



This item contains the Dublin core metadata attributes and Curatescape item type metadata fields for a story from the Ports, Past and Present archived collection on the digital repository of Ireland. It has been provided in .odt format for easy copy and pasting.

For more information about the Ports, Past and Present Project, see <https://portspastpresent.eu/>.

For more information about Omeka Classic, see <https://omeka.org/classic/>.

For more information about Curatescape, its Omeka plugin suite and this item type metadata schema, see <https://curatescape.org/>.

For a .csv containing tabular data for all stories, see the larger collection at <https://doi.org/10.7486/DRI.ht259b362>.

For an archived snapshot of the story as it appeared between 2020 and 2023 on <https://portspastpresent.eu/>, see the Relation field below.

Dublin Core

Title

Wordsworth on the Holyhead Road | Wordsworth ar y Ffordd i Gaergybi

Subject

William Wordsworth

Holyhead Road

Ffordd Caergybi

Irish Sea Crossing

Taith drosodd Môr Iwerddon

Creator

Brandon C. Yen

Publisher

Ports, Past and Present Project

Date

2023

Rights

CC BY 4.0 International License

Relation

<https://perma.cc/Q8FD-CZDF>

Format

Curatescape story

Language

English

Welsh

Coverage

53.22030283800244, -4.1631251853341675

Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

Lede

On Saturday the 29th August 1829, at 9pm, William Wordsworth wrote home from Holyhead. He was waiting to embark at 11pm and to sail at 1am.

Lede (Welsh)

Ar ddydd Sadwrn 29 Awst 1829, am naw o'r gloch y nos, ysgrifennodd William Wordsworth at ei deulu o Gaerdybi. Roedd yn aros i fynd ar fwrdd llong am un ar ddeg, cyn hwylio am un yn y bore.

Story

'What dreadful weather!' Dorothy Wordsworth exclaimed on 28 August 1829. She had 'a hundred fears' because her brother William was going to cross the Irish Sea from Holyhead the following night.

As they would soon find out, 'three vessels had been wrecked on the Coast of Anglesey' on the 26th and 27th, with many lives lost. The Alert (from Liverpool to Dublin) had met her end off Holyhead, the Davies Hall (from Liverpool to Beaumaris on Anglesey) near the Great Orme, and the Myrtle (of Hull) in Cemaes Bay.

On Saturday the 29th, at 9pm, William Wordsworth wrote home from Holyhead. He was waiting to embark at 11pm and to sail at 1am. It was estimated that their steam-packet would arrive in Dublin at 7 on Sunday morning – 'God willing', he added.

In the event, it turned out to be a 'quiet passage'. They disembarked at Howth at 8 am, beginning a five-week journey during which they would visit many celebrated places: the Wicklow Mountains, Glendalough, Glengarriff, Killarney, Edgeworthstown, Lough Erne and the Giant's Causeway, as well as Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Derry/Londonderry and Belfast.

That was Wordsworth's first and only Irish tour, but in September 1824, with his wife Mary and their daughter Dora, he had already trodden parts of the 'Irish Road' in Wales: Thomas Telford's Holyhead Road. There they drank tea with the Ladies of Llangollen, Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby from Kilkenny, who had settled into Plas Newydd in 1780. Wordsworth renamed their valley the 'GLYN CAFAILLGARROCH' ('Vale of Friendship').

In 1824 the Wordsworths had taken the steam-packet from Liverpool to Bangor, near where they 'admired the stupendous preparations for the bridge over the Menai'. The poet would cross the Menai Suspension Bridge (completed in 1826) on his way to Holyhead in 1829. Designed by Telford, the bridge seemed to be guiding him to eternity: the 'dazzling sun' turned 'the Bridge and its chains etc. into brilliance', and 'the metal gave to it an aerial or celestial appearance that was quite enchanting'.

The poet Felicia Hemans crossed the same bridge in 1830 after befriending the Wordsworths in the Lake District that summer. She described it in a similar way: ‘its chain work is so airy in appearance, that to drive along it seems almost like passing through the trellis of a bower’. The whole was like ‘a native feature of the scene’, its ‘magnificence’ blending in with the ‘glorious’ mountains of Caernarfonshire.

Anglesey – or Mona – was known for its Druidic past. Wordsworth’s nephew Christopher wrote a poem called ‘The Druids’, imagining Mona’s Druid King using a ‘knife of gold’ to cut ‘quivering mistletoe’ from an oak. Describing Anglesey as a ‘land of prose’, however, Hemans strove ‘in vain to conjure up the ghost of a Druid, or even of a tree, on its wide, monotonous plains’.

Wordsworth too thought that nothing could be ‘more dreary than the Interior of Anglesea’. Holyhead, though, seemed to hold visionary possibilities: a mysterious entrance to an unknown world beyond the Irish Sea. Darkness had fallen. All he saw there were ‘20 Lamps or more at equal distances’, which ‘made a bright semicircle half enclosing a segment of the sea’.

Wordsworth would remember the Holyhead Road in his objections to the Kendal-and-Windermere railway, published in the Morning Post in 1844. Tourists, he thought, could benefit little from railways and new roads if they had not ‘an eye to perceive, and a heart to feel’. He caricatured those ‘pilgrims of fashion’ who were ‘hurried along in their carriages, not a few of them perhaps discussing the merits of “the last new Novel,” or poring over their Guide-books, or fast asleep’. The same applied to the Holyhead Road, which had penetrated the ‘mountainous country of Wales’, though he acknowledged that ‘the plea of utility, especially as expediting the communication between England and Ireland, more than justifies the labours of the Engineer’.

For Wordsworth, Telford’s Holyhead Road had a political significance in the era following the Act of Union, 1800. Throughout his life, he was deeply concerned about Ireland’s relationship with Britain. In 1794, whilst planning a radical journal, he thought of appointing an agent in Dublin to ‘disseminate’ it. As the years went by, his radicalism waned, and he became strongly opposed to Catholic Emancipation, speaking dismissively of Ireland’s Catholic ‘superstitions’.

Yet, just as the Menai Bridge resembled a threshold to a visionary world, so Wordsworth alluded to Milton’s paradise in referring to the Irish coast as the ‘bright confines of another world’. The only poetic image he gleaned from his 1829 tour was equally evocative: a pair of eagles in County Antrim that ‘Flew high above Atlantic waves, to draw | Light from the fountain of the setting sun’.

Holyhead was a portal to a world suffused with light, unfathomably rich and strange.

Story (Welsh)

‘What dreadful weather!’ ebychodd Dorothy Wordsworth ar 28 Awst 1829. Roedd ganddi ‘a hundred fears’ oherwydd bod ei brawd William yn bwriadu croesi Môr Iwerddon o Gaergybi’r noson ganlynol.

Fel ddaeth yn amlwg wedyn, ‘three vessels had been wrecked on the Coast of Anglesey’ yn ystod y ddau ddiwrnod blaenorol, gyda cholledion sylweddol. Suddodd ‘The Alert’ (ar ei

ffordd o Lerpwl i Ddilyn) ger Caergybi ei hun; aeth y Davies Hall (Lerpwl i Fiwmares) i lawr ger Penygoarth, a'r Myrtle (o Hull) ym Mae Cemaes.

Ar ddydd Sadwrn 29 Awst 1829, am naw o'r gloch y nos, ysgrifennodd William Wordsworth at ei deulu o Gaergybi. Roedd yn aros i fynd ar fwrdd llong am un ar ddeg, cyn hwylio am un yn y bore. Disgwyliai i'r cwch ager lanio yn Nulyn am saith o'r gloch fore dydd Sul – 'God willing', ategodd.

Yn y pen draw cafwyd 'a quiet passage'. Disgynnodd y teithwyr yn Howth am wyth yn y bore, gan gychwyn ar daith o bum wythnos a fyddai'n mynd â nhw i lawer o lefydd adnabyddus: Mynyddoedd Wicklow, Glendalough, Glengarriff, Killarney, Edgeworthstown, Lough Erne a Sarn y Cawr, yn ogystal â Dilyn, Corc, Limerick, Derry/Londonderry a Belfast.

Dyna'r tro cyntaf, a'r unig dro, i Wordsworth ymweld ag Iwerddon; ond ym 1824, gyda'i wraig Mary a'u merch Dora, teithiodd ar yr 'Irish Road' yng Nghymru, sef ffordd fawr newydd Thomas Telford. Y pryd hynny, arohson nhw i yfed te gyda 'Ledis' Llangollen, Eleanor Butler a Sarah Ponsonby, y ddwy yn wreiddiol o Kilkenny ond wedi ymgartrefu ym Mhlas Newydd ers 1780. Ailfedyddiodd Wordsworth eu dyffryn hardd yn: 'GLYN CAFAILLGAROCH' ('Vale of Friendship' – i fod!).

Ym 1824 cymerodd y Wordsworths y llong ager o Lerpwl i Fangor, gan edmygu 'the stupendous preparations for the bridge over the Menai'. Croesodd William Bont Menai (un arall o gynlluniau Telford, a orffenwyd ym 1826) ar ei ffordd i Gaergybi ym 1829. Teimlodd fod y bont yn ei arwain i dragwyddoldeb: yn y 'dazzling sun' trawsnewidwyd 'the Bridge and its chains etc. into brilliance [...] the metal gave to it an aerial or celestial appearance that was quite enchanting'.

Croesodd y bardd Felicia Hemans yr un bont ym 1830 ar ôl dod i adnabod y Wordsworths yn Ardal y Llynnoedd yr haf hwnnw. Mae ganddi ddisgrifiad tebyg: 'its chain work is so airy in appearance, that to drive along it seems almost like passing through the trellis of a bower'. Yr oedd y cyfan yn debyg i 'native feature of the scene', ei harddwch yn cyd-fynd â mynyddoedd ysblenydd Sir Gaernarfon.

Roedd Ynys Môn –Mona – yn enwog am ei gorffennol derwyddol. Ysgrifennodd nai William Wordsworth, Christopher, gerdd am 'The Druids', lle dychmygir Brenin Derwyddon Mona yn torri 'quivering mistletoe' gyda chylllell aur o dderwen. Meddyliai Hemans i'r gwrthwyneb, roedd Môn yn 'land of prose' ac yn ofer ceisiodd godi 'the ghost of a Druid, or even of a tree, on its wide, monotonous plains'.

Meddyliodd Wordsworth hefyd nad oedd nunlle yn fwy 'dreary than the Interior of Anglesea'. Ond cynigiodd Caergybi bosibiliadau mwy gweledigaethol, gan ymddangos fel drws cyfrinachol i fyd anhysbys tu hwnt i Fôr Iwerddon. Roedd hi'n nosi. Yr unig beth a welodd oedd '20 Lamps or more at equal distances', yn creu 'a bright semicircle half enclosing a segment of the sea'.

Yn ddiweddarach, cofiodd Wordsworth Ffordd Caergybi wrth iddo gofnodi ei wrthwynebiadau i reilffordd Kendal a Windermere yn y *Morning Post* ym 1844. Ni chredodd bod modd i dwristiaid elwa lawer o reilffyrdd a ffyrdd newydd os nad oedd ganddynt 'an eye to perceive, and a heart to feel'. Gwawdiodd y 'pilgrims of fashion' a ruthrodd heibio 'in their carriages, not a few of them perhaps discussing the merits of "the last new Novel," or poring over their Guide-books, or fast asleep'. Yr oedd hynny'r un mor wir am Ffordd Caergybi, oedd wedi treiddio 'the mountainous country of Wales'; er, yn yr achos hynny, cyfaddefodd werth 'the plea of utility, especially as expediting the communication between England and Ireland, more than justifies the labours of the Engineer'.

Yn y cyfnod yn dilyn y Ddeddf Uno rhwng Prydain ac Iwerddon ym 1800, gwelodd Wordsworth ystyr wleidyddol yn Ffordd Caergybi. Ar hyd ei oes teimlodd yn gryf am berthynas Iwerddon gyda Phrydain. Ym 1794, wrth gynllunio cylchgrawn radicalaidd, ystyriodd benodi asiant yn Nulyn 'to disseminate it'. Wrth i'r blynyddoedd fynd heibio a'i radicaliaeth yn gwanhau, trodd yn erbyn Gwaredred Pabyddol, gan gyfeirio'n ddirmygus at 'superstitions' y Pabyddion Gwyddelig.

Ac eto, yn yr un modd ag a welodd Bont Menai yn debyg i drothwy i fyd gweledigaethol, cyfeiriodd at Baradwys Milton wrth sôn am arfordir Iwerddon megis 'the bright confines of another world'. Yr un mor awgrymog oedd yr unig ddelwedd farddonol a gasglodd o'i daith ym 1829: pâr o eryrod yn Sir Antrim, a 'Flew high above Atlantic waves, to draw | Light from the fountain of the setting sun'.

Yr oedd Caergybi yn ddrws i fyd a dreiddwyd gan oleuni, byd rhyfeddol o gyfoethog a gwyrthiol.

Factoid

Wordsworth's Cumbria had many Irish immigrants and traditions. He could also have travelled to Dublin from Whitehaven, a major port on the west coast of Cumbria.

Cafwyd llawer o fewnfudwyr Gwyddelig a'u traddodiadau yn Cumbria yn ystod oes Wordsworth. Gallai Wordsworth fod wedi teithio i Ddilyn o Whitehaven, porthladd sylweddol ar arfordir gorllewinol Cumbria.

Related Resources

Stephen Gill, William Wordsworth: A Life, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020)

Brandon C. Yen, 'Wordsworth in Ireland', *History Ireland*, 28.1 (2020), 18–21

Claire Connolly, 'Turbulent water: A cultural history of the Irish Sea', *The Irish Times*, 4 May 2019, archived at <https://perma.cc/NW8V-MTNJ>

Official Website