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## Dublin Core

### Title

The First Irish Sea Balloon Crossing: Failures and Rescues | Croesiad Cyntaf Môr Iwerddon mewn Balŵn: Methiannau ac Achub

### Subject

North Wales

Irish Sea

Ballooning

### Creator

Elizabeth Edwards

### Publisher

Ports, Past and Present Project

### Date

2023

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### Relation

<https://perma.cc/QZW3-PA77>

### Format

Curatescape story

### Language

English

Welsh

## Coverage

53.326542194959615, -3.8344637438719795

## 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

The invention of hot air balloon travel in the 1780s was an international sensation, and intrepid individual aeronauts quickly took on the challenge of trying to complete increasingly daring journeys. However, efforts to cross the Irish Sea for the first time ended in several dramatic failures. The pioneering Irish aeronaut Richard Crosbie was responsible for a dramatic incident at Dublin Bay in May 1785, when Crosbie found himself in need of a lighter pilot for his balloon. His substitute on that occasion was a 21-year-old student at Trinity College, Richard McGwire (or MacGwire), whose lack of ballooning experience left him stranded in the sea several miles off Howth. Luckily for McGwire, boats quickly reached him and returned him to Dublin, where he received a hero's reception, including poetic tributes, an army commission and a knighthood. Crosbie himself failed to cross the Irish Sea the following year, when he was rescued after landing in the sea approximately half way through his journey.

Perhaps the best-known abandoned balloon flight took place in October 1812, when James Sadler's attempt to cross from Dublin to Liverpool left him stranded off the north Wales coast at sunset. Sadler took off from Dublin with much fanfare, but encountered a potentially disastrous problem not long into the flight when he discovered a tear in his 'Crimson & White' silk balloon. In a narrative of danger and heroism, in which he was exposed to fumes, gases and extreme heat, Sadler recounts using his neckerchief to mend the hole. Sadler's account also contains striking descriptions of the view from his balloon, from the Dublin suburbs, Bay and shipping to the scenery across Wicklow and ocean seascapes: 'in a word, the country to the South and West of Dublin, interspersed with Villages and cultivated Fields, the Amphitheatre of Hills and Mountains, the broad expanse of Ocean, the Bay, the small Breakers beating on the Islands and the rocky shore, the sails of Vessels glancing in the Sun; *all combined* presented a prospect which fancy may contemplate, but words can give no adequate idea of'. Few before Sadler had ever witnessed these views, something that compensated for the risks involved, he noted.

Sadler's intended route across the Irish Sea was Dublin to Liverpool, but he might have been successful in his 1812 attempt if he had landed in Wales. Heading north-east on his flight, Sadler flew over the Isle of Man, before tacking south again towards Anglesey. He notes passing north-west of Holyhead, then the Skerries Lighthouse, but trouble lay ahead. A change in wind direction as Sadler neared Llandudno on the north Wales coast made reaching Liverpool increasingly unlikely. As evening approached, Sadler was forced to land in the sea,

where he waited to be rescued by nearby ships. His balloon, still partly filled with gas, had to be punctured by the bowsprit of one of the ships that came to his aid, in order to deflate it.

### **Story (Welsh)**

Roedd dyfeisio teithio mewn balŵn aer poeth yn y 1780au yn rhyfeddod rhyngwladol, ac atebodd awyrenwyr unigol dewr yr her o geisio cwblhau teithiau mwyfwy mentrus. Er hynny, daeth ymdrechion i groesi Môr Iwerddon am y tro cyntaf i ben mewn sawl methiant dramatig. Bu'r awyrennwr Gwyddelig arloesol Richard Crosbie yn gyfrifol am ddiwyddiad dramatig ym Mae Dulyn ym Mai 1785, pan welodd Crosbie fod arno angen peilot ysgafnach i'w falŵn. Yr eilydd y tro hwnnw oedd myfyriwr 21 oed yng Ngholeg y Drindod, Richard McGwire (neu MacGwire), a aeth yn sownd yn y môr sawl milltir oddi ar Howth oherwydd ei ddiffyg profiad mewn balŵn. Yn ffodus i McGwire, cyrhaeddodd cychod yn gyflym a'i ddychwelyd i Ddulyn, lle cafodd ei dderbyn fel arwr, gan gynnwys teyrngedau barddonol, comisiwn gan y fyddin a'i urddo'n farchog. Methodd Crosbie ei hun â chroesi Môr Iwerddon y flwyddyn wedyn, pan gafodd ei achub ar ôl glanio yn y môr tua hanner ffordd trwy ei daith. Ym mis Hydref 1812 y cafwyd yr ymgais aflwyddiannus enwocaf, pan wnaeth ymgais James Sadler i groesi o Ddulyn i Lerpwl ei adael yn sownd oddi ar arfordir y Gogledd ar fachlud haul. Cychwynnodd Sadler o Ddulyn yng nghanol ffanffer, ond daeth ar draws problem a allasai fod yn drychinebus heb fod yn hir i mewn i'r hediad pan welodd fod rhwyg yn ei falŵn sidan coch a gwyn. Mewn ymgais llawn perygl ac arwriaeth, bu'n agored i fygdarthau, nwyon a gwres eithafol, ac mae Sadler yn sôn am ddefnyddio'i hances i drwsio'r twll. Mae disgrifiad Sadler hefyd yn cynnwys disgrifiadau trawiadol o'r olygfa o'i falŵn, dros faestrefi Dulyn, y Bae a'r llongau i'r golygfeydd ar draws Wicklow a thros y môr: 'in a word, the country to the South and West of Dublin, interspersed with Villages and cultivated Fields, the Amphitheatre of Hills and Mountains, the broad expanse of Ocean, the Bay, the small Breakers beating on the Islands and the rocky shore, the sails of Vessels glancing in the Sun; all combined presented a prospect which fancy may contemplate, but words can give no adequate idea of'. Ychydig yn unig oedd wedi gweld y golygfeydd hyn cyn Sadler, sef rhywbeth a oedd yn gwneud iawn am y risgiau, meddai.

Llwybr arfaethedig Sadler ar draws Môr Iwerddon oedd Dulyn i Lerpwl, ond fe allai fod wedi llwyddo yn ei ymgais ym 1812 pe bai wedi glanio yng Nghymru. Wrth fynd tua'r gogledd-ddwyrain ar ei hediad, hedfanodd Sadler dros Ynys Manaw, cyn troi tua'r de eto tuag at Ynys Môn. Mae'n nodi ei fod wedi mynd heibio i'r gogledd-orllewin o Gaergybi, yna Goleudy'r Moelrhoniaid, ond roedd trafferth o'i flaen. Roedd newid cyfeiriad y gwynt wrth i Sadler agosáu at Landudno ar arfordir y Gogledd yn golygu bod cyrraedd Lerpwl yn fwyfwy annhebygol. Wrth i'r nos agosáu, gorfodwyd Sadler i lanio yn y môr, lle bu'n aros i gael ei achub gan longau cyfagos. Bu'n rhaid i'w falŵn, oedd yn dal i lenwi'n rhannol â nwy, gael ei dyllu gan bolyn blaen un o'r llongau a ddaeth i'w helpu, er mwyn gollwng yr aer.

### **Factoid**

The novelist Maria Edgeworth was among the crowds gathered to witness James Sadler's ascent from Dublin in 1812. She described the launch scene in detail: 'the beautiful many-coloured balloon, chiefly maroon colour, with painted eagles, and garlands, and arms of Ireland, hung under the trees ... filling fast from pipes'.

### **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/>

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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