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Dublin Core

Title

The First Irish Sea Balloon Crossing: Beginnings | Croesiad Cyntaf Môr Iwerddon mewn Balŵn: Dechrau arni

Subject

Dublin
Irish Sea
Ballooning

Creator

Elizabeth Edwards

Publisher

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Date

2023

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Relation

<https://perma.cc/9H7F-N6S6>

Format

Curatescape story

Language

English

Welsh

Coverage

53.37159678901586, -6.255161642450217

Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

Lede

The invention of hot air balloon travel in the 1780s transformed the relationship between air and sea. But crossing the Irish Sea by balloon would prove to be no easy matter.

Lede (Welsh)

Cafodd y berthynas rhwng yr awyr a'r môr ei drawsnewid pan ddyfeisiwyd y balŵn aer poeth yn y 1780au. Ond nid ar chwarae bach y byddai Môr Iwerddon yn cael ei groesi mewn balŵn.

Story

From the first manned hot air balloon flight in Paris in November 1783, balloons exerted a powerful force on the public imagination. Early observers of hot air balloons were not sure exactly what they were for, but ballooning's capacity for setting new boundaries in travel and technical ingenuity was immediately clear. For the first time, journeys that had previously only been possible by sea could plausibly be considered in terms of air travel. As Paul Keen has pointed out, air balloons quickly became an early version of the 'space race', with aeronauts attempting increasingly daring feats such as crossing the English Channel. Crossing the Irish Sea by balloon power emerged early on as another challenge to be overcome, but it would be nearly thirty more years before aeronauts came close to successfully navigating the Dublin-Holyhead route by air.

The first manned balloon ascent in Ireland was made in January 1785, in Dublin, by Richard Crosbie (1755-1824). Some 20,000 people are said to have witnessed his trip into the sky and across Dublin Bay, where he landed at Clontarf. Crossing the Irish Sea by balloon was Crosbie's ultimate aim, but neither he nor the Scottish and French rivals who also attempted to cross the Irish Sea from Dublin in the 1780s managed it. Wartime in Europe following the French Revolution in 1789 put balloon sea crossing plans on hold, and it was not until 1812 that the next serious attempt was made. In 1812, the aeronaut planning to cross the Irish Sea was James Sadler (1753-1828), who had become the first English balloonist when he made a short flight from Oxford in October 1784.

Sadler's sea-crossing plan attracted a great deal of attention: over the summer of 1812, his balloon went on public display at Dublin's Rotunda, in an effort to raise funds towards the flight attempt. Scientists, politicians and writers emphasised the military and commercial uses of hot air balloons at various points in this period, but balloons arguably made their greatest impact in terms of spectacle, fantasy and showmanship. The launch of Sadler's balloon, from Belvedere House in Drumcondra, in October 1812 was a dramatic affair, attracting large crowds and an aristocratic audience. In a print that highlights the momentous nature of the flight – as well as Sadler's outsider status as an English aeronaut perhaps – the balloon displays a banner featuring the 1790s nationalist slogan 'Erin go Brah' – Ireland Forever. Like previous attempts, however, this flight would end in failure, with Sadler needing to be rescued by a passing ship off the north Wales coast.

Story (Welsh)

O'r hediad cyntaf mewn balw'n aer poeth ym Mharis ym mis Tachwedd 1783, creodd balwnau argraff bwerus ar ddychymyg y cyhoedd. Doedd y bobl gyntaf a welodd falwnau aer poeth ddim yn siŵr beth yn union oedd eu diben, ond roedd gallu balw'n i osod ffiniau newydd mewn teithio a dyfeisgarwch technegol yn eglur ar unwaith. Am y tro cyntaf, gellid credu y byddai siwrneiau oedd wedi bod yn bosibl ar y môr yn unig yn y gorffennol yn ymarferol drwy deithio yn yr awyr. Fel y mae Paul Keen wedi nodi, daeth balwnau awyr yn gyflym iawn yn fersiwn gynnar o'r 'ras ofod', gydag awyrenwyr yn rhoi cynnig ar gampau mwyfwy beiddgar fel croesi Môr Udd. Daeth croesi Môr Iwerddon trwy ddefnyddio balw'n i'r amlwg yn gynnar fel her arall i'w hateb, ond byddai bron deng mlynedd ar hugain yn rhagor yn mynd heibio cyn i awyrenwyr ddod yn agos at groesi'n llwyddiannus rhwng Dulyn a Chaergybi yn yr awyr.

Codwyd y balw'n cyntaf â rhywun ynddo yn Iwerddon ym mis Ionawr 1785, yn Nulyn, gan Richard Crosbie (1755-1824). Dywedir bod rhyw 20,000 o bobl wedi bod yn dyst i'w daith i'r awyr ac ar draws Bae Dulyn, lle glaniodd yn Clontarf. Croesi Môr Iwerddon mewn balw'n oedd nod pennaf Crosbie, ond ni lwyddodd ef na chystadleuwyr o'r Alban a Ffrainc a geisiodd groesi Môr Iwerddon o Ddulyn yn y 1780au chwaith. Yn ystod y rhyfel yn Ewrop yn sgil y Chwyldro Ffrengig ym 1789 daeth cynlluniau i groesi'r môr mewn balw'n i ben, ac nid tan 1812 y cafwyd yr ymgais nesaf o ddifrif. Ym 1812, yr awyrennwr a fwriadai groesi Môr Iwerddon oedd James Sadler (1753-1828), sef y balwnydd cyntaf erioed o Loegr pan hedfanodd am gyfnod byr o Rydychen ym mis Hydref 1784.

Denodd cynllun Sadler i groesi'r môr lawer o sylw: dros haf 1812, cafodd ei falw'n ei ddangos i'r cyhoedd yn Rotunda Dulyn, mewn ymdrech i godi arian tuag at yr ymgais i groesi. Pwysleisiodd gwyddonwyr, gwleidyddion ac awduron ddibenion milwrol a masnachol balwnau aer poeth ar wahanol adegau yn y cyfnod hwn, ond gellid dadlau mai adloniant, ffantasi a chreffftwaith oedd effaith fwyaf y balwnau. Roedd lansio balw'n Sadler, o Belvedere House yn Drumcondra, ym mis Hydref 1812 yn fater dramatig, gan ddenu torfeydd mawr a chynulleidfa aristocrataidd. Mewn print sy'n tynnu sylw at natur bwysig yr hediad – yn ogystal â statws Sadler fel awyrennwr Seisnig o'r tu allan o bosibl – mae'r balw'n yn dangos baner sy'n cynnwys slogan cenedlaetholgar o'r 1790au 'Erin go Brah' – Iwerddon am Byth. Fel ymdrechion blaenorol, fodd bynnag, methiant fyddai'r hediad hwn yn y diwedd, a bu'n rhaid i Sadler gael ei achub gan long oedd yn pasio oddi ar arfordir y Gogledd.

Factoid

The exploits of aeronauts such as Richard Crosbie and James Sadler were reported in detail in newspapers in Ireland and further afield, reflecting the immense public interest in the progress of balloon science.

Related Resources

Clare Brant, 'The Progress of Knowledge in the Regions of Air?: Divisions and Disciplines in Early Ballooning', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 45:1 (2011), 71-86.

Mark Davies, 'Destination Wales!', *History Ireland*, 25:4 (2017), 16-18 <https://www.historyireland.com/volume-25/issue-4-julyaugust-2017/destination-wales/>

F. E. Dixon, 'Ballooning in Dublin', *Dublin Historical Record*, 14:1 (1955), 2-11.

Paul Keen, 'The "Balloonomania": Science and Spectacle in 1780s England', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 39:4 (2006), 507-35.

James Sadler, *Balloon. An Authentic Narrative of The Aerial Voyage, of Mr. Sadler, Across the Irish Channel* (Dublin: W.H. Tyrrell, 1812), <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=-YcIAAAAQAAJ&rdid=book--YcIAAAAQAAJ&rdot=1>

Windham Sadler, *Aerostation. A Narrative of the Aerial Voyage, of Mr. Windham Sadler, Across the Irish Channel* (Dublin: William Henry Tyrrell, 1817), <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=DJu0PhaR6zoC&rdid=book-DJu0PhaR6zoC&rdot=1>

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