of Early Modern Gardening,” *Seventeenth Century* 25 no 1 (2010) 1-26; Mark Laird, *The Flowering of the Landscape Garden: English Pleasure Grounds, 1720-1800*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 70.

<sup>66</sup> Russell M. Magnaghi, “Sassafras and its Role in Early America, 1562-1662,” *Terrae Incognitae, The Journal for the History of Discoveries*, 29, (1997), 10-21.; Mark Laird, 70; Friel, 111.

back to Britain by a commercial or privateering venture, returning from the New World. Vessels returning from the other side of the Atlantic sometimes found their way to Pembrokeshire ports.<sup>67</sup> One Robert Davie for example, reported the safe return of his ship to Milford Haven in 1595, after skirting Newfoundland on the way back from an unsuccessful privateering expedition to the West Indies.<sup>68</sup> It was not unusual for ships to resupply at Newfoundland before returning to Europe by the Northerly route across the Atlantic, as Humphrey Gilbert did in 1583.<sup>69</sup> It is also possible that the sailors Church referred to were fishermen who travelled to the shores of Newfoundland in the spring to fish for cod. Fishing fleets had travelled from Europe to the cod-rich fishing grounds off the Newfoundland coast since the early 1500s. Crews of men worked on the shoreline where they salted and dried fish in preparation to be shipped back to Europe. Much of the Tudor fishing fleet travelled from Southwestern England, but Welsh ships from Pembrokeshire ports such as Milford Haven, and Tenby started to join the fishery by the 1560s.<sup>70</sup> Some early voyages were made by combined Welsh and English crews. For example, the *Jesus* of Tenby headed to “the Newfoundland with the first wind and weather” in April of 1562, with a Welsh crew and a ship’s master from Plymouth.<sup>71</sup> Other cargoes of “newland fish” and “train oil” started to arrive on Welsh shores in the 1560s,<sup>72</sup> and were exclusively Welsh endeavours. The *Bark Perrotte*, captained and owned by Welshmen, returned to Milford Haven from Newfoundland in December of 1566, laden with 19,000 cod.<sup>73</sup> The ship’s master David Wogan and the owner Sir John Perrot were both from Pembrokeshire and were both neighbours of the Bowens. Perrot owned a small fleet of ships based out of Milford Haven, and several of these vessels travelled to Renewes and the Isle of Boys, off the coast of Newfoundland during the war with Spain.<sup>74</sup> Saplings could have easily arrived in Wales on board his ships, bound for the Haroldston or Carew estates. The port books demonstrate that shipments from Newfoundland were sometimes unloaded in Wales in the 1580s and ‘90s. Two Welshmen in particular, Morgan Powell of Pembroke and Thomas Powell of Haverfordwest, were active in the Newfoundland fishery at around this time, and transported cargoes of fish and train oil from Newfoundland to

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<sup>67</sup> E.A. Lewis, *Welsh Port Books 1556-1603* (Honourable society of Cymmrodorion, 1927) xxvii-xxviii.

<sup>68</sup> Richard Davie, “The Voyage of Amias Preston and Captain George Sommers to the West Indies,” in Richard Hakluyt, *The principal navigations voyages traffiques & discoveries of the English nation* Vol. 10 (reprint, 1903), 226.

<sup>69</sup> Kenneth Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire 1480-1630* London; Cambridge University Press, 1984), 194.

<sup>70</sup> Lewis, xxvii-xxviii.

<sup>71</sup> David B. Quinn, “Wales and the West,” in R.R. Davies, Ralph A. Griffiths, Ieuan Gwynedd Jones and Kenneth O. Morgan, *Welsh Society and Nationhood* (Cardiff; University of Wales Press, 1984), 94.

<sup>72</sup> Howells, “Squirearchy”, 25; Bowen, *Seafaring*, 67; Lewis, xxvii-xxviii.

<sup>73</sup> Lewis, 79.

<sup>74</sup> Quinn, “Wales and the West,” 94-5.

Milford Haven.<sup>75</sup> These cargoes were unloaded in Wales, and were sometimes then transported to English or other European ports. Interestingly, one Tenby-based ship that was involved in the export of Newfoundland cod to Continental Europe in the 1590s was mastered by Hugh Bowen, who was a cousin of Thomas Bowen.<sup>76</sup> Perhaps Hugh Bowen had contacts in the Newfoundland fishing trade who were interested in importing trees along with their other cargoes. Welsh participation in the Newfoundland fishery continued on a fairly small scale throughout the period, although the records of the surviving Port Books are incomplete, so it is difficult to tell the true scale of Welsh participation.<sup>77</sup> It is clear that there was ample opportunity for Welsh seafarers to travel to and from Newfoundland, perhaps transporting small cargoes of saplings on the decks of their ships, amid their fishing gear.

The Welsh were not strangers to Newfoundland, even if their investment in the trans-Atlantic fishing industry was overshadowed by the English. Two decades after the trees were planted in Welsh soil, a Welshman from Carmarthenshire, Sir William Vaughan, attempted to plant a Welsh colony on the southern coast of the Avalon Peninsula. The colony did not take root, but the venture demonstrated that Newfoundland had made an impression on the imaginations of other Welshmen besides Bowen. Even after Vaughan's enterprise failed, there was evidence of an ongoing, if muted, Welsh representation in Newfoundland history. The "Cambro-Briton" Captain Edward Wynne was present in the early life of the Ferryland plantation.<sup>78</sup> Other Welsh names, such as Powell and Williams also appeared in the early history of Newfoundland.<sup>79</sup> Morgan and Thomas Powell, and the merchant Lewes Roberts from North Wales all spent time in Newfoundland waters, as did John Wogan, and other unknown numbers of Welshmen who were participants in the early Newfoundland fishing industry. Some left a record of their endeavours in wills. In 1643, for example, one Nicholas Hobbs, "a 'gentleman', of Llangennech died leaving as part of his estate (half a boat) valued at £20 as well as 'certain goods sent by him in adventure to Newfoundland and by him given to his daughter Margaret Hobbs....'"<sup>80</sup> Bowen's

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 94-5.

<sup>76</sup> Lewis, 166; Major Francis Jones, "Bowen of Pentre Ifan and Llwyngwair," *The Pembrokeshire Historian: Journal of the Pembrokeshire Local History Society* No. 6 (1979), 25-57, especially 38; See B.M Add. MSS., 12507, f.188 and H.A. Lloyd, *The Gentry of South West Wales, 1540-1640*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1968), 88.

<sup>77</sup> Quinn, "Wales and the West," 95; Duncan Taylor, "The Maritime Trade of the Smaller Bristol Channel Ports in the Sixteenth Century," (PhD Diss. University of Bristol, 2009), 1-305. Taylor states "Royal authority was found to be particularly weak in this part of Wales which was dominated by local magnates and their followers who appear largely to have chosen to ignore the new customs regime introduced in mid-century." 196-7.

<sup>78</sup> Quinn, "Wales and the West," 95.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 95; "Williams," in William Kirwin Seary, *Family Names of the Island of Newfoundland*. (Toronto: McGill-Queens Press, 1998), 550.

<sup>80</sup> Moelwyn Williams, "Life in Seventeenth Century Carmarthenshire," *The Carmarthenshire Historian* 14 (1977).

interest in trees from “the Newfoundland”, and his small role as a forestry pioneer provide a further demonstration that the Welsh had a role to play in the shaping of the early modern world.

Thomas Bowen died in 1617. During the Civil War, his grand-son, also named Thomas, was one of twenty-four gentlemen who signed a Protestation of Loyalty to the King.<sup>81</sup> The declaration ensured that when the war came to Southern Pembrokeshire, the Bowens of Trefloyne were affected. In 1643, in preparation for a Parliamentary assault on Southern Pembrokeshire, Richard Vaughan, Lord Carberry,<sup>82</sup> garrisoned the estate with Royalist troops. The fortified house was assaulted by Parliamentary troops in early 1644 in an offensive to clear Pembrokeshire of Royalist forces. Trefloyne was bombarded, “causing the walls to be slighted”.<sup>83</sup> After a spirited defense the estate was surrendered by Carberry and was subsequently looted by triumphant Parliamentary troops. It is unclear how well the wooded land around the manor house survived the process of fortification, the battle, or the aftermath, but we do know that the damage to the estate was extensive. Following the war, Trefloyne was reclaimed and rebuilt by the Bowens, but eventually passed through marriage to the Philipps family of Picton Castle. After the Philipps inherited the manor, it was inhabited by a series of tenants.<sup>84</sup> By the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Trefloyne was abandoned and quickly fell into ruin. Today, any trace of the manor or the garden has disappeared, although there is still evidence of the dovecot.<sup>85</sup> Another building was built on the property in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, slightly to the north of the original house. The area that was the garden is now the parking lot for the Trefloyne Golf Course, which owns the land of Bowen’s original estate. In the nineteenth century “evergreen pines and silver firs” were said to grow in the area,<sup>86</sup> and still grow amongst the deciduous trees on the edge of the golf course and elsewhere. Perhaps some of these trees are descendants of trees brought across the Atlantic from Newfoundland in the late 1590s.

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<sup>81</sup> *Bowens of Trefloyne*.

<sup>82</sup> Sir William Vaughan was Carberry’s uncle.

<sup>83</sup> *Bowen of Trefloyne*.

<sup>84</sup> Margaret Davies, *A Murder of Crows: The Story of Penally* (2001), 38-9.

<sup>85</sup> Coflein, “Trefloyne,” RCAHMW, <http://www.coflein.gov.uk/en/search/>

<sup>86</sup> George Huntingdon, “A George Herbert of the Nineteenth Century,” *Monthly Packet* Third Series, Vol. XIII, January-June, 1887, 575.