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Dublin Core

Title

Fishguard and the Cunard Line | Abergwaun a'r Cunard Line

Subject

Cunard Line

Mauretania

Fishguard

Abergwaun

Creator

Anna Lois McKay

Publisher

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<https://perma.cc/N6GJ-VTBU>

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Curatescape story

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English

Welsh

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Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

Lede

More than a century ago in the midst of the race for ever-faster transatlantic travel, Fishguard achieved global fame when the *Mauretania* sailed in from New York.

Lede (Welsh)

Ragor na chanrif yn ôl, a'r ras i deithio'n gyflymach nag erioed ar draws yr Iwerydd yn ei hanterth, daeth Abergwaun i fri byd-eang pan gyrhaeddodd y *Mauretania* ei phorthladd o Efrog Newydd.

Story

In August 1909, the port of Fishguard in Pembrokeshire hit the headlines. The Cunard Steamship Company had chosen Fishguard as its first port-of-call for its Atlantic liners. In its inaugural crossing from New York to Fishguard, the Cunard ship *Mauretania* gained the much-coveted Blue Riband for the fastest Atlantic passage time of 4 days and 14 hours. Supported by a network of sea and rail, Fishguard was now widely praised for bringing New York and London closer than ever before.

Ocean liners had sailed from Fishguard for some years, but the *Mauretania* was the first North Atlantic liner to connect with New York. The *Daily Mail* described scenes of excitement as it was first sighted on the headland on 30 August 1909: '*her four great red funnels with their black tops were sighted round Strumble Head. Every point of vantage from the cliffs on the Goodwick side to the ruined fort on the old Fishguard side was lined with people, whose cheers crossed the dancing blue waves, borne on the brisk southerly breeze to greet the Cunarder.*'

Fishguard bubbled over with enthusiasm as the *Mauretania*'s passengers were ferried to shore. Ten local women in Welsh costume presented sprigs of white and purple heather to the passengers as they landed, flags hung from every house, local lifeboats danced on the waves and the Territorial Artillery fired a salute. The first passenger off the liner was Jenkin Evans, a western farmer. When greeted by cheers from those on shore, he said, '*I left Lampeter forty-three years ago, and I am returning to Wales from Kansas City.*'

Immortalised in verse by Rudyard Kipling as a '*monstrous nine-decked city,*' the *Mauretania* was a symbol of modernity but it was also designed to suit the lavish tastes of its Edwardian upper-class passengers. It was decorated with marble, wood panelling and tapestries, and boasted a fully stocked library, elegant drawing rooms and a veranda café. However, passengers of all classes made the transatlantic crossing. They travelled for leisure purposes, as emigrants looking to find work, or to join family members who had travelled before them.

When passengers arrived at Fishguard, three Great Western Railway express trains were waiting to convey them to London Paddington. The GWR played an important role in turning Fishguard into a purpose-built ocean liner port, drawing traffic away from its rivals Liverpool, Plymouth and Southampton. Good connections between ship and rail cut

passengers' waiting and travelling times. They also aided the distribution of news, as the *Mauretania* brought with it almost 2,000 bags of mail which were speedily distributed across the country.

Across the Atlantic, the *New York Herald* praised the speed of the liner's crossing, stating that '*the adoption of the new and little-known port by the premier steamship company is a matter of great importance.*' The route was shorter than its competitors, at only 2,902 nautical miles, and also occupied a central position between Queenstown – now Cobh, County Cork – and Liverpool. Painstaking and expensive modifications made to Fishguard's harbour by the GWR Company included an enormous breakwater to shelter it from the north, creating a sheltered channel of six miles of deep water.

The media coverage of the arrival of the *Mauretania* at Fishguard indicates that expectations around the port were high. It had been hoped that Fishguard would become the new epicentre of transatlantic travel but within a few years, opposition from its rivals and rising costs made it hard for Fishguard to compete. In 1914, the outbreak of the First World War put an end to Fishguard's transatlantic ambitions. As passenger crossings and leisure travel ground to a halt, the *Mauretania* was repurposed as a troop ship. Those who worked on the Cunard Line and the GWR signed up to fight, and Fishguard and its neighbour Goodwick found new purpose, this time as sea-plane stations, patrolling for U-boats between St George's Channel and the Irish Sea.

Story (Welsh)

Ym mis Awst 1909, cyrhaeddodd porthladd Abergwaun yn Sir Benfro y tudalennau blaen. Roedd y Cunard Steamship Company wedi dewis y dref yn borthladd galw cyntaf ar gyfer ei longau mawrion a fyddai'n croesi'r Iwerydd. Ar ei mordaith gyntaf oll o Efrog Newydd i Abergwaun enillodd un o longau Cunard, y *Mauretania*, y Rhuban Glas enwog am groesi'r cefnfor mewn record o 4 diwrnod ac 14 awr. Gyda'i rhwydwaith o reilffyrdd a llwybrau'r môr, cafodd Abergwaun ei chanmol yn fawr am ddwyn Efrog Newydd a Llundain yn nes at ei gilydd nag a fuont erioed o'r blaen.

Roedd llongau mawr wedi bod yn hwylio o Abergwaun ers rhai blynyddoedd, ond y *Mauretania* oedd y gyntaf i gysylltu ag Efrog Newydd. Disgrifiodd y *Daily Mail* y cyffro ar y pentir ar 30 Awst 1909 pan ddaeth y llong i'r golwg am y tro cyntaf: '*her four great red funnels with their black tops were sighted round Strumble Head. Every point of vantage from the cliffs on the Goodwick side to the ruined fort on the old Fishguard side was lined with people, whose cheers crossed the dancing blue waves, borne on the brisk southerly breeze to greet the Cunarder.*'

Roedd Abergwaun yn grochan o gyffro wrth i deithwyr y *Mauretania* gael eu cludo i'r lan. Daeth deg o ferched lleol mewn gwisg Gymreig i gyflwyno sbrigynnau o rug gwyn a phorffor i'r teithwyr wrth iddynt lanio, gwelid baneri'n crogi o bob tŷ a badau achub lleol yn dawnsio ar y tonnau, a thaniwyd y canonau tiriogaethol mewn saliw. Y teithiwr cyntaf i'r lan oedd Jenkin Evans, hen ffermwr o'r gorllewin. Ymatebodd i fonllefau y rhai ar y lan gan ddweud, "Gadewais Lamed dair blynedd a deugain yn ôl, a nawr rwy'n dychwelyd i Gymru o Kansas City."

Anfarwolwyd y *Mauretania* gan Rudyard Kipling fel 'monstrous nine-decked city', ac yn wir, roedd yn symbol o foderniaeth ond wedi'i chynllunio hefyd i siwtio chwaeth ei theithwyr dosbarth uchaf Edwardaidd. Cawsai ei haddurno â marmor, paneli pren a thapestrïau, ac roedd ynddi lyfrgell dda, ystafelloedd arlunio moethus a chaffi ar feranda. Eto i gyd, roedd teithwyr o bob dosbarth yn rhan o'r fordaith, boed hynny i bwrpas hamdden, fel ymfudwyr yn chwilio am waith, neu wrth iddynt ganlyn perthnasau a oedd wedi teithio o'u blaenau.

Wedi i'r teithwyr gyrraedd Abergwaun, roedd tri o drenau cyflym Rheilffordd y Great Western yn barod i'w cludo i orsaf Paddington yn Llundain. Chwaraeodd y GWR ran bwysig yn y broses o droi Abergwaun yn borthladd pwrpasol ar gyfer y llongau mawr, gan ddargyfeirio'r traffig oddi wrth Lerpwl, Plymouth a Southampton. Roedd cysylltiadau da rhwng llongau a rheilffyrdd yn golygu bod amseroedd aros a theithio yn cael eu cwtdogi, ac yn gymorth hefyd i rannu newyddion, gyda'r *Mauretania* yn cludo bron i ddwy fil o fagiâu post, a gafodd eu dosbarthu ar fyrder i bob cwr o'r wlad.

Yr ochr draw i'r Iwerydd, roedd y *New York Herald* yn canu clodydd y llong a chyflymder y daith, gan nodi bod '*the adoption of the new and little-known port by the premier steamship company is a matter of great importance*'. Roedd trywydd y daith yn fyrrach nag eraill a gystadlai â hi, yn ddim ond 2,902 o filltiroedd môr, a'r gyrchfan hefyd mewn man canolog rhwng Queenstown (Cobh erbyn heddiw) yn Swydd Corc a Lerpwl. Gwnaeth Cwmni'r GWR welliannau mawr a chostus i harbwr Abergwaun, yn cynnwys codi morglawdd enfawr i'w gysgodi o gyfeiriad y gogledd, ac yn sgil hynny creu sianel gysgodol o ddŵr dwfn a ymestynnai am chwe milltir.

Mae'r sylw a roddodd y cyfryngau i laniad y *Mauretania* yn profi bod y disgwyliadau'n uchel o gwmpas y porthladd. Y gobaith oedd y byddai Abergwaun yn dod yn brif ganolfan ar gyfer teithio ar draws yr Iwerydd, ond ymhen ychydig flynyddoedd roedd cystadleuaeth gan borthladdoedd eraill a chostau cynyddol wedi ei gwneud hi'n anodd iddi allu dal ei thir. Daeth y gobeithion i ben yn derfynol pan dorrodd y Rhyfel Byd Cyntaf yn 1914. Ataliwyd y mordeithiau hamdden, a chafodd y *Mauretania* ei throï i fod yn llong filwrol. Listiodd nifer o weithwyr cwmnïau Cunard a'r GWR â'r lluoedd arfog, a thrawsnewidiwyd Abergwaun a Gwdig gerllaw i fod yn ganolfannau ar gyfer awyrennau môr a fyddai'n patrolio Môr Cymru a Môr Iwerddon am longau tanfor Almaenig.

Factoid

The GWR's modifications at Fishguard also provided a quick and comfortable route to Ireland for travellers from London. The sea-passage was reduced to 54 nautical miles and was hailed as 'a new epoch in the history of Ireland' by *The Times*.

Roedd datblygiadau'r GWR yn Abergwaun hefyd yn cynnwys darparu taith gyflym a chyffyrddus i deithwyr o Lundain i Iwerddon. Cwtogwyd trywydd y fordaith i 54 o filltiroedd môr, ac fe'i bedyddiwyd yn 'a new epoch in the history of Ireland' gan bapur newydd y *Times*.

The completion of the South Wales section of the GWR Company realised the ambition of engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel, who had hoped Fishguard would become the terminus of the line.

Pan ffurfiwyd rhan de Cymru o Gwmni'r GWR fe wireddwyd uchelgais y peiriannydd Isambard Kingdom Brunel, a oedd wedi gobeithio y byddai Abergwaun yn datblygu i fod yn ben draw'r lein.

Related Resources

National Museum Wales, Cunard Line ships at Fishguard 1908-9, Photograph Album, <https://tinyurl.com/y7zbv5f9>

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'The New, Shortest, and Quickest Route, New York to London, via Fishguard', *The Times*. 9 October 1909. *The Times* Digital Archive.

'175 years of the Cunard shipping line – in pictures'. *The Guardian*, May 26, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/gallery/2015/may/26/175-years-of-cunards-transatlantic-voyage-in-pictures>

Official Website

<https://www.cunard.com/en-gb>