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Dublin Core

Title

My Life on the Irish Sea: A Few Memories I | Fy Mywyd ar Fôr Iwerddon: Ambell i Atgof I

Subject

Welsh and Irish archaeology

Irish Sea Crossings

Dublin Port

Holyhead

Dun Laoghaire

Creator

Frances Lynch Llewellyn

Publisher

Ports, Past and Present Project

Date

2023

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Relation

<https://perma.cc/4WJF-UKNZ>

Format

Curatescape story

Language

English

Welsh

Coverage

53.274514668675245, -5.321398513275626

Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

Lede

Welsh-Irish archaeologist, Frances Lynch Llewellyn, recounts memories of her field trips to Ireland, and the sea crossings from Holyhead to Dublin and Dun Laoghaire from the 1960s to the present day.

Lede (Welsh)

Mae Frances Lynch Llewellyn, archeolegydd Cymreig-Gwyddelig, yn hel atgofion am ei theithiau maes i Iwerddon, ac am groesi'r môr o Gaergybi i Ddulyn a Dun Laoghaire rhwng y 1960au a heddiw.

Story

As my name suggests, I have crossed the Irish Sea many times. I first went to Ireland to pursue archaeology in 1960 when I was researching the North Wales megalithic tombs and needed to see the Irish ones as well.

My memory of that first visit to Brennanstown portal tomb, in south Dublin, was not so much its enormous capstone, but the old man I met in the lane pushing a bicycle with two buckets of water on the handlebars. In 2000, visiting Brennanstown with a group of undergraduate students, we gasped, not at the capstone, but at the enormous cost of the houses being built near Brennanstown now!

Over the years there have been a lot of changes at Brennanstown. In 1960 we walked from the lane across a couple of green fields. By the time I was bringing students on regular bi-annual tours a large bungalow had been built and a garden blocked the route. Ask at the door – go through, no problem. A few years later it was even better – an architect had bought the property and he had created a path and a stile. No need to ask even. Then it became the home of a Middle Eastern diplomat and was guarded by men with guns. Rather more tricky. Then it was the home of a notoriously ferocious dog; it growled, but we got to see the tomb.

In 1965 I was working at the Newgrange excavations and I had a car but there were no car ferries then, and it had to come on a merchant boat to North Wall. I well remember standing by the boat watching the car swaying on a crane to bump down beside me on the quay. On the way north I had a slight contretemps with a man in a van. He got out and rubbed my car where he'd scratched the paint, and said "That will be OK in the morning!"

One year, after a rough sea crossing from Dublin to Holyhead, I was feeling rather sea sick. Then I looked out of the window and saw Holyhead Mountain and immediately felt better. Who says magic mountains don't exist! That mountain is certainly one! It has so much history on it. The leeward slope is covered with round stone houses occupied throughout prehistory; the summit is crowned with a late prehistoric fort and with a Roman signal station, alerting the fort below to the arrival of Irish raiders. It is sad, since ships became motorised, that there is no reason for travellers to be held up in Holyhead any more, with time

to visit its fascinating church – founded by St Cybi in the 6th century inside the Roman fort below, whose walls still surround it.

Over the years that I have been travelling, the ferries have changed out of all recognition. I can't honestly remember when I first took a group of students from Bangor University for a weekend's fieldwork in Ireland in a minibus. We went every other year – an ideal interval to observe the changes and the growth of the Celtic Tiger from 1973 when both Ireland and the UK joined the EU.

For travelling alone, the High Speed Ships (the HSS) were really useful – leave Holyhead about 8.00am and be in the National Museum by 11.00am – home again by midnight. The first one I travelled on was not comfortable: it was a rough ride – every hard surface padded and lots of grab rails! But they quickly stabilised them. They were introduced in the mid-1990s but are now gone: like Concorde - wonderful, but too expensive to run.

Story (Welsh)

Fel y mae fy enw yn awgrymu, rydw i wedi croesi Môr Iwerddon sawl gwaith. Euthum i Iwerddon y tro cyntaf ar drywydd archeoleg ym 1960 pan oeddwn yn ymchwilio beddrodau megalithig Gogledd Cymru, ac roedd angen i mi weld y rhai Gwyddelig hefyd.

Fy atgof o'r ymweliad cyntaf hwnnw â beddrod porthol Brennanstown, yn ne Dulyn, oedd yr hen ddyn a welais wrth ymyl y ffordd yn gwthio beic a dau fwcad o ddŵr ar y cyrn, yn hytrach na'r maen capan enfawr. Yn 2000, wrth ymweld â Brennanstown gyda grŵp o fyfyrwyr israddedig, ebychom, nid o weld y maen capan, ond o weld cost sylweddol y tai sy'n cael eu hadeiladu ger Brennanstown nawr!

Dros y blynyddoedd, bu nifer fawr o newidiadau yn Brennanstown. Ym 1960, cerddom o'r ffordd fechan gan groesi ychydig gaeau gwyrdd. Erbyn yr oeddwn yn dod â myfyrwyr ar deithiau rheolaidd bob chwe mis, roedd byngalo mawr wedi cael ei adeiladu ac roedd gardd yn rhwystro'r llwybr. Ar ôl holi wrth y drws – roedd croeso i ni groesi, dim problem. Ychydig flynyddoedd yn ddiweddarach, roedd yn well fyth – roedd pensaer wedi prynu'r eiddo ac wedi creu llwybr a chamfa. Nid oedd angen gofyn hyd yn oed. Yna, bu'n gartref diplomydd o'r Dwyrain Canol, ac roedd dynion â gynnu yn ei warchod. Roedd hynny ychydig yn anos. Yna, bu'n gartref ci ffyrnig iawn; arferai chwyrnu atom, ond cawsom weld y beddrod.

Ym 1965, roeddwn yn gweithio yng ngwaith cloddio Newgrange ac roedd car gennyf, ond nid oedd fferïau ceir ar y pryd, ac roedd wedi cyrraedd North Wall ar long fasnachol. Cofiaf yn dda sefyll wrth y llong yn gwyllo'r car yn siglo ar graen, cyn cael ei roi i lawr wrth fy ymyl ar y cei. Ar y ffordd i'r gogledd, cefais ddamwain fechan gyda dyn mewn fan. Daeth allan a rhwbio fy nghar lle'r oedd wedi crafu'r paent, a dywedodd “Bydd hwn yn iawn yn y bore!”

Un flwyddyn, ar ôl croesi o Ddulyn i Gaergybi yn ystod tywydd garw, roeddwn yn teimlo ychydig yn sâl. Yna edrychais allan o'r ffenestr a gwelais Fynydd Caergybi, a theimlais yn well yn syth. Mae mynyddoedd hud yn bodoli! Heb os, mae hwn yn un! Mae cymaint o hanes iddo. Mae'r llethr cysgodol wedi'i orchuddio â thai cerrig crwn y bu pobl yn byw ynddynt trwy gydol cynhanes; mae caer cynhanesyddol hwyr ar y brig, gyda gorsaf rybuddio Rufeinig, a fyddai'n hysbysu'r caer oddi tano am ddyfodiad ysbeilwyr o Iwerddon. Mae'n drist nad oes rheswm i deithwyr gael eu dal yng Nghaergybi mwyach ers dyfodiad llongau modur, a'u bod yn cael amser i ymweld â'i heglwys ddiddorol iawn – a sefydlwyd gan St Cybi yn y 6ed ganrif y tu mewn i'r caer Rhufeinig oddi tani, y mae ei waliau yn ei hamgylchynu o hyd.

Dros y blynyddoedd yr wyf wedi bod yn teithio, mae llongau fferi wedi newid yn llwyr. Ni allaf gofio pryd oedd y tro cyntaf yr euthum â grŵp o fyfyrwyr o Brifysgol Bangor am benwythnos o waith maes yn Iwerddon mewn bws mini. Arferem fynd bob yn ail flwyddyn – seibiant delfrydol i arsylwi'r newidiadau a thwf y Teigr Gwyddelig o 1973 pan ymunodd Iwerddon a'r DU â'r Undeb Ewropeaidd.

Wrth deithio ar fy mhen fy hun, roedd y Llongau Cyflym (HSS) yn ddefnyddiol iawn – roeddwn yn arfer gadael Caergybi tua 8.00am a byddwn yn yr Amgueddfa Genedlaethol erbyn 11.00am – a gartref eto erbyn canol nos. Nid oedd yr un gyntaf y teithiais arni yn gyffyrddus: bu'n daith stormus – pob wyneb caled wedi'i glustogi a nifer fawr o ganllawiau er mwyn cydio ynddynt! Ond fe'u sefydlogwyd yn gyflym. Fe'u cyflwynwyd tua canol y 1990au, ond maent bellach wedi diflannu: fel Concorde – gwych, ond yn rhy ddrud i'w rhedeg.

Factoid

Related Resources

Lynch, F. 2023. 'My Life on the Irish Sea II', *Ports, Past and Present*.
<https://portspastpresent.eu/items/show/710>

Official Website