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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

So Near, and Yet So Far | Mor Agos, ac eto Mor Bell

Subject

Aviation

Hedfan

Holyhead

Caergybi

History of Flight

Hanes Hedfan

Creator

Derek Webb

Publisher

Ports, Past and Present Project

Date

2023

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Relation

https://perma.cc/RW7X-L86N

Format

Curatescape story

Language

English

Welsh

Coverage

53.36150193601441, -6.052545487182674

Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

Lede

Two years before the official first flight from Britain to Ireland another intrepid airman came within a few hundred yards of claiming the record.

Lede (Welsh)

Ddwy flynedd cyn i'r awyren gyntaf groesi'n swyddogol o Brydain i Iwerddon daeth awyrennwr dewr arall o fewn ychydig gannoedd o lathenni i hawlio'r record.

Story

The official first flight from Britain to Ireland took place on 22 April, 1912 in a Bleriot monoplane piloted by Denys Corbett Wilson, who flew from Fishguard in Wales to Enniscorthy in Wexford. But two years earlier another attempt came within a whisker of making the crossing. The pilot this time was an intrepid actor-airman, Robert Loraine. Loraine was the actor who first played in George Bernard Shaw's 'Man and Superman' which opened on Broadway in 1905. It was so successful that it was taking $12,000 a week and broke all records. Lorraine made so much money he did what every wealthy man might do: he bought an aeroplane. It was his passion, and he is credited with coining the term 'joystick', although he wasn't regarded as a very good pilot.

Nevertheless, five years later he resolved to fly across the Irish Sea and had his Farman biplane specially adapted for the trip, including a four-hour petrol tank and special compass. He took off from Holyhead on 11 September and all went well until at around 4000 feet his engine suddenly cut out. He went into a dive and at around 20 feet from the sea the engine spluttered and cut back in again.

The same thing happened five times before he was within sight of the Irish coast and, as Howth Head loomed up in front of him the plane went into another dive, but this time the engine didn't restart and he plunged into the sea near the Bailey lighthouse – just a few hundred yards short of his goal.

His Farman turned turtle and Loraine struggled onto a rock resisting help from the lighthouse keeper because he wanted to make it to the Irish shore unaided. The Dublin steamer 'Aden' saw the crash and finding Loraine's plane floating partly submerged, upside down, hoisted it up and onto the deck of the steamer. The damage to the aeroplane was found to be relatively slight and later it was sent to London for repairs.

Loraine too needed to be in London because at the time of his attempt to cross the Irish Sea, he was rehearsing for a play that was due to open in London's West End. It opened only a few days after his failed attempt to cross the Irish Sea – and, bizarrely, the title of the play was 'The Man from the Sea'!

When World War One began he joined the fledgling Royal Flying Corps and served as an observer over enemy lines. For a time, his pilot was Denys Corbett Wilson, the man who is credited with officially being the first man to fly from Britain to Ireland, two years after Bob Loraine's attempt. Loraine later went on to become a relatively famous film actor appearing in several Hollywood films.

Story (Welsh)

Ar 22 Ebrill 1912 y cafwyd y croesiad swyddogol cyntaf mewn awyren o Brydain i Iwerddon a hynny mewn monoplan Bleriot gan Denys Corbett Wilson, a hedfanodd o Abergwaun i Enniscorthy yn Wexford. Ond ddwy flynedd yn gynt daeth ymgais arall o fewn trwch blewyn i gwblhau'r croesiad. Actor eofn o awyrennwr oedd y peilot y tro hwnnw, dyn o'r enw Robert Loraine. Loraine oedd yr actor cyntaf a ymddangosodd yn 'Man and Superman' gan George Bernard Shaw a agorodd ar Broadway yn 1905. Bu'r ddrama mor llwyddiannus fel ei bod yn cymryd $12,000 yr wythnos ac yn torri pob record. Gwnaeth Loraine gymaint o arian nes gwneud yr hyn yr hoffai unrhyw ddyn cefnog ei wneud: prynodd awyren. Dyna'i angerdd, ac maen nhw'n dweud mai ef a greodd y term 'joystick', er nad oedd yn cael ei ystyried yn beilot da iawn.

Serch hynny, bum mlynedd wedyn, penderfynodd hedfan ar draws Môr Iwerddon ac addasodd ei awyren ddwbl Farman yn unswydd ar gyfer y daith, gan gynnwys tanc petrol pedair awr a chwmpawd arbennig. Ymadawodd â Chaergybi ar 11 Medi ac aeth popeth yn dda nes i'w injan fethu tua 4000 troedfedd i fyny. Dechreuodd yr awyren blymio a rhyw 20 troedfedd o'r môr dyma'r injan yn pesychu ac ailddechrau gweithio.

Digwyddodd yr un peth bum gwaith cyn iddo gyrraedd o fewn golwg o arfordir Iwerddon ac, wrth i Drwyn Howth ymddangos o'i flaen, dechreuodd yr awyren blymio eto, ond y tro hwn wnaeth yr injan ddim ailgychwyn a phlymiodd i'r môr ger goleudy Bailey – ychydig gannoedd o lathenni yn unig yn brin o'i nod.

Trodd y Farman ar ei gefn a llwyddodd Loraine i gyrraedd craig, gan wrthod cymorth ceidwad y goleudy am ei fod am gyrraedd y lan yn Iwerddon heb gymorth. Gwelwyd y ddamwain gan y stemar 'Aden' o Ddulyn, a ddaeth o hyd i awyren Loraine yn rhannol o dan y dŵr. Cododd y llong yr awyren i'r dec a gwelwyd bod y difrod iddi yn gymharol fach. Cafodd ei hanfon i Lundain wedyn i gael ei thrwsio.

Roedd angen i Loraine yntau fod yn Llundain oherwydd pan wnaeth ei ymgais i groesi Môr Iwerddon, roedd yn ymarfer ar gyfer drama a oedd i fod i agor yn West End Llundain. Agorodd gwta ddyddiau ar ôl ei ymgais aflwyddiannus i groesi Môr Iwerddon – ac, yn rhyfedd iawn, teitl y ddrama oedd 'The Man from the Sea'!

Pan ddechreuodd y Rhyfel Byd Cyntaf, ymunodd Loraine â'r egin Gorfflu Awyr Brenhinol a gwasanaethu fel sylwedydd uwchben llinellau'r gelyn. Am gyfnod, ei beilot oedd Denys Corbett Wilson, y dyn sy'n cael y clod swyddogol fel y dyn cyntaf i hedfan o Brydain i Iwerddon, ddwy flynedd ar ôl ymgais Bob Loraine. Aeth Loraine ymlaen wedyn i fod yn actor ffilm cymharol enwog a ymddangosodd mewn sawl ffilm yn Hollywood.

Factoid

In 1910, Robert Loraine attempted, unsuccessfully, to become the first person to fly from Britain to Ireland. He took off from Holyhead on 11 September.

Ym 1910, gwnaeth Robert Loraine ymdrech aflwyddiannus i fod y person cyntaf i hedfan o Brydain i Iwerddon. Cychwynnodd o Gaergybi ar 11 Medi.

The engine of Loraine's Farman biplane cut out several times over the Irish Sea. It stalled for a final time just short of Howth Head, and Loraine was plunged into the sea, just short of his goal.

Methodd injan awyren ddwbl Farman Loraine sawl tro dros Fôr Iwerddon. Pallodd am y tro olaf ychydig yn brin o Drwyn Howth, a chafodd Loraine ei fwrw i'r môr, ychydig cyn cyrraedd ei nod.

Robert Loraine was an actor on stage and screen, and a friend of George Bernard Shaw. During the First World War, he served as an observer with the Royal Flying Corps. He died in 1935.

Roedd Robert Loraine yn actor ar y llwyfan a'r sgrin, ac yn ffrind i George Bernard Shaw. Yn ystod y Rhyfel Byd Cyntaf, bu'n gwasanaethu fel sylwedydd gyda'r Corfflu Awyr Brenhinol. Bu farw ym 1935.

Related Resources

Lanayre D. Liggera, *The Life of Robert Loraine: The Stage, the Sky and George Bernard Shaw* (Plymouth: University of Delaware Press, 2013)

Winifred Loraine, *Robert Loraine: Soldier, Actor, Airman* (London: Collins, 1938)

Official Website