

THE GATEWAY GARDENS TRUST

The Gateway Gardens Trust creates and pays for special tailor-made visits to historic parks and gardens in Wales and the West Midlands for a diverse range of community groups, schoolchildren and Lifelong Learners.

For more information about **Bittersweet** or our other visit programmes contact: Jeanette Hill 01558 669158 or Anna Shakespeare 01758 770544

Additional information about the history of the slave trade can be found on the following websites: www.antislavery.org, www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/abolition, www.bbc.co.uk/wales/history/sites/slavery, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/slavery/



It is estimated that some 11-12 million Africans were transported across the Atlantic Ocean into slavery.

The journey from West Africa to the Caribbean the Middle Passage - sometimes took more than eight weeks.

Nine inches is the total amount of width space one slave had in a ship's hold: he had to lie on his side with only 2'7" of headroom.



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Helpu Pobl i Ddarganfod Gerddi



THE
GATEWAY GARDENS TRUST

Helping People Discover Gardens

www.gatewaygardenstrust.org

BITTERSWEET



Clwb Pensiwywr

visits

Portmeirion

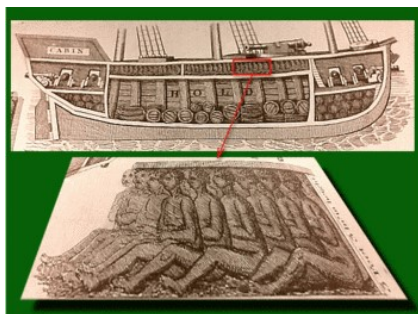
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Tuesday 20th November 2007

2007 commemorates the 200th anniversary of the **1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act** in Britain. This meant that British ships would no longer be allowed to transport slaves, but slavery continued in the New World: in the British Empire until 1834, in the French Empire until 1848, and in Brazil until the 1880s. Our new **Bittersweet** Project looks at the links between the slave trade and historic gardens, their makers, what they planted, Welsh abolitionists and the wider links with local communities in Wales.

Sir Clough Williams-Ellis designed and then constructed the village of **Portmeirion** between 1925 and 1975. The main building of the hotel, and the cottages called "White Horses", "Mermaid" and "The Salutation" had been a private estate called **Aber Iâ (Ice estuary)**, developed in the 1850s, **on the site of a foundry and boatyard which was active in the late 18th century**. Williams-Ellis changed the name, which he interpreted as "frozen mouth", to Portmeirion - Port to place it on the coast, Meirion from the county of Merioneth / Meirionydd in which it then lay.

A visit to Portmeirion gives us the opportunity to look at the history of ship building in the area. Liverpool was the main centre of the slave trade in that period; on average, a ship left Liverpool for Africa to purchase slaves every three days. **In the hundred years before the slave trade was abolished in 1807, approximately 5,000 slave ships commenced their voyages from Liverpool** (compared to about 2,000 from Bristol and 3,000 from London).



In J Ge-raint Jenkins' book, "Traddodiad y Môr" he quotes the following words from a visitor to nearby **Pwllheli** in 1801:

*"This little town seems in a flourishing condition. I saw a large **Guineman** on the stocks, fitted for 600 slaves"*.

This "Guineman" was probably called "Mary", (also known as **Welsh Mary**) a 426 ton ship, she was by far the largest ship to be built at Pwllheli in 1801 and she was constructed for a Liverpool owner, a Mr Courtenay. A "Guineman" was a ship for trading with Guinea on the coast of Africa. More than 400 ships were built in Pwllheli between the 18th and 19th centuries, the Welsh Mary would have been one of the largest ships to sail from the town.

Pwllheli and Nefyn were considered to be cheap places for shipbuilding. In 1851 there were 256 men employed and were paid 2/- to 2/6d per day



with an extra sixpence for the wear and tear on their tools as the timbers on the old ships had become very hard with age. Sails, chains and anchors, etc were brought in from Liverpool or Bristol, The ships were built on the seashore, which could take two or three years. They were made so they

could be sailed directly on to the beach, and after being unloaded, be easily floated out on the next high tide. **The original ships were built entirely of oak** and were exceedingly strong to withstand the enormous stresses and strains of carrying heavy cargo in stormy weather. The oak used for their construction were rafted across the bay, or brought in ships, from Maentwrog.



At Portmeirion today you will find a very different landscape than that seen by the boat builders of years gone by. Look out for many different types of trees: large Douglas Firs, Coast Redwoods, Wellingtonia, Noble and Himalayan Firs planted in the 1850s. Around the Hotel, are large evergreen Holm Oak., Portugal and Cherry Laurels, Strawberry Tree, Rhododendrons Yew, and Bay. In the woodland there is a very large specimen of Griselinia littoralis (known as "The Dancing Tree") and a group of Monkey Puzzles.