

## 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

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



From 1690-1807 British ships captured and transported approximately 2.8 million West African people across the Atlantic Ocean.

One third of the people captured, died within the first three years of their life on a Plantation.

By the 1790s, on average, every adult in Britain consumed more than 20 pounds of sugar per year.



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Helpu Pobl i Ddarganfod Gerddi



THE  
GATEWAY GARDENS TRUST

Helping People Discover Gardens

[www.gatewaygardenstrust.org](http://www.gatewaygardenstrust.org)

**BITTERSWEET**



The Expert Patient Programme  
Volunteers

visit

The National Botanic Garden of Wales

on

Friday 14th December 2007

for

'The icing on the cake'



**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 the local community in Wales.



The National Botanic Garden of Wales is built upon land that was once part of the **Middleton Estate** developed by **William Paxton**. In 1824 **Edward Hamlin Adams**, a wealthy merchant from Jamaica, bought the hall and estate. He was born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1777, where his family had moved to during the British civil war. They were wealthy plantation owners. His wife came from Philadelphia in America, where her father **Captain John MacPherson**, had been a privateer and fought in the American Revolution. He had earned enough money at sea to have a large house built called Mount Pleasant, he too, would have possibly had slaves as servants.

Edward Hamlin Adams became the MP for Carmarthenshire. He would have voted in the 1833 bill that abolished slavery throughout the British Empire.



On slave plantations Christmas week was a time of bittersweet revelry. Harvest was in, and slaves were given time off to rest and play. They were issued a new set of clothes, as well as food and often alcohol. However the celebrations were tinged with worry, since the first of the year was the time for selling and leasing slaves to other plantations, and the week often ended with painful, lifelong separations — hardly a symbol of "peace on earth."

At one time our traditional Christmas cake would not have been possible without slave produced sugar. In fact, it can contain ingredients originating from all over the world. **Sugar**, fruit, nuts, and spices, and even the wheat to make the flour, these ingredients can travel thousands of miles before being mixed together to make the cake. Many are from plants grown in countries that were once involved in the slave trade.



Many years ago people in Britain would make boiled **fruitcake** for their families who had gone to the colonies of Australia and Canada, or were missionaries. The boiled cakes lasted better than the baked ones, and in those days, they could take many weeks or months even to cross the world by ship. These cakes were usually sent as part of a **Christmas Hamper** of food and presents, and this way the tradition of **Christmas cake**, often eaten with a piece of cheese or apple pie, became known all over the world.

Here at Middleton Hall, Edward's granddaughter, **Alice Abadam**, wrote about how Christmas was celebrated in the late nineteenth century:



*"There was a great influx of 'Duty' turkeys, geese, ducks, and chickens at Christmas, these being part payment for rent from tenants. The 'Duty' fowls were packed into gift hampers, together with plum puddings, cakes and mince pies, to be sent to the clergy, the doctors, friends and relatives at a distance, to help their Christmas cheer."*

From memoirs written for the book on Llanarthne by Rev J Jenkins published in 1939

The celebrations at Middleton hall could well have included family traditions from Jamaica, and America as well as local Welsh ones.