

## THE PHOTOGRAPHER CHARLES CLIFFORD: BALLOONS AND HORSES

EL FOTÓGRAFO CHARLES CLIFFORD:  
GLOBOS AEROSTÁTICOS Y CABALLOS

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**Abstract :** British photographer Charles Clifford (1819-1863) appears for the first time in press advertisements in Madrid in 1850, not, surprisingly, as a photographer but as a balloonist who announces several balloon shows including one in which he states his intention to ascend on the back of a live horse hanging from the basket. Using British and Spanish newspapers as a bibliographical reference, this article studies the relationship between Clifford and ballooning, shedding some light on the motives behind his short-lived career as an aeronaut as well as this curious and original advertisement. **Keywords:** Charles Clifford; photographer; balloonist; horse; balloon.

**Resumen:** El fotógrafo británico Charles Clifford (1819-1863) aparece por vez primera en anuncios de prensa en Madrid en 1850, y no, sorprendentemente, como fotógrafo sino como piloto aerostático que presenta diversos espectáculos de vuelo con globos, incluyendo uno en el cual declara su intención de ascender a lomos de un caballo vivo que cuelga, a su vez, de una cesta. Usando periódicos ingleses y españoles como fuente bibliográfica, este artículo estudia la relación entre Clifford y el vuelo en globo, y pretende arrojar alguna luz de los motivos de su corta carrera como aeronauta así como sobre el curioso y original anuncio en la prensa. **Palabras clave:** Charles Clifford; fotografía; vuelo aerostático; caballo; globo.

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## 1. Introduction

“There’s something in a flying horse. There’s something in a huge balloon”.  
William Wordsworth, 1819<sup>1</sup>

When reading the known biographical details of the photographer Charles Clifford we are often surprised by one in particular: his arrival in Madrid in the autumn of 1850. Thanks to research carried out by Gerardo Kurtz in the 1990’s our first encounter with the photographer is in the skies of Madrid, aboard a huge balloon: the Royal Cremorne, accompanied by his wife Jane and the aeronaut Arthur Goulston (Kurtz, 1999: 48). Hardly anything is known about Clifford’s life before his arrival in Madrid which makes his ballooning adventures even more surprising and extraordinary.

Several questions arise such as: Where did the aeronauts come from? Who was Arthur Goulston and what was his relationship to Charles Clifford? Where did they get the idea from for their original and extravagant balloon shows, including the one where they stated their intention of ascending on the back of a live horse hanging from the basket? Was this the first time Clifford had made a balloon ascent or did he have previous experience?

In this article, based on recent research, I will answer these questions and shed some light for the first time on an unknown period of Clifford’s life immediately before his arrival in Spain.

## 2. Clifford y Goulston’s Ballooning Contract

A contract found in the Archivo Histórico de Protocolos in Madrid dated 15 October, 1850 with the title: “Contract signed by D. Antonio Hernández, Director of the Bullring and Mr. A. Goulston, Mr. C. and Mrs J. Clifford of English Nation,” confirms the information we already have regarding the ballooning adventures of Clifford and Goulston.<sup>2</sup>

According to the contract, the interested party is: “from England, originally residents of London but residents at present in this capital.”<sup>3</sup> They agree to carry out four balloon ascents in the following way: 1) “with the three aeronauts ascending together in the balloon,” 2) “with one of them, at least, mounted on a live horse” provided by the director of the bullring, 3) “taking with them a thirty foot

[01] First lines of the poem “Peter Bell” (Wordsworth, 1919: 104).

[02] Archivo Histórico de Protocolos de Madrid: Escribano Gabriel Santín de Quevedo. T.26.042, f.305. Original text: Convenio Otorgado por D. Antonio Hernández, Empresario de la Plaza de Toros de Esta Corte y El Sr. A. Goulston, El Sr. C. y J. Clifford de Nación Ingleses.

[03] Original Text: ‘[...] naturales de Inglaterra, avecinados en Londres y hoy residentes en esta capital.’

rope to be able to descend with a pyrotechnic machine hanging from the balloon” and 4) “with at least one of the aeronauts mounted on a live bull”<sup>4</sup> also provided by Sr. Hernández.

Weather permitting, the ascents would be carried out during the month of November on dates fixed by the director of the bullring. If not, they would have to take place during the month of December, otherwise the aeronauts “would have no rights to claim or receive any payment.”<sup>5</sup>

All costs of the balloon would be undertaken by the aeronauts and if, by chance, they were not able to carry out the ascents for any reason: “bad weather, disease, political and other disturbances, death of the King or Queen, problems with the authorities or any other unforeseeable motive,”<sup>6</sup> they would have no right to any compensation.

The aeronauts were allowed to choose the horse and the bull, after having agreed to cover the cost of any incident caused by the animal. Also, they were obliged by terms of contract to display the programme of the balloon ascents publicly and to stick to it. If this were not the case, the director would accept no liability for the breach of contract. Likewise, the cost of repairing any damage caused to the bullring would be covered by the aeronauts, whose “possessions present and future, especially their balloon”<sup>7</sup> would be used to cover the costs if necessary.

A curious detail is that Jane Clifford, Charles Clifford’s wife, states in the contract that neither her husband nor anybody else had obliged her “by force or fear” to ascend in the balloon and that she “freely and spontaneously”<sup>8</sup> agreed to participate in the show. This small insight into Jane Clifford’s character is of interest taking into account that little is known about her except that she worked and presumably travelled with her husband and continued with his photography business after his untimely death in 1863 (Fontanella, 1999: 213-229).

[04] Original Text: ‘Se comprometen a ejecutar cuatro ascensiones aerostáticas de esta forma: una, ascendiendo los tres aeronautas juntos en el globo; otra, colocándose montado uno de ellos por lo menos en un caballo natural [...]; otra, llevando una cuerda de treinta pies de largo para [...] descender por ella un aparato de fuegos artificiales que irá pendiente del globo [...]; y otra, ascendiendo uno de los aeronautas por lo menos sobre un toro natural [...]

[05] Original Text: ‘Las ascensiones han de verificarse en todo el mes de Noviembre próximo en los días que designe el propietario de la Plaza, siempre que el tiempo lo permita.’

[06] Original Text: ‘Si por mal temporal, peste, trastornos, circunstancias políticas, muerte del Rey o Reyna, disposición de las autoridades u otro motivo imprevisto [...] no tendrían derecho ni acción los aeronautas, para reclamar la menor retribución.’

[07] Original Text: ‘[...] todos sus bienes habidos y por haber, y especialmente el globo que ha de servir para las ascensiones y aseguran ser de su propiedad.’

[08] Original Text: ‘no ha sido inducida, violentada ni atemorizada por su esposo ni otra persona a su nombre, sino que lo hace de su libre y espontánea voluntad.’

Finally, the director of the bullring, D. Justo Hernández, agreed to pay the three aeronauts three thousand seven hundred and fifty francs for each of the ascents.

From Kurtz's article we know that only two of the four ascents agreed in the contract took place and in January 1851. The delay was due to problems with the supply of gas and unfavourable weather and although the shows were advertised with posters full of colourful details, the aeronauts did not ascend on a live horse or bull (Kurtz, 1999: 52). Taking into account the terms of the contract mentioned before, this means that the aeronauts were probably left out of pocket.

Whatever their financial situation at the time, one incident after another saw the end of Clifford's aeronautical career which, apart from being a spectacular and original way of introducing himself to the Madrid scene, was soon forgotten.

In a letter to the newspaper, *La Patria*, published on January 17th, 1851, five days after Clifford's first balloon ascent in Madrid, the photographer gives a descriptive account of the event.

[...] we had just crossed (the clouds) when all of us, particularly my wife had the indescribable pleasure of reaching a serene blue sky and enjoying for a moment the bright and relaxing rays of the sun. [...] In the vast space ahead of us, looking down, we could only see a huge sea of undulating clouds, white as snow and similar to a frozen polar ocean. The highest peak of a solitary mountain was the only thing that changed this panorama. [...] Shortly afterwards, and almost without any wind or breeze, we opened the valve and again descended towards the clouds, which we crossed leaving a halo of beautiful prismatic colours in our wake [...] (*La Patria*, 1851: January 17).<sup>9</sup>

Clifford's rich descriptive narrative, which brightens up an almost empty scene and in which his surprise and excitement appear to be almost naïve at times, leads us to believe that this was Clifford's first balloon flight. However, was this really the first time that Clifford and his companions had ascended in a balloon?

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[09] Original Text: [...] apenas cruzamos (las nubes) cuando todos y más particularmente mi esposa, tuvimos el placer inefable de encontrarnos en un cielo azul y sereno [...] En todo el espacio que abarcada (sic.) nuestra vista solo mirábamos debajo de nosotros un mar extenso de nubes ondulantes, blancas como la nieve y aparecidas (sic.) a la que será el océano helado en las regiones polares. La cúspide más elevada de una montaña solitaria era lo único que variaba aquel panorama a lo lejos. A poco, y casi sin viento alguno abrimos la válvula y bajamos de nuevo a las nubes, las cuales atravesamos seguidos de nuestra aparición, pues la sombra del globo se hallaba rodeada de una aureola de colores prismáticos hermosísimos [...].



**Fig. 1:** Lithograph poster of the aeronauts Clifford and Goulston mounted on horseback for the event which was supposed to take place on January 26th, 1851. Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid (Sección de Fotografía, Servicio de Estampas y Grabados).

# PLAZA DE TOROS.

En la tarde del DOMINGO 12 de Enero de 1851 (si el tiempo lo permite) se verificará

## LA 8.<sup>a</sup> CORRIDA DE NOVILLOS CON ASCENSION AEREOSTATICA,

**NUNCA VISTA EN ESTA CAPITAL.**  
Presidirá la plaza el Excmo. Sr. gefe político de la provincia.

Habiendo obtenido el correspondiente permiso de la Autoridad los ingleses *A. Goulston, C. Clifford y Mistress Clifford, su esposa*, para verificar diferentes ASCENSIONES AEREOSTATICAS, tendrá lugar la primera en la tarde del referido día, elevándose los tres en una barquilla pendiente de UN MAGNIFICO GLOBO, henchido de gas, cuyas dimensiones son tan extraordinarias que puede asegurarse que no le hay mayor en Europa.

Con el objeto de amenizar la función ha dispuesto por su parte, el Empresario de la Plaza de Toros que se verifique tambien una corrida de novillos y toros de puntas antes de la ascension y tambien despues, si por cualquier incidente no pudiera verificarse de manera que á la variedad de los espectáculos que se ofrecen, se agregue la novedad de que el público vea ascender por primera vez á tres aeronautas reunidos en una frágil barquilla contándose entre ellos á la animosa é interesante *Mistress CLIFFORD*.

*La funcion se coordinará del modo siguiente:*

- 1.<sup>o</sup> DOS TOROS EMBOLADOS que picarán dos aficionados y banderillearán otros dos metidos EN CESTOS, siendo estoqueados por *Gabriel Caballero*.
- 2.<sup>o</sup> DOS TOROS de puntas: el primero de la ganadería de *D. Manuel de la Torre y Rauri*, vecino de esta corte, con divisa encarnada y escarolada, y el segundo de *D. Justo Hernandez*, de la misma vecindad (procedente de casta Jijona), con celeste y morada, que picarán *Juan Martinez y Juan Uceta*, con otro picador de reserva; siendo estoqueados por el espada *Isidro Santiago*, á cuyo cargo estarán las correspondientes cuadrillas de banderilleros.
- Y 3.<sup>o</sup> LA GRANDE ASCENSION AEREOSTATICA por los Sres. *A. Goulston, C. Clifford y Mistress Clifford, su esposa*, reunidos en una barquilla pendiente de un magnifico y colosal GLOBO, henchido de gas que se hallará preparado en medio de la plaza antes de principiarse la función, si fuere posible.

ADVERTENCIA.

Deseoso el Empresario de la Plaza de Toros, de que no se defrauden los intereses del público, tendrá dispuesto para el caso de no verificarse la ascension, por cualquier incidente imprevisto, que continúe la función lidiándose otros dos toros de puntas que picarán los referidos *Martinez y Uceta*, estoqueando al primero el espada *Isidro Santiago* y al segundo el sobresaliente de espadas *José Muñoz*; corriéndose de todos modos, verifíquese ó no la ascension, y por fin de fiesta EL NUMERO DE NOVILLOS EMBOLADOS que la Autoridad disponga para que el público pueda bajar á divertirse capeándolos á su arbitrio, excepto los ancianos y muchachos, á quienes se prohibe para evitar desgracias.

*Se previene al público de orden de la Autoridad:*

Que en lugar de perrosse usarán banderillas de fuego para los toros de muerte que no entran á varas: Que está prohibido arrojar á la plaza naranjas, cáscaras, piedras, ni otra cosa que pueda perjudicar á los lidiadores: Que nadie pueda estar entre barreras si no los precios operarios, ni bajar de los tendidos hasta que se verifique la ascension aereostática, ó está, en su caso, enganchedo el último toro de muerte, observándose además las prevenciones que rigen en las corridas de novillos.

PRECIOS SIN DISTINCION DE SOL NI SOMBRA.

Tendidos á reales pagados á la puerta de los mismos.

|                                 |                                |     |  |                |                                |     |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----|--|----------------|--------------------------------|-----|
| GRADAS.....                     | Delanteras y tabloncillos..... | 10. |  | ANDANADAS..... | Delanteras y tabloncillos..... | 12. |
| Palcos de diez asientos 420 rs. | Centros.....                   | 8.  |  | Centros.....   |                                | 8.  |

A las Gradas, Andanadas y Palcos se entrará por billetes, que se venderán desde el sábado 11 del corriente en el despacho establecido en la

**PUERTA DEL SOL, TIENDA DE LA CASA NUM. 3, CIUFERIA.**

Y en otro despacho que se establecerá en la misma Plaza de toros el día de la función, desde las dos de la tarde en adelante.

**LA CORRIDA EMPEZARA A LAS TRES.**

Fig. 2: Poster used for advertising one of Clifford and Goulston's balloon events following a bullfight. Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid (Sección de Fotografía, Servicio de Estampas y Grabados).

### 3. Background

In order to answer this question and be able to provide more details about the background to Clifford's arrival in Madrid, we must go back, first of all, to the year 1848 and the Cremorne gardens in London, a place where numerous original balloon shows took place at the time. In August of the same year the press published the following news about a balloon race which had taken place recently between the balloon, Royal Cremorne, piloted by Lieutenant Gale and the Royal Albert, piloted by Mr Gypson. The balloons are referred to as: "aeronautic monsters of almost the same size; [...] The Royal Cremorne, shining like an orb of gold, with its bright crimson belt, was plainly distinguishable from its rival, the Royal Albert, which is of a much darker hue [...]" (*The Era*, 1848, August 13: 11).

As for the outcome of the race, we read the following:

"[...] Mr Gale describes his voyage as the most brilliant he has yet made; the immense altitude (nearly two miles and a half) enabling himself and his companions to witness the setting sun in all its glory [...] Mr Gale was the first to reach town, and herald the victory of his pet, the Royal Cremorne; he arrived at about half past twelve o'clock and was followed an hour later by Mr. Gyspon. This terminated this novel and exciting race" (*The Era*, 1848, August 13: 11).

A week later, on August 20, 1848, we read the following in the same newspaper: "At an early hour Lieutenant Gale, with Major Lettsome, Mr Goulston and Mr Bishop of Charles Street Westminster, ascended in the Royal Cremorne balloon, taking with him two model parachutes, the cars of which were occupied by two little chattering monkeys" (*The Era*, 1848, August 20: 10).

On this occasion, one of the famous aeronaut's companions has the same surname as Clifford's companion in the same balloon in Madrid two years later, Goulston. The relationship between Gale and Goulston consolidated during the following year and Goulston soon became Gale's main ballooning companion: "At five o'clock Lieutenant Gale, R.N., the celebrated aeronaut, ascended in his balloon, with Mr. James Goulston, of London, and two persons of the neighbourhood" (*The Morning Post*, 1849, June 22: 5). "Mr Ellis generously arranged another balloon ascent, to take place at night, the voyagers upon this occasion being Lieut. Gale, Mrs Gale and Mr Goulston, who, after a short excursion, made a safe descent near Kentish Town" (*The Era*, 1849, August 12: 6).

Gale's exceptional aeronautical career continued with him offering to serve on a scientific survey of the Arctic in October of the same year. The following from an article published in the press at the time gives us some idea of Gale's

extraordinary qualities as an aeronaut: “If one man can face danger, brave hardship, or endure fatigue, with more unflinching courage than another, Gale is the man” (*The Era*, 1849, October 28: 9).

As for James Goulston, in June 1850, shortly before Clifford’s arrival in Madrid, we find him in the Waterloo festival in the Cremorne Gardens, London, on board the Royal Cremorne with Gale, where they ascended in the presence of the ambassador of Nepal and his entourage. On this occasion the press refers to them as: “the intrepid aeronauts Lieut. Gale and Mr Goulston” (*The Era*, 1850, June 23: 11).

The following month, Gale set off on an eventful crossing of the English Channel, getting lost on the way and ending up with the balloon tied to a rock about six miles from the coast of Dieppe. After walking to a village and not being able to make himself understood in French, he was arrested and taken to the British consulate in Dieppe where he was returned to England on a steam boat (*London Daily News*, 1850, July 11: 6).

The same day, on the same page of the *London Daily News*, we come across another headline: “Ascent of an Aeronaut on Horseback.” The article is about an equestrian ascent which took place in Paris during the summer of 1850. The aeronaut, M. Poitevin, dressed as a jockey, ascended from the Paris hippodrome on the back of a white horse hanging from the basket, whilst fifty men and some of the spectators fought to hold back the balloon in a strong gale. As for the horse, we read the following:

“For some moments the horse exhibited great restiveness, and appeared very frightened, but as soon as the balloon had commenced its ascent, he remained quite motionless, his legs hanging as if he were attacked by paralysis. For an instant, the balloon, forced by the wind, was almost at right angles with the aeronaut and the horse.... The emotion of the spectators was very obvious, and some ladies fainted. [...] M. Poitevin exhibited the greatest coolness and courage” (*London Daily News*, 1850, July 11: 6).

In France, in 1850, many balloon ascents and shows took place in the hippodromes of the main cities, after the horse racing events (Tissandier v.ii, 1887: 45-54). The first equestrian balloon ascent took place in Nanterre in 1798. The aeronaut, Testu-Brissy, ascended in an elongated balloon with a rectangular wooden platform under the basket. After a first, unsuccessful attempt the aeronaut managed to ascend with the horse tied to the platform to an altitude that he did not find particularly uncomfortable, although the horse started to bleed from its nostrils and ears (Tissandier v.i, 1887: 150).



In August 1828, the famous English aeronaut, Charles Green, ascended on horseback from the Eagle Tavern, London. It was the first time that this type of show had been seen in England. An extract from an article which appears in the press with the headline “Mr Green’s Equestrian Balloon Ascent,” describes the event as follows:

“[...] the horse made several plunges backwards and forwards, and trembled violently, evidently alarmed at the shouts which he distinctly heard, till he had passed the Thames. The horse, however, in a few seconds, regained his wonted serenity, and became quite passive, eating some beans from his hand, which, by leaning forward, he could easily give him [...]” (*The Morning Post*, 1828, August 2: 3).

Green was the most celebrated aeronaut of his generation. From a family of greengrocers from London he was known to be affable and good natured on the ground but nervous and taciturn in the air. Nobody has any idea where his interest in ballooning came from but in a short period of time he became not only a competent and brave aeronaut but also an excellent businessman, who skillfully negotiated a contract with the Gas Company to use coal as fuel for his balloon, thus reducing the costs substantially (Holmes, 2013: 55-57).

In November 1836, Green took off on a night excursion from London to visit various European countries in the company of Monck Mason, an Irish musician and Robert Holland, a wealthy member of parliament, both enthusiastic amateur balloonists. Green himself had constructed the enormous balloon which he called The Royal Vauxhall (Holmes, 2013: 60).

The voyage was epic and heroic: four hundred and eighty miles in eighteen hours; a record for the time. Flying eastwards they crossed Calais, Brussels, Liège and Koblenz and nearly reached Frankfurt. On board they carried curious supplies such as several dozen bottles of champagne and liqueurs, forty pounds of ham, red meat and tongue, the same amount of bread, biscuits and sugar and forty five pounds of game and preserves, apart from clothes, footwear, astronomic instruments, lamps etc. (Holmes, 2013: 60).

Returning to England in the summer of 1850, we come across two curious pieces of news in the press. The first one refers to the first appearance that season of the Royal Cremorne, in the gardens of the same name:

“The Royal Cremorne Balloon (its first appearance of the season) was on Monday an object of great admiration, and worthily so, for it is, in form, colour, and material, very handsome. The celebrated Guiseppe

Lunardine (sic.),<sup>10</sup> a Spanish aeronaut, was engaged to make his first ascent in England, which he did admirably on Monday evening, accompanied by three gentlemen, Messrs. Goulston, Smith and Norman” (*The Era*, 1850, July 13: 12).

The second piece of news refers to the great difficulty encountered whilst transporting the Royal Cremorne from the Gas Company to the Cremorne Gardens for a night ascent. The balloon; “[...] an erratic monster that had so unceremoniously found its way to foreign parts[...]” was tied to a steamboat and towed up river to the Cremorne Gardens being released and tied again every time they came to a bridge. On board were the aeronauts Gale, James Goulston and Van Buren.

On passing through the main entrance to the gardens, swaying in the wind, the balloon banged into some ornamental columns and got tangled up in a tree. Finally, the aeronauts managed to repair the damage caused to the balloon and were able to carry out a brilliant ascent with a firework display included, in the presence of a crowd anxious to see the great balloon again after its recent accidental crossing of the Channel (*London Daily News*, 1850, July 11: 6).

#### 4. The death of the aeronaut Lieutenant Gale

In September 1850, a month before the first appearance of the aeronauts Goulston and Clifford in the Madrid press, the *London Evening Standard*, citing various sources, published an article with the following headline: “The Fatal Accident to Lieut. Gale, the Aeronaut.” This piece of news gives an account of the death of the aeronaut in Bordeaux at the beginning of the same month (*London Evening Standard*, 1850, September 16: 3).

The curious thing about this news report, the first of many which appeared during the following days in the British newspapers, is that it begins with the words: “This was the first occasion that the late Mr Gale ever ascended with a pony.”

It goes on to mention the many reasons Gale had given against ascending on horseback, amongst others, that it was no longer a novelty as the aeronauts Green and Poitevin had already done it and besides, it was cruel. However, it appears that the aeronaut was forced to comply because of economic difficulties.

On the day of the fatal ascent, Gale was “accompanied by Mr Goulstone (sic.), who has a large share in the balloon Royal Cremorne and Mr Goulstone Jr.,” although neither were on board at the time of the accident. All of them had

[10] Guiseppe Lunardini was the stage name or “nomme de guerre” used by Arthur Goulston, son of James and ballooning companion of Clifford (source: *Lancaster Gazette*, 1852, August 2: 6). The name is remarkably similar to Vicente Lunardi, the first aeronaut to make an ascent in England (Tissandier v.I, 1887: 108).

left London some weeks earlier with the intention of carrying out ascents in Paris, Bordeaux and Spain (*London Evening Standard*, 1850, September 16: 3).

Gale ascended successfully on horseback from the hippodrome of Bordeaux, landing safely in a nearby village where various people went to help him with the balloon, securing it with a rope and letting the horse loose. Gale was furious about this and started cutting the rope with a knife, which provoked a sudden ascent at full power (*The Morning Post*, 1850, September 16: 2).

The impulse of the ascent, together with a brusque escape of gas, rendered Gale unconscious and he fell to the bottom of the car, although this part of the story is unclear as there appear to have been no direct witnesses. A farm labourer said that he had seen a large balloon pass by at a high altitude and out of control. The aeronaut appeared to be hanging from the basket with his tongue out, unconscious. The balloon, with its tank still half full of gas, was found in a field nearby with no trace of the aeronaut. Gale's mutilated body was found some days later, several kilometres away (*The Morning Post*, 1850, September 16: 2).

To the account of Gale's accident, *The Morning Post*, in the same edition adds the following: "We must, for the sake of the truth, mention that at the moment of his first ascent Mr Gale was not perfectly sober; he had taken more than his usual quantity of spirituous liquor [...]" It continues: "[...] and his state of excitement was such that Mr. Clifford was alarmed, and proposed to ascend in his stead. This proposition was, however, rejected, and Mr. Clifford expressed his apprehension to several persons present" (*The Morning Post*, 1850, September 16: 2).

Bearing in mind what we already know about Clifford's ballooning adventures in Madrid, there can be no doubt that the Mr Clifford mentioned here is the photographer Charles Clifford. This information situates him in Bordeaux before his arrival in Madrid.<sup>11</sup> We also find out from the same source that he played a leading role in the search for the aeronaut and ordered the balloon, when it was found, to be emptied and transported back to Bordeaux (*The Morning Post*, 1850, September 16: 2).

The *Cork Examiner*, on the 20th of the same month, published an extract from a letter by Mrs Goulston, the wife of James Goulston, "manufacturer of cloths, of Marlborough Terrace, Old Kent Road," owner of the Royal Cremorne balloon. In the extract, Mrs Goulston summarizes the details of the accident and explains that the aeronaut had been buried in the protestant cemetery of Bordeaux and that the Mayor and a considerable number of English residents had attended the funeral (*Cork Examiner*, 1850, September 20: 4).

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[11] See also Sircos et Pallier, 1876: 354, note 2. Here Gale is described as an old English Lieutenant whose intention was to cross France with a balloon offering equestrian shows and accompanied by his fellow countryman, Clifford (sic.)

Afterwards, there were various initiatives aimed at collecting donations for the Gale family (a widow and seven children), amongst others, a charity balloon ascent from the Bordeaux hippodrome organized by Mr Clifford, the director. On this occasion, Mr Clifford, his wife Jane and the Goulstons (father and son) proprietors of the balloon, ascended together (*Cork Examiner*, 1850, September 20: 4); *The London Evening Standard*, 1850, September 19).

Mrs Goulston's letter finishes by expressing her gratitude to Mr Clifford for his benevolent attitude towards Gales' family and for organizing the event to collect donations (*Cork Examiner*, 1850, September 20: 4).

## 5. Conclusions

The discovery of Charles Clifford in Bordeaux as director of the hippodrome, a month before appearing for the first time in Madrid, allows us to shed some light upon several of the questions arising from his spectacular arrival in the autumn of 1850 including the nature of his relationship with the aeronaut Arthur Goulston, the confirmation of Goulston's identity<sup>12</sup> and the reason why they were interested in offering an ascent on horseback as part of their balloon show, although it is unclear whether the equestrian ascent was planned as part of a repertoire based on previous experience or as a tribute to their fellow countryman Lieut. Gale.

Whatever the reason, Clifford's reaction in the light of the fatal events which took place in Bordeaux also provides us with valuable information which helps to build his personal profile. In the first place, his authority and positioning with respect to Gale's excessive drinking, offering to take the aeronaut's place and ascend on horseback himself, followed by his managing of the retrieval of the balloon and his arrangement for transporting it back to Bordeaux. In the second place, Clifford's initiative to help the widow and family of the dead aeronaut by collecting donations from the English residents in Bordeaux and the organization of a balloon ascent in which he himself participated.

Clifford's decisiveness and organizational skills proved later to be a valuable asset when establishing a photography business in Madrid. In the first period he had no qualms about opening and closing studios which offered the latest techniques. When the studio business began to dwindle in the face of ever growing competition from local photographers, instead of giving up and leaving Madrid, Clifford changed direction, heading out from the studio in an ever widening geographical radius. At the same time, he extended his contacts, embarking on pho-

[12] The question of who exactly was Clifford's companion in the balloon has been subject to some debate largely due to errors in the Spanish newspaper accounts which led to a variation in the spelling of the surname and the possibility of it having been Alfred Guesdon, French artist famous for his aerial lithographs of Spain in the early 1850's.

tographic projects which brought him nearer to his goal of working for the Spanish royal family.

As far as his generosity is concerned, during his stay in Madrid, we have records of his contributions to both the Episcopal Church and British Cemetery funds and also in aid of the sufferers of the Indian Mutiny in 1857<sup>13</sup>. On another occasion he had agreed to photograph the headstone on a grave in the British cemetery in Madrid in order to provide a visual record for the family of the deceased in London who were unable to visit the grave for economic reasons.<sup>14</sup>

To conclude this story of balloons and horses, on 12 June 1852, the *Lancaster Gazette* published the news of a balloon accident in the Bellevue gardens, Manchester, involving the aeronaut James Goulston, father of Arthur Goulston, Clifford's ballooning companion. It would appear that James Goulston had arrived in Manchester to substitute his son Arthur in an ascent due to the fact that Arthur was already engaged in a similar event in the Cremorne Gardens in London at the same time under the name of Guiseppe Lunardini.

The ascent took place on board a new balloon of enormous size and with a great capacity for holding gas. The balloon was manufactured by James Goulston himself. At the time of the launch, it was pouring with rain and during the descent a heavy thunder storm broke out. Goulston was obliged to descend rapidly. As a result, the balloon crashed violently into a stone wall, ejecting the aeronaut upwards towards the net of the balloon in which he became entangled and trapped. The balloon went on to crash violently against another wall and against the front of a house. James Goulston was already dead when the rescue party arrived. He was an experienced aeronaut with fifty balloon ascents. The balloon, a prototype, was going to be named Royal Belle Vue (*Lancaster Gazette*, 1852, June 12: 6).

In 1852, Arthur Goulston married Jane Fuller, daughter of a bank employee, resident in Camberwell, Surrey. In 1853, their only son, Arthur, was born. Arthur Goulston, like his father James was a cloth and canvas manufacturer. These materials were used to make umbrellas and other things, including balloons. There is no evidence that Arthur participated in balloon ascents after 1852. The couple lived in Camberwell for most of their lives. Jane Goulston died in Devon in 1906 at the age of seventy six and Arthur in 1914 at the age of eighty six.<sup>15</sup>

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[13] National Archives, London. FO/185 232.

[14] National Archives, London. FO/444/5 (Embassy and Legation, Madrid, Spain: General Correspondence, Drafts of out-letters, 1861. Correspondence between W.C. Brackenbury and Mrs Blakeway).

[15] Data from the UK census: 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901; Free BMD Birth Index (1837-1983); Free BMD Marriage Index (1837-1983); Free BMD Death Index (1837-1983). Available from: Ancestry, <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>

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