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Newsletter

Spring 2016

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Editorial

Euan Raffel

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As we enter our 26th year, it's enlightening to learn of growing coraclemaking and usage around the world. Further to our items in the Journal, we have had photos of an Ironbridge coracle being used on the river Nile in Cairo and recently a coracle was made in the USA from an old plastic pickle barrel - photos of this appear later in the newsletter.

There is also a company in the States making a derivation of the Ironbridge coracle, which they market as a Corcl - it is a one piece boat formed from foam and fibreglass, without a seat. It doesn't quite look right to traditionalists, but its great to see people taking their knowledge of these ancient craft and applying it to a modern world. Anything to keep the coracle in usage!

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and please keep sending in your news, photographs, updates and events - it's awfully difficult to produce it and the Journal without your contributions.

Chair's Chat

Jude Pilgrim

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What a really interesting summer it's proving to be. Following the Second World War re-enactment day on 28th May in Ironbridge (3 coracles attending) we have the 23rd Scottish Traditional Boat Festival at Portsoy in Aberdeenshire on the weekend of 25th – 26th June, with a strong display of coracles expected.

There are plenty of regattas in the

pipeline including Welshpool and Carmarthen, which are being held on the same day, Saturday 2nd July. The Bures Regatta is on 6th August and Ironbridge as usual on August Bank Holiday Monday, followed by the Macmillan regatta at Shrewsbury on 16th September, billed as 'the World Championship Coracle Race'.

The Society has also been invited to demonstrate coraclemaking and paddling at BBC Countryfile Live at Blenheim Palace from 4th to 7th August. We are putting together quite a good demonstration, with representatives from the Ironbridge Coracle Trust and other coracling groups. If you are interested in helping out please get in touch with the Secretary. More information on this is provided later in the newsletter.

Finally, can I encourage everyone to come along to the Annual General Meeting on the weekend of 16th to 18th September. We have been invited to The Good Life Experience at Hawarden Estate, Flintshire. We are planning 2 regattas, plus demonstrations and joining the barbecue on Saturday night. Once arrangements for this have been finalised we will let you know.

Best wishes and good coracling!

2016 AGM and Regatta

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This year, we have been invited to The Good Life Experience at Harwarden Estate, Flintshire, for our AGM and regatta. This takes place on the weekend of 16th - 18th September.

We are currently finalising the timetable for the weekend and should be available in the next few weeks - if you have access to the internet, visit our AGM webpage coraclesociety.org.uk/agm. Don't worry if you don't have internet access though, we'll send you details about the weekend in the post nearer the time.

Recycled coracle

Richard Greene from California, USA, has sent us photos of his coracle made from a recycled HDPE pickle barrel, canvas and elastomeric roof coating. More photos are available online at coraclesociety.org.uk/picklecorage



BBC Countryfile Live

The Society has been invited to exhibit at this year's BBC Countryfile Live at Blenheim Palace. Held over four days from Thursday 4th to Sunday 7th August, we along with some of our coracling partners including the Ironbridge Coracle Trust will be running demonstrations of coraclemaking and paddling, with opportunities for members of the public to have a go

We are inviting Society members to apply to help us over the weekend - free tickets, parking and camping are on offer to successful applicants. If you can help out for the whole weekend, or just a couple days, please get in touch - apply online at coraclesociety.org.uk/bbccfl or contact the Secretary.

Ironbridge WW2 day

Here is a photo from the WW2 day held in Ironbridge at the end of May. More photos can be viewed online at coraclesociety.org.uk/ironbridgeww2



Cyryglau ar yr afon Taf

Dylan Jones

Fel y gwydd rhai ohonoch, ym mis Mai 2013 defnyddiwyd Karl Chattington gan Glwb Criced Morgannwg fel atynfa i ddenu rhagor o gefnogwyr i wylïo chwaraewyr megis Chris Gayle, o India'r Gorllewin, yn nghystadleuaeth gemau Tlws Pencampwyr a oedd ar fin dechrau. Roedd Gayle yn adnabyddus o fwrw'r bel o'r maes i'r afon a gwelwyd Karl yn maesu yn yr afon!

Hyd y gwyddwn Karl oedd y person cyntaf mewn cwrwgl ar y Taf ers dros ganrif. Ceir y cyfeiriad cyntaf o gyryglau ar yr afon o lun adnabyddus

Julius Caesar Ibbetson (1759 – 1817) a elwid yn Caerdydd o'r Gorllewin. Yn y llun gwelwn un cwrwgl ar yr afon a dwy arall ar y lan. Mae'r cyryglau yn debyg i wneathuriaeth yr afon Teifi ond gyda'r rhwyf yn nodweddiadol o deip hirach yr afon Tywi. Gellid gweld y llun bellach yn Oriel Aberdeen.

Gan symud ymlaen i tua 1825 cawn gyfrif o James Lucas yn boddi tra'n pysgota am eog gyda rhwyd ar yr afon ger Gwesty'r Royal heddiw. Rhaid cofio bod llif yr afon yn dra wahanol heddiw i'r un y cyfnod yno. I goffáu y digwyddiad cawn heddiw cerflun pren o gwrwgl yn agos i'r afon ym Mharc Biwt.

Cawn drychineb arall ar ddiwedd 1908 pan foddwyd bachgen ifanc o'r enw Cromwell Davies ym Mynwent y Crynwyr

Taff coracles

Dylan Jones

Back in May 2013 we saw Society member, Karl Chattington, on the river Taff near Sophia Gardens retrieving cricket balls from the nearby SWALEC stadium. He had been used as a publicity stunt for the forthcoming Champions Trophy fixtures which featured the mighty West Indian Chris

Gayle - a renowned hitter of sixes!



Coracle memorial to James Lucas

To our knowledge, Karl, was the first person on a coracle on the river Taff for over a century! One of the earliest references to the existence of coracles on the

river is from Julius Caesar Ibbetson's (1759 – 1817) painting 'Cardiff from the West' which now can be seen at Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums. In the painting we see one coracle on the river and two others on the bank. The coracles are similar to the Teifi construction but with a longer paddle characteristic of a Tywi type.

Moving on to around 1825 we have an account of James Lucas drowning whilst net fishing from a coracle near the Royal Hotel. A wooden coracle carving has recently been unveiled commemorating his passing at Bute Park.

Another drowning incident happened at the latter end of 1908 when a young boy, Cromwell Davies, was drowned at Quaker's Yard near Merthyr Tydfil. The

ger Merthyr Tydful. Roedd cyryglwyr Caerfyrddin wedi teithio lan i gynorthwyo y boblogaeth leol i ddargangod y corff a hyn a waned tair wythnos yn ddiweddarach.

Ar wahân i ymddangosiad Karl ar yr afon felly nid oedd cyryglau wedi ymddangos ar yr afon Taf ers cryn

amser. Newidiwyd hyn ar brynhawn dydd Mercher gwlyb yng nghanol mis Mai 2016. Fel rhan o Brosiect Taf Byw gan Paul Barrett a Chris Powell penderfynwyd ailgyflwyno'r cwrwgl ar yr afon. I ddathlu'r achlysur pwysig hwn teithiodd cwmni teledu Cwmni Da o Gaernarfon i lawr o'r Gogledd i ffilmio. Roedd Paul a Chris wedi bod yn brysur am fisoedd yn adeiladu cwrwgl o deip Tywi ac roeddynt yn edrych ymlaen i'r lansiad agoriadaol! Doedd yr un ohonynt wedi bod mewn cwrwgl o'r blaen ac felly rhoddwyd y cyfrifoldeb a'r fraint i mi fod yn gyntaf ynddi!

Penderfynwyd y lle gorau i lansio Bonesig oedd o ben isaf Parc Biwt ger y Bws Dŵr 90 sedd. Falch o gofnodi aeth fordaith cyntaf Bonesig ymlaen heb unrhyw anffawd a rhaid i Paul a Chris cael eu canmol am adeiladu'r cwrwgl mor gelfydd. Adeiladwyd Bonesig ym Myd y Cychod draw yn Mae Caerdydd a rhoddwyd cyngor a arweiniad iddynt gan Karl Chattington ac

Tywi coraclemen of Carmarthen had assisted the local population in searching for the young child and subsequently recovered the body three weeks later.

Apart from the brief cameo appearance by Karl as mentioned earlier no other coracles had been seen on the river Taff for a

long time. This all changed on a wet Wednesday afternoon in the middle of May 2016. As part of the Living Taff Project let by Paul Barrett and Chris Powell it was decided to reintroduce the coracle onto the river. To celebrate this momentous occasion Cwmni Da television production company from Caernarfon came down to film. Paul and Chris had been busy for months, constructing a Tywi type craft and were excited at the prospect of its inaugural launch. Neither had been on a coracle before therefore it was left to myself to find out if it floated!

It was decided the best place to launch 'Bonesig' was from the lower end of Bute Park by the 90 seat Waterbus. Thankfully 'Bonesig's' maiden voyage went without any mishap and both Paul and Chris must be commended for constructing such a fine craft! Incidentally the coracle was built at the World of Boats in Cardiff Bay and were given plenty of



Bonesig coracle before launch



Dylan Jones presents Meinir Gwilym with a bottle of our anniversary ale, 'Cwrwgl'

Andy Keward sy'n adeiladu'r Sgwner Elena. Roedd yn deimlad hyfryd, erys y glaw trwm, i ail gyflwyno'r cwrwgl yn ôl ar yr afon Taf. Clod mawr i Meinir Gwilym, cyflwynwraig Cwmni Da, am fod mor barod i fynd ar yr afon gyda mi. Ychydig iawn o hanes y gwrwgl oedd ganddi cyn mentro lawr i Gaerdydd ac wrth gwrs, erioed wedi bod mewn un o'r blaen! Wedi cwpl o wersi cyflym roedd wedi meistrioli'r grefft yn ddigonol i alluogi iddi fynd ar y dŵr a dod yn ôl yn sych! Gyda llaw roedd ei chwrgl hi wedi ei wneud yn Ironbridge ac wedi ei rhoddi i Paul fel rhodd.

Roedd yn ddiwrnod da i bawb er nad oedd y tywydd wedi bod o'n plaid. Falch o ddweud nid oedd neb wedi syrthio i fewn. Rwy'n mawr gobeithio bydd Paul a Chris yn parhau i ddenu

ymwelwyr i fae Caerdydd ac wedi gwersi yn Sain Ffagan byddant yn cael rhwyfo eu cwrwgl eu hunain ar yr afon rhyw ddydd. Roedd yn ffrainc fod y cyntaf i lansio Bonesig ar ei mordaith cyntaf a thro nesaf mae Paul a Chris yn gobeithio gweld mwy o gryglau ar yr afon. Eu bwriad yw cynnal rasus cyryglau ar yr afon a byddaf yn sicrhau yn gadael chi wybod pryd fydd hynny.

advice and guidance by Karl Chattington and Andy Keward who is rebuilding the schooner Elena. It was a lovely feeling, even with the rain coming down heavily, being able to reintroduce the coracle back onto the river Taff. Special praise must be given to Meinir Gwilym, the presenter for Cwmni Da, for volunteering to accompany me on the quest. She was totally oblivious to the history of the coracle before coming down to south Wales and never actually been in one before! To her immense credit, after a

crash course in how to use a coracle, she was able to circumnavigate the treacherous waters of the Taff with no problem! It would be good to have her as a member one day. Her coracle was made at Ironbridge and kindly given to Paul Barrett.



Dylan on the water with Meinir

It was certainly a good day for everyone – we were certainly wet but not from falling into the river! I sincerely hope both Paul and Chris will continue to attract visitors to Cardiff bay and with their next coracle be able to launch their own as they are due to have coracle lessons at St Fagans early June. It was a privilege to launch 'Bonesig' on her maiden voyage and fortunately were able to avoid the busy traffic of the water buses! Both Paul and Chris hope to see more coracles on the Taff and it is their intention one day to hold coracle races. I will certainly keep everyone informed.

2016 events calendar

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Here is a summary of events taking place in 2016. If you know of any coracle-related events not listed, or are organising one yourself, please get in touch so we can spread the word - visit coraclesociety.org.uk/contribute or contact the Secretary. If you do not have internet access and would like more information about these events please contact the Secretary

Scottish Traditional Boat Festival - Saturday 25th - Sunday 26th June

With coracle demonstrations from Dave Purvis. Portsoy, Aberdeenshire. Contact STBF Portsoy 01261 842951 or email contact@stbfportsoy.com, or Dave Purvis - 01765 690318

Welshpool coracle regatta - Saturday 2nd July

Welshpool Town Wharf. Contact Welshpool Town Council - 01938 553142 or email town.clerk@welshpooltowncouncil.gov.uk

Carmarthen River Festival - Saturday 2nd July

Annual river festival with coracle and raft races. Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire. Contact Julie Rees - 07974 772393 or email jrees@trevaughan.freeserve.co.uk

BBC Countryfile Live - Thursday 4th - Sunday 7th August 2016

The Society will be exhibiting at this year's BBC Countryfile Live. Members are invited to apply to help out - details at coraclesociety.org.uk/bbccfl or contact the Secretary. Blenheim Palace, Woodstock. Contact Dylan Jones - 029 2057 3438 or email info@coraclesociety.org.uk

Bures coracle regatta - Saturday 6th August

Camping Friday night, regatta Saturday. Bures, Suffolk. Contact River Stour Trust - 01787 313199 or email coracles@riverstourtrust.org

Ironbridge Coracle Regatta - Monday 29th August

Annual regatta at the rowing club. Ironbridge, Shropshire. Contact Ironbridge Coracle Trust - 01952 275606 or email judyawalker@blueyonder.co.uk

Guisborough Forest Festival - Sunday 11th September

Coracle demonstrations by Dave Purvis. Contact Friends of Guisborough Forest - 01287 631132

2016 Macmillan Coracle World Championships - Friday 16th September

Shrewsbury, Shropshire. Contact Macmillan Coracle World Championships committee - coracleworldchampionships@gmail.com or contact our Secretary Dylan Jones - 029 2057 3438 and we will relay your message

2016 Coracle Society AGM and regatta - Friday 16th - Sunday 18th September

Full details will be posted to you nearer the time. The Good Life Experience, Harwarden Estate, Flintshire. Contact Dylan Jones - 029 2057 3438 or email info@coraclesociety.org.uk

The Coracle Society Officers 2015/16

President	Dr Irving Finkel
Vice Presidents	Rod Bowen John Davies Peter Faulkner Martin Fowler Terry Kenny
Honorary Chairperson	Jude Pilgrim
Honorary Vice Chairpersons	Malcolm Rees Bruce Watson
Secretary/Archivist	Dylan Jones: St Fagans National History Museum
Treasurer	Euan Raffel
Committee	Mark Dellar Gerwyn Lewis June Lewis Brian Pearce Dave Purvis Julie Rees
Teifi netsmen's representative	Mark Dellar
Tywi netsmen's representative	Malcolm Rees
Ironbridge representative	Terry Kenny

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