

# AMGUEDDFA CYMRU



Everywhere in Chains  
Wales and Slavery

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# Everywhere in Chains

## Wales and Slavery

‘Everywhere in Chains...’ looks at the role played by Welsh people in both supporting and opposing the transatlantic trade in enslaved African People from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.

*We recognise that a small proportion of the historical materials used within this resource contain words or imagery that may be upsetting or offensive. We have taken the decision not to remove or suppress historical content as it is important in tracing our diverse histories. Instead, we are working to identify and contextualise any potentially upsetting or offensive content.*

# Everywhere in Chains

## Wales and Slavery

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*Mae'r adnodd hwn ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This resource is available in Welsh.*



# ***Slavery***

*Being under complete control  
of another person, without  
rights, freedom or choice.*

The transatlantic trade in enslaved African people began from the early sixteenth century (about 400 years ago). In 1807, the British parliament passed an Act to abolish the trade in enslaved people, but it was merely the first step in a long campaign to abolish the trade.



- ▲ This image of a kneeling slave was commissioned by the Abolition Society from the potter Josiah Wedgwood in 1788. It became an icon for anti-slavery movements throughout the world during the next hundred years.



▼ *A romanticised view of enslaved people cutting sugar cane on Henry De La Beche's Jamaican plantation, 1824*



© Amgueddfa Cymru

Campaigns to stop the transatlantic trade in enslaved African people had been started by Black and White people more than thirty years before the Act was finally passed. Even after 1807 enslaved people living in British colonies were not actually set free until 1834. And even though many had their freedom, many enslaved people would still labour as “apprentices” for many years, which some saw as a continuation of the trade.

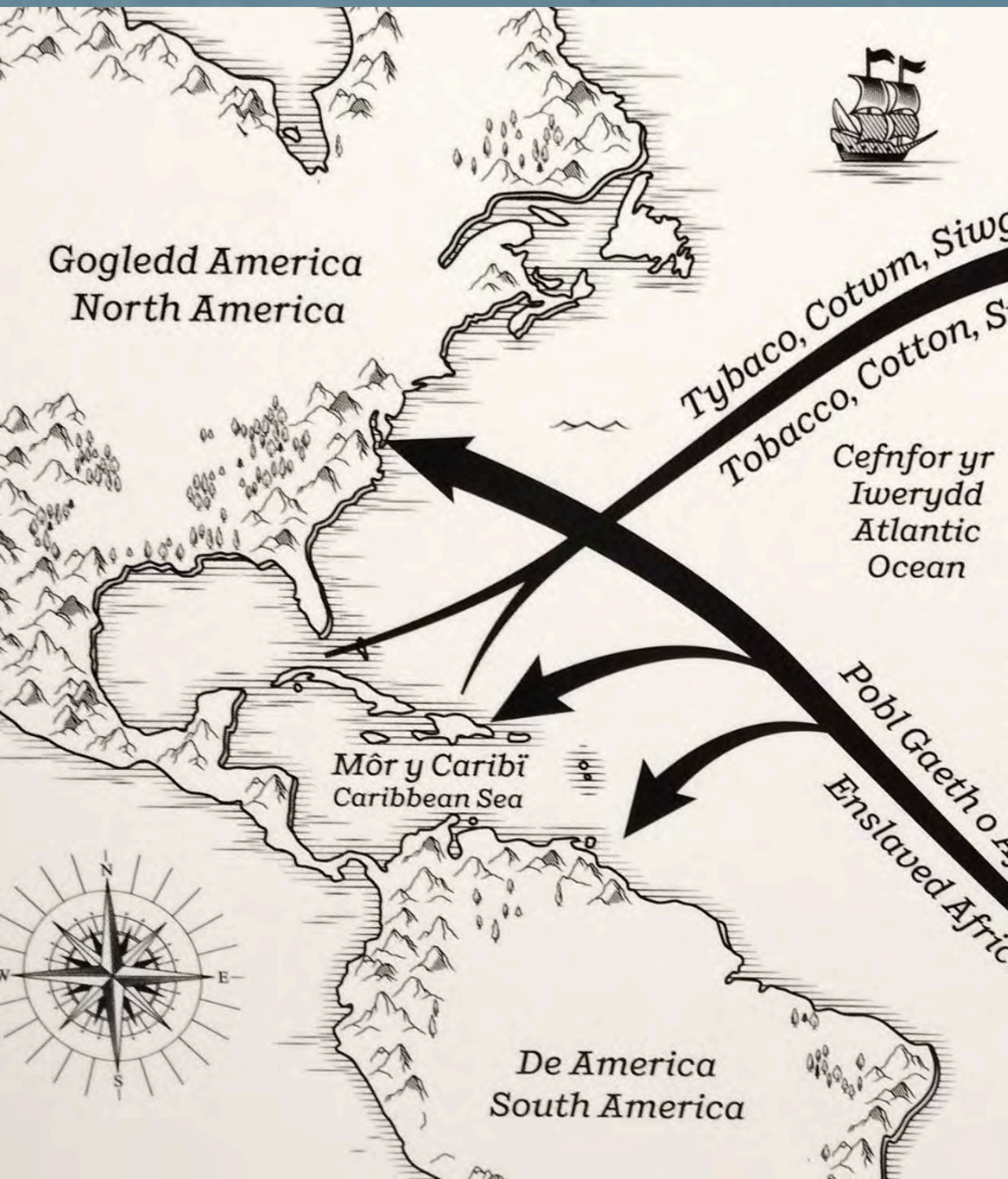
The trade in enslaved African people was driven by the growth of capitalism and consumerism. The growing European market for products such as tobacco, sugar and cotton quickly developed into an economic system known as the 'Triangular Trade'. Goods were made in Britain, then shipped to Africa and used to buy enslaved people, who were taken to the Americas and West Indies and sold, then the products they were forced to make were shipped back to Britain.



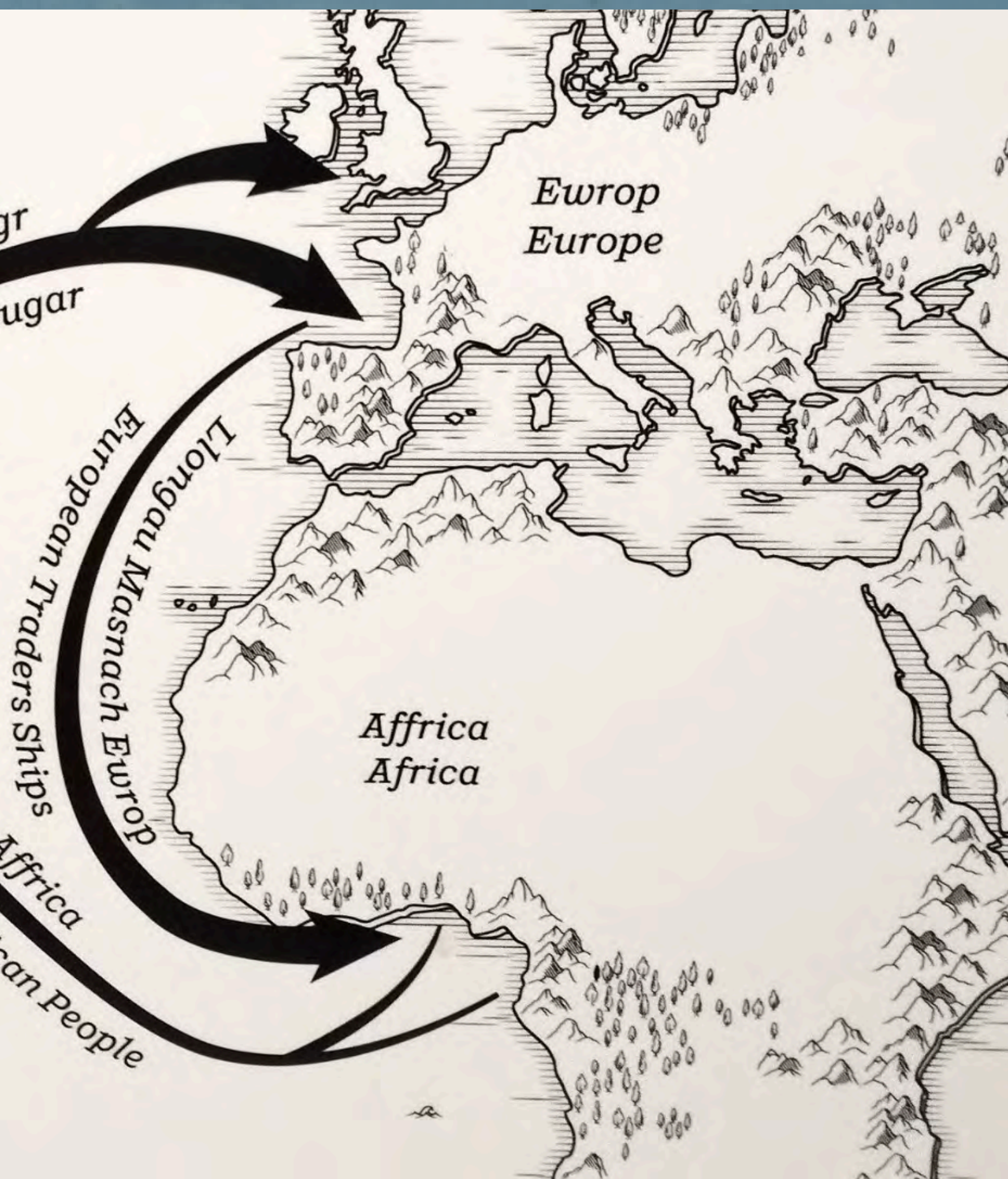
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▲ *Naparima, Trinidad*, T.J. & J. Mayer, 1853










▲ Map of the 'Triangular Trade' - Estimates of the numbers vary greatly but at least 12 million Africans were taken abroad by force to be enslaved labour.



# Everywhere in Chains Enabling slavery



Life in the West Indies could be dangerous and short for both Africans and Europeans. However, ambitious white people could often make lots of money and rise rapidly up the social ladder. Many Welsh people became involved in the trade in enslaved African people through different professions.



- ▲ Good conduct medal - Henry De La Beche, who owned sugar plantations in Jamaica, created these medals to encourage the enslaved people working on his plantations.



Many Welsh mariners served on the ships transporting enslaved people, including Thomas Philips of Brecon. He was commander of the ship Hannibal.

▼ Thomas Phillip's pamphlet is detailed and horrific. His voyage went from Gravesend in England to the Guinea coast and then to Barbados.

\*The below excerpt contains racist words used during the period.

### *A Journal of a Voyage to*

yesterday in the afternoon I came off with a resolution to go to sea Accordingly about six in the evening we got up our anchors, and set sail for *Barbadoes*, being forc'd to leave the *East-India merchant* behind, who could not get ready to sail in nine or ten days ; which time I could not afford to stay, in respect of the mortality of my negroes, of which two or three died every day, also the small quantity of provisions I had to serve for my passage to *Barbadoes* We stood off E and E. by N. with a small breeze at S. W. till 8, when we had a fine fresh gale at S. steering off N. E. N. N. E and N. till 10 o'clock, when we were abreast the *Cabras*, then hal'd up N. N. W. and N. W. till 12, at which time it fell stark calm, and continued so till



The sailors worked closely with 'Factors' or middlemen stationed in the trading forts on the African coast. Among them was Samuel Davies of St Dogmaels, Pembrokeshire, who was a factor on the Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1736.

## *A Journal of a Voyage to*

winds here all between the S. and W. S. W. constantly, and the current sets strong to the N. so that there was no plying against wind and tide

Sunday the 26th. Yesterday at two in the evening sprung up a fine breeze at S. S. W. but soon veer'd to W. S. W. we keeping up W. N. W. and N. W. the wind often shifting a point or two. At noon this day the island of *St. Thomas* being in latitude  $00^{\circ} 10'$  N. bore off us S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  E. distant 14 leagues, from which take my departure for *Barbadoes*, we being then 27 miles to the N. and 33 miles to the west of it, as appears by the following table, which I have rather chose to annex, shewing the course of our sailing every day, than write every 24 hours work down at large, which had been tedious, since nothing extraordinary occurred to us in our voyage

The rapid growth of industry in Wales during the eighteenth century was, in many cases, paid for by profits that came from industries in the West Indies and the Americas that relied on enslaved labour.

▼ *Port Penrhyn, Moses Griffith - Richard Pennant invested money earned from Jamaican plantations into developing Port Penrhyn*





▼ *Penrhyn Slate Quarries, near Bangor, Alfred Sumners*



© Amgueddfa Cymru

Richard Pennant (1737-1808) owned 8,000 acres of land in Jamaica, which was worked by over 600 enslaved people. He invested the profits he made from the sugar and rum, made by enslaved people, to finance and expand the Penrhyn slate quarry, in Gwynedd. He also built the harbour of Port Penrhyn at Bangor. Later, his family rebuilt Penrhyn Castle.



*Cyfarthfa Ironworks, Penry Williams, 1817 ▼*



© Amgueddfa Cymru

Anthony Bacon, a merchant from Cumberland, transported enslaved people from Africa across the West Indies and America. He also provided the British government enslaved people for construction projects. In 1765 he invested his profits in Merthyr Tydfil, establishing the Cyfarthfa Ironworks.

Iron forges in places such as Bassaleg, near Newport, produced 'Voyage iron', small iron bars which were traded for enslaved people.

Copper mines in Anglesey and copperworks in Swansea, Penclawdd and Holywell benefited heavily. Copper and brass goods included objects known as 'manillas', which were used to buy enslaved people on the West African coast.



▲ Brass manilla from wreck of DOURO, 1843 - Depending on the period 10-60 manillas were traded for an enslaved person.



In mid Wales, the flourishing woollen industry produced 'Welsh Plains', a heavy, coarse woollen cloth. The material was traded in Africa for enslaved people and used to make clothes for enslaved people on plantations in the Americas and West Indies.

▼ *Cynwyd Mill near Corwen in Merionethshire, Paul Sandby, 1771*



© Amgueddfa Cymru

*Sugar Casks, Bristol, 1854 ▼*



Enslaved labour has been closely linked to the rise of capitalism. People working in industry earned higher wages and the market for luxury goods in Britain began to grow. The cheapest way of producing some of these goods was with the use of enslaved labour.

Most of the coffee consumed in Britain came from plantations using enslaved labour. Between 1750 and 1820, sugar became Britain's largest single import. Nearly all of it was produced in the West Indies using enslaved labour.

▼ *The Port of Liverpool*



© Amgueddfa Cymru

By the eighteenth-century Bristol and Liverpool were the main British ports for the trade of enslaved people. With both cities being so close to Wales it is not surprising that many Welsh people became involved in the trade.



Jeffrey Jeffreys of Llywel, Breconshire, transported shiploads of enslaved people to Virginia in the 1670s and 1680s. He brought tobacco, sugar and wood back to Britain. He was elected 'Assistant' (Director) of the Royal African Company, which ran all the British transatlantic trade in enslaved African people between 1663 and 1698.



© Amgueddfa Cymru

- ▲ *Sugar Cutter - Sugar was originally sold in loafs or cones. These would be cut into smaller pieces using a sugar cutter. Between 1750 and 1800 sugar was the most valuable imported product coming into Britain.*

A money-making sideline of the sugar plantations was rum. In the 1790s the West Indies took 24% of the copper exported from Britain, 90% of which was from Wales. This copper was used to make pans and stills for sugar and rum production.



© Amgueddfa Cymru

- ▲ A Guinea showing King William III and Queen Mary II, struck in 1694 - The coins were originally made from gold brought from Guinea in West Africa.



▼ Tobacco box, japanned ware, made in Pontypool, 1749



© Amgueddfa Cymru

Tobacco, cotton, indigo (a blue dye), rice and hardwoods such as mahogany were produced using enslaved labour. All these products became cheap, staple goods for ordinary working people as well as for the rich. It could be argued that the consumer society of today has its origins in the eighteenth-century trade in enslaved African people.

The background of the image is a dark blue-grey color. Overlaid on this is a large, semi-circular, embossed design that resembles the reverse side of a coin. The design features the words "WHAT'S YER WORTH" in a serif font, arranged in two lines. Below this, there is a small, stylized figure of a person. At the bottom of the design, the words "TO YOU" are visible. The overall effect is a subtle, textured background that contrasts with the white text.

# Everywhere in Chains Opposing Slavery





## ***Abolition Movement***

*Various groups, societies and individuals who all wanted to see an end to the practice of slavery.*

- ▼ Ceramic tower shaped spit support decorated with an anti-slavery medallion impression and several stamped impressions.



© Amgueddfa Cymru

The abolition movement in Britain grew out of the 'Committee for Abolition of the African Slave Trade' which was formed in 1787. Its leaders were William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharp.



The Welsh attitude to the campaign was 'patchy and inconsistent'. Many people depended on the trade of enslaved people for their livelihoods, either directly or indirectly. Others, aware that their local landlord owned enslaved people in the West Indies, were reluctant to condemn the trade publicly. Many more people simply did not know about enslaved people, or care about the enslavement of foreign people thousands of miles away.



▲ Detail of ceramic spit

Many ordinary people did quietly support abolition, some refused to buy West Indian sugar, for example.

However, some people were very vocal about their opposition to the trade, including the poet and antiquary Edward Williams (Iolo Morgannwg), and Morgan John Rhys, a Baptist minister from Llanbradach.

- ▼ *Thomas Williams, agent for Parys Copper Mines, Anglesey, opposed abolition because he thought it would destroy the copper industry.*





Eventually, 20 petitions were sent by towns in Wales to Parliament asking for abolition.

The anti-slavery movement in Wales was still behind the rest of Britain though as in the same time frame England had presented 310 petitions and Scotland 187.

▼ *Parys Copper Mines, Anglesey, 1804.*



© Amgueddfa Cymru



# B I L L,

INTITULED,

An ACT for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

---

Note.—*The Figures in the Margin denote the Number of the Presses  
in the Ingrossment.*

---

\*\*\*\*\* HEREBY the *African* Slave Trade is contrary to the  
\* \* \* \* \* Principles of Justice, Humanity, and sound Policy :

\*\*\*\*\* And whereas the Two Houses of Parliament did, by their  
Resolutions of the tenth and twenty-fourth days of June one thousand  
eight hundred and six, severally resolve, That they, considering the *African*  
Slave Trade to be contrary to the Principles of Justice, Humanity, and  
sound Policy, would, with all practicable Expedition, take effectual  
Measures for the Abolition of the said Trade, in such manner, and at such  
period as might be deemed adviseable :

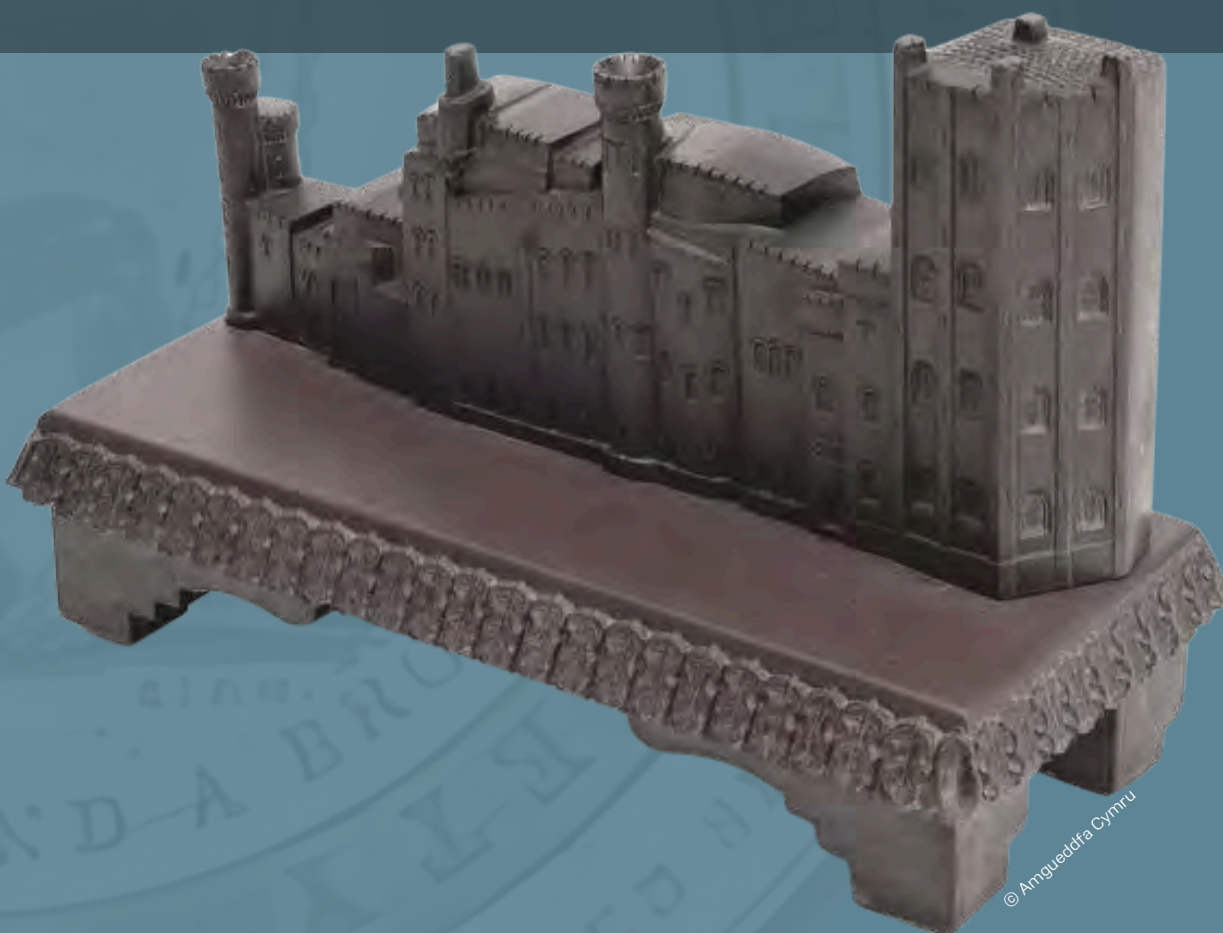
In 1807 the British Parliament finally passed an act to ban the transport of people from Africa to the colonies.

Although it was illegal for British ships to transport people from Africa to the Americas and West Indies after 1807, it was still legal to own or purchase enslaved people in the British colonies.



In Wales, the campaign for total abolition began. Between 1807 and 1834 hundreds of thousands of people signed petitions and attended protest meetings.

Thomas Clarkson, a leader of the abolition movement, toured Wales in 1824. His progress did not meet with support everywhere. In north Wales he faced great opposition from the supporters of the powerful Pennant family.



▲ Carved slate model of Penrhyn Castle - Penrhyn Castle, the impressive Welsh home of the Pennant family, built in 1827 using profits from their extensive Jamaican estates.



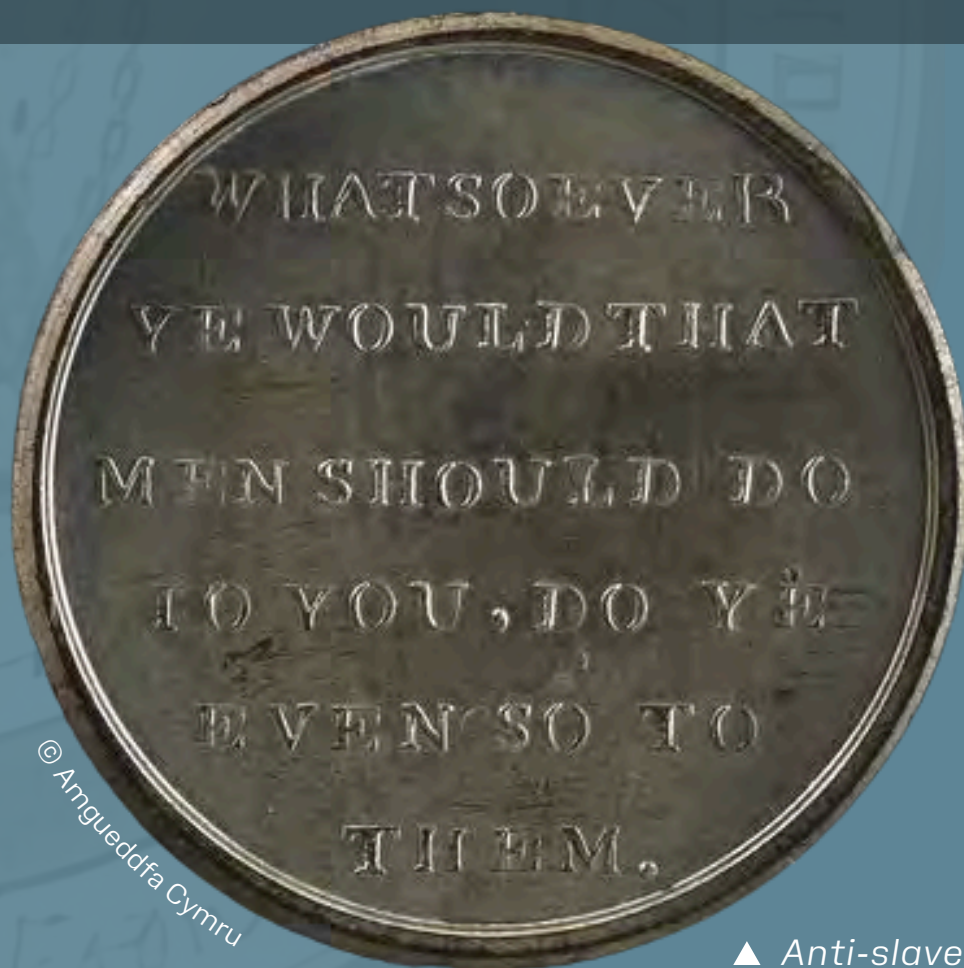
▲ *Neath Abbey with colliery in foreground and Neath Abbey smelting works in distance, by E Donovan, 1805*

Joseph Tregelles Price, the manager of Neath Abbey Ironworks, was the driving force behind the anti-slavery movement in Swansea and Neath. As the secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, he called on Parliament to finally abolish 'Slavery throughout the British Dominions.'



The abolition movement certainly played an important role in the British government's decision to emancipate enslaved people. However, there is no doubt that the resistance of the enslaved people themselves was an equally important factor. Rebellions in the colonies encouraged support in Britain for the end of slavery.

In 1834, slavery was abolished in most of the British Empire, but it continued in many counties and places around the world.



© Angueddfa Cymru

▲ Anti-slavery medal

AMERICAN

FOR ONE NIGHT  
ONLY,



SLAVERY.

As the Lecturer is  
under an obligation  
to return to Upper  
Canada.

On *Wednesday* Evening, *August 11<sup>th</sup>* 1852  
A

# LECTURE

WILL BE DELIVERED IN THE

*Douglas Girls' School-rooms*

BY

## MR. JOHN BROWN,

*A Man of Colour, from the State of Georgia,*

**When he will detail his experience of American Slavery and wonderful escape.**

He is noted for his object, and supported by People of all Denominations. A number of testimonials from influential Gentlemen may be seen on application.

Drawings will be exhibited showing his escape, capture, and punishment: he will also appear in his horns and bells, such as are worn by recaptured slaves.

Mr. J. B. will recite the sufferings he endured under the hands of Dr. Hamilton, who practiced upon him for experiments; one of which was to put him down into a burning hot pit dug in the earth, and almost deprived him of respiration, to try the strength of his constitution,—the manner of which process he will fully demonstrate to the satisfaction of the audience, by burning a portion of atmospheric air in their presence. He will also introduce his Magic Bottle, showing the pressure of the Atmosphere; he will explain the reason why a Coloured Man can stand a greater degree of heat than a White Person.

*Doors open at Seven o'Clock; the Chair to be taken at Eight o'Clock.—Admission: Front Seats, 6d.; Back Seats, 3d.; Children and Schools, Half-price. Tickets may be had of* *at the entrance*

W. MORRIS, PRINTER AND STATIONER, STAMP-OFFICE, HIGH-STREET, SWANSEA.

- ▲ This poster was produced in Swansea for a lecture tour by a freed slave campaigning for abolition in the United States of America. It uses a crude copy of Josiah Wedgwood's "kneeling slave" image of 1788.



Many of the local anti-slavery societies that had been established across Wales during the abolition campaigns turned their attention to the issue of freeing enslaved people in the United States. Welsh people organised protest meetings and presented petitions to Parliament to support abolition in the United States. Several fugitive enslaved people, including Henry Box Brown, Frederick Douglass and William Craft, visited Wales and told the stories of their enslavement to audiences across the country.

BY  
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W. MORRIS, PRINTER AND STATIONER, STAMP-OFFICE, HIGH-STREET, SWANSEA.

In the USA, settlers from Wales were on the front line in the abolition battle. One example was Robert Everett, a Congregationalist minister from Flintshire, who emigrated to Utica, New York in 1823. Everett was responsible for mobilising opinion against slavery amongst the Welsh community through his publications *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd* and *Y Dyngarwr*.

At the end of the American Civil War in 1865, the American Congress abolished slavery in the United States.



© Angueddfa Cymru

▲ Anti-slavery medal



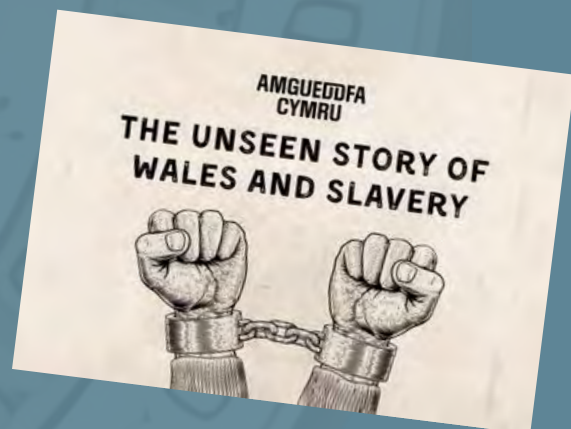
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## Wales and Slavery

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More learning resource about the  
history of slavery and Wales