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Dublin Core

Title

The First Irish Sea Balloon Crossing: Success | Croesiad Cyntaf Môr Iwerddon mewn Balwŷn: Llwyddiant

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/B7EV-AH5L>

Format

Curatescape story

Language

English

Coverage

53.30692810626168, -4.699261907351414

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 race to be the first to cross the Irish Sea by hot air balloon would turn out to be a family affair. After James Sadler's high-profile attempt failed in October 1812, the baton was taken up by his 20-year-old aeronaut son, Windham Sadler, in 1817. Like his father, Sadler published an account of his groundbreaking flight. From the beginning, his narrative frames the attempt as a generational story – as succeeding where his father had admitted defeat, 'to preserve to the Family ... the undisputed palm of pre-eminence in the practical application of *Aerostation*'. Setting out from the Cavalry Barracks, Portobello, on 22 June 1817, Sadler's six-hour flight appears to have been as straightforward as his father's was dramatic, leaving him able to immerse himself in the spectacular panoramic views from the air: 'seated at ease and security in the middle regions of a calm and serene Atmosphere ... enjoying at one glance the opposite Shores of Ireland and Wales, with the entire circumference of the Isle of Man'.

Some three hours later, Sadler landed safely at Holyhead where the welcoming party included the notable sea captain John Macgregor Skinner: 'Within a *quarter of Seven o'clock*, I was a little to the *Southward* of the Light-house on Holyhead, when perceiving a suitable place on which to alight, I in a few minutes, opened the Valve, when the Balloon descending, a current of Air brought me at once within a short distance of the spot which I had selected, and the grappling Iron touching the Earth, the Balloon remained stationary, at within *Twelve feet of the ground*: the Evening was serenely calm, and a number of persons having assembled to aid me at the moment of descent, it was effected in a manner the most successful ... at *five minutes after Seven o'clock* I trod on the shores of Wales, the first Aeronaut who had successfully accomplished the passage of the Irish Channel'.

Sadler also used his narrative as an opportunity to reflect on the place of aeronautics and atmospheric science in contemporary scientific knowledge. Whereas by 1817 the fields of chemistry, mineralogy and electricity were increasingly well-understood, air science lagged behind, Sadler argued. His narrative stresses that the air 'alone remains comparatively unexplored', going on to set out how aspects of atmospheric science defined by balloon travel – not least across the Irish Sea – might be developed and used in the future.

Story (Welsh)

Mater teuluol oedd y ras i fod yn gyntaf i groesi Môr Iwerddon mewn balŵn aer poeth yn y diwedd. Ar ôl i ymgais enwog James Sadler fethu ym mis Hydref 1812, cafodd yr awenau eu codi gan ei fab 20 oed, Windham Sadler, ym 1817. Fel ei dad, cyhoeddodd Sadler adroddiad ar ei hediad arloesol. O'r dechrau, mae ei naratif yn fframio'r ymgais fel stori am ddwy

genhedlaeth – yntau'n llwyddo lle roedd ei dad wedi cyfaddef cael ei drechu, 'to preserve to the Family ... the undisputed palm of pre-eminence in the practical application of Æerostation'. Ar ôl cychwyn o Farics y Marchfilwyr, Portobello, ar 22 Mehefin 1817, mae'n ymddangos bod hediad Sadler, a barhaodd chwe awr, wedi bod yr un mor hwylus ag y bu hediad ei dad yn ddramatig, oedd yn golygu y gallai fwynhau'r golygfeydd panoramig rhyfeddol o'r awyr: 'seated at ease and security in the middle regions of a calm and serene Atmosphere ... enjoying at one glance the opposite Shores of Ireland and Wales, with the entire circumference of the Isle of Man'.

Rhyw dair awr wedyn, glaniodd Sadler yn ddiogel yng Nghaergybi lle'r oedd y parti croesawu yn cynnwys capten môr adnabyddus, John Macgregor Skinner: 'Within a quarter of Seven o'clock, I was a little to the Southward of the Light-house on Holyhead, when perceiving a suitable place on which to alight, I in a few minutes, opened the Valve, when the Balloon descending, a current of Air brought me at once within a short distance of the spot which I had selected, and the grappling Iron touching the Earth, the Balloon remained stationary, at within Twelve feet of the ground: the Evening was serenely calm, and a number of persons having assembled to aid me at the moment of descent, it was effected in a manner the most successful ... at five minutes after Seven o'clock I trod on the shores of Wales, the first Æronaut who had successfully accomplished the passage of the Irish Channel'.

Defnyddiodd Sadler ei naratif hefyd fel cyfle i fyfyrion ar le awyrofod a gwyddoniaeth atmosfferig mewn gwybodaeth wyddonol gyfoes. Er bod meysydd cemeg, mwynoleg a thrydan yn cael eu deall yn gynyddol dda erbyn 1817, roedd gwyddoniaeth awyr ar ei hôl hi, dadleuai Sadler. Mae ei naratif yn pwysleisio mai'r awyr yn unig oedd yn dal heb ei archwilio, gan fynd ymlaen i nodi sut y gellid datblygu a defnyddio agweddau ar wyddoniaeth atmosfferig a gâi eu diffinio erbyn 1817 gan siwrneiau mewn balŵn – yn enwedig ar draws Môr Iwerddon.

Factoid

Having completed the first flight across the Irish Sea in 1817, Windham Sadler was unfortunately killed in a ballooning accident in 1824, an event that underscored the very real dangers involved in early balloon travel.

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

James Sadler, *Balloon. An Authentic Narrative of The Ærial 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 Ærial 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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