

30th anniversary 1990-2020



The
Coracle
Society

Journal

Autumn 2020



In This Issue

- 3** **Membership Renewals & Keeping In Touch**
- 4** **President's Thoughts**
Chair's Chat
- 5** **Coracle Sighting**
From Privet Hedge To Coracle
From hedge to transport
- 6** **Sir Peter Badge**
Remembering our founder and dear friend, Sir Peter Badge
- 8** **Carmarthen Coracle & Netsmen's Association Update**
- 9** **Coraclemaking Courses**
Insh Coracle Club Update
Raymond Green updates us on this year's activities at the Highland Folk Museum
- 11** **What I Did During Lockdown**
Martin Fowler talks about The National Coracle Centre, the global pandemic and dear friend Sir Peter Badge
- 13** **Coraclemaking in Minnesota USA**
- 14** **Three Decades Of The Coracle Society**
A dive into the archives as we celebrate our 30th anniversary
- 20** **The Coracle Society Officers 2020-21**
Contact Us

Cover image: Peter Faulkner (L) paddling with Sir Peter Badge (R)

The Coracle Society Journal - Autumn 2020

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Membership Renewals & Keeping In Touch

Membership renewals are now due for 2021. In light of the tough year we've all had, the committee have agreed a 30% discount for all full rate members for the 2021 membership year. Membership rates are therefore £7 for individuals/£10.50 for joint, family & associate members. However, if you would like to pay the full membership rate as normal (£10/£15), we would be very grateful to receive this.

You can renew online with your debit or credit card, or send a cheque to the Treasurer with the member's name and postcode written on the reverse.

If we have your email address on your membership record AND you consented to receiving emails from us, you will receive your membership renewal details by email. Otherwise, please find enclosed your personalised membership renewal form. Whatever way you receive your renewal notice, **please carefully check your details BEFORE renewing!** Every year we have a number of occasions where we find members have moved but not informed us, and queried why they weren't receiving post from us!

If you have an online account, you can make any necessary changes to your address, phone number or email address yourself. Simply log in and follow the link to My Account at the top of the page. Alternatively email any changes to treasurer@coraclesociety.org.uk, or correct the renewal form and return to the Treasurer.

Don't forget you need to renew your membership by 31st January to maintain a full year's membership. This is regardless of the date you joined the Society; our membership year runs 1st January - 31st December. We look forward to welcoming you to another year of membership in 2021.

Do you have an email address?

Since GDPR came in to force in 2018, about a third of our members have not opted back in to receiving emails from us. This is down from a high of around 90% in 2017. This means we have had increased costs in recent years, as items such as the spring newsletter and AGM notifications need to be sent by post to members around the world.

If you use email, we would be grateful if you would opt in to receive emails from us. We only send a handful of messages through the year, so your inbox won't be inundated. You can opt in using our online form at www.coraclesociety.org.uk/gdpr, or if renewing by post simply enter your email address on the form before posting back to us with your cheque.

President's Thoughts

Peter Faulkner

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It was with deep sadness that I learnt of the death of our founder, Sir Peter Badge, who passed away on 29th October. I know that you will all join with me in extending our sympathy to Lady Badge and her family and that our thoughts and prayers are with them at this time.

Thirty years ago, the Society was in its infancy but the foundation stone had been laid on solid ground. Now, after some thirty years that foundation stands unshaken. The advance in technology has put us on the global map with a website second to none. Over the years many officers have loyally served the Society. Whilst our membership is not vast, we have maintained that feeling of 'family' throughout - long may it continue.

Peter led the Society through its formative years with vision and diplomacy, we owe him a great debt which can be repaid by simply working together for the good of our unique society. I give you the toast - Sir Peter Badge, Founder of The Coracle Society.

Chair's Chat

Mark Dellar

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Firstly I would like to take the opportunity to express our greatest sympathies to the Badge family on the sad passing of Sir Peter Badge.

With everything coracle related being cancelled this year, the chair's report is rather thin on the ground.

I would like to thank all the Society's elected officers for the commitment to the society once again and I would like to take this opportunity to focus on the input of our Honorary Treasurer Euan Raffel.

Euan not only looks after the finances of the Society, he does a lot of the behind the scenes work that allows the Society to run as smoothly as it does. From putting together the journal, to organising the meetings, attending and running Society events, Euan is and has been at the forefront of The Coracle Society. I personally would like to thank Euan for what he is doing and has done for The Coracle Society, its members and the greater coracling community.

Coracle Sighting

Ken Hulme

You lot on the east side of The Pond probably already know this, but I was pleasantly surprised recently to see a coracle being paddled (apparently by Michael Palin) in several scenes at the beginning of the 1977 Terry Gilliam/Michael Palin medieval fantasy film, *Jabberwocky*!

Palin paddles to and from his sweetheart's over-water house to "court" her. These untrained eyes couldn't begin to know which style of coracle it was, save that it did not appear to be pinched in at the seat and had a wickerwork gunwale. Unless Palin was sitting backwards, the craft had a narrow-ish rounded bow and a wider flat stern.

From Privet Hedge To Coracle

Rooster Fricke

What started as the pruning of a hedgerow turned into a coracle. Having seen a coracle many years ago, I had always wanted to build one. The time was right when the privet hedge switches lay on the ground. They were destined to go to the brush dump, but wait! Not the brush dump! "We're going to build a coracle!"

Through a combination of research, including *Coracles of the World* by Sir Peter Badge, and on-the-fly experimentation, a coracle rose out of the ground. Almost literally. The thwart was slabbed from a maple tree that we had felled on our property. A paddle is being made from a spruce plank slabbed from another tree. The canvas was sealed using beeswax from our honeybees. A wholly satisfying endeavour.



Photo: Rooster Fricke



Sir Peter Badge

Euan Raffel

It was with great sadness that the Society learnt of the loss of Sir Peter Badge, who passed away peacefully on Thursday 29th October 2020. Sir Peter was the founding Chairman of the Society, before holding the office of President from 1997 until 2015. Sir Peter founded The Coracle Society in June 1990, following proposals in the late 80s to double coracle net licence fees. It was noted in the Times newspaper in December 1987 that the Towy coracle netsmen were ready to abandon net fishing if this act was successful, but thanks in part to the vocal and public concern over the matter, this did not happen.

In the first Society Journal in 1990, Sir Peter wrote the following about this threat to the netsmen: "It did, however, alert people to how close they had come to losing a precious and irreplaceable part of our national heritage because, of course, coracles have an unbroken line of descent from pre-Roman times to the present day. It was this principally which led to the formation of the Coracle Society in June of this year."

Sir Peter's love of coracles started in the 1940s when as young schoolboy, he saw a coracler fishing from his upper Dee coracle in the Llangollen area. His interest in coracles was revived in 1981 when his wife Mary bought him his first coracle - a Teifi coracle made by the late Bernard Thomas - for his 50th birthday. The rest, as they say, is history.



Sir Peter's knowledge and passion for coracles knew no bounds. Sir Peter travelled and researched extensively, and spent many hours in conversation with coraclemakers. He was always hugely supportive of the Welsh coracle netsmen, campaigning against changes to net bylaws that are detrimental to their ways. It was always a delight to chat with Sir Peter and those who had the honour will certainly treasure those times with him. In the foreword to Sir Peter's 2009 publication *Coracles of the World* - a must have resource for anyone with an interest in coracles - John Williams Davies sums up Sir Peter's contribution to the coracling world quite perfectly:

"This book is the product of a lifetime's fascination with coracles and the culmination of three decades of scholarly and original research on the part of the author. No-one is better qualified to write on the subject than Peter Badge. Not only has he an unsurpassed knowledge of coracles and related craft throughout the world, but he is also an experienced and highly skilled coracle-maker and handler. As the founder and driving force behind the Coracle Society he has also done more than anyone to popularise coracling as a leisure activity. His own fine collection of coracles, which includes examples of virtually every known type, is on public display at various venues around the UK. He has also been a tireless campaigner on behalf of the rights of the few remaining Welsh coracle-fishermen to continue to practice their ancient craft."

Martin Fowler, one of the Society's vice presidents and owner of The National Coracle Centre in Cenarth, shared with us the following thoughts: "Without Sir Peter Badge there would not have been a Coracle Society and [he] was fundamental in setting up The National Coracle Centre here in Cenarth, which I have had the pleasure to run for the past thirty years. His passion and dedication to the Society will always be remembered and he will never be forgotten."

Gerwyn Lewis, one of the founding members of the Society, also shared with us some of his thoughts: "It was in the early days of the Green Wood Trust that I met Peter in particular during the Ironbridge and Bewdley Regattas. I recall that it was at this time that the growing interest in coracling was formed into The Coracle Society. With Peter's all-consuming dedication and gentle good humour, the Society grew into what it is today. I recall the time that he told me that he once kept a coracle above his court and he was very fortunate that he wasn't discovered. Coracling and the traditions of fishing in our rivers owes a great debt of gratitude to Peter's fastidious efforts."

The Society will be forever grateful to Sir Peter and we will miss him dearly. Our thoughts and condolences are with his wife, Lady Mary Badge, and his family.

Carmarthen Coracle & Netsmen's Association Update

Julie Rees

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Carmarthen River Festival/Coracle Races

Sadly due to the current situation, the organisers made the decision to cancel the 2020 Carmarthen River Festival, which was due to take place on the 20th June. Plans are now underway for 2021 to ensure it's another successful community event.

Coracle Fishing Season

Following the change to the fishing by-law, this year's coracle season for the Towy commenced on the 1st May (usually 1st March) and ended as normal on the 31st July. Due to illness and bereavement only 3 licences were taken this year out of a possible 8.

Sea Trout (sewin) numbers are still a cause for concern. However, the very dry period and increased numbers of predators (seals) did not help our cause.

I am pleased to report a significant increase in salmon stock and this continued into the autumn. I can only assume there must be some link between lockdown (no trawlers) and the apparent increase in numbers.

Carmarthen Coracle Education Booklets

Carmarthen Coracle and Netsmen's Association have published an educational booklet on the Carmarthen Coracle.

We have been working with retired teacher and local story-teller, Mr Andy Edwards and with the backing of the Heritage Lottery Fund, we have been able to preserve and record the old stories of the River Towy.

The booklet has been distributed to local primary schools in the area. Teachers and members of the public will have access to our comprehensive research on the 'People's Collection Wales' website.

Both the booklet and the online resource will be a beneficial tool for coracle history, Welsh heritage and river topics taught within schools.

With the recent rules on lockdown during the Covid 19 virus, we have been distributing the coracle booklets to local residential and care homes.

Media

We've done several projects including a video for the Welsh Government and local magazines.

Coraclemaking Courses

Society members Pippa and Rob are planning to run two coraclemaking courses next spring, where participants will have the chance to build a Boyne style coracle at The Gorfanc Hideaway in Mid Wales.

The course dates are currently 24-25 April and 8-9 May, and the cost course - inclusive of materials, tools, lunch and refreshments - is £320.00 for one or two people building one coracle. Camping is available on site.

For more information, please contact Pippa or Rob - tel 01686 420423

Insh Coracle Club Update

Raymond Green

The end of the 2019 season was not a time for rest here in Insh. Our coracles were kept in the sawmill at the Highland Folk Museum but during a very busy time on the millpond we were informed that the sawmill was going to be brought back in to working condition over the winter. That meant that in 2020 we would not be able to store the coracles in what would be very a dangerous situation with moving machinery. We now have eight coracles, including the three fibre glass coracles purchased with The Coracle Society grant - bringing them back to Insh was logistically difficult.

Recognising the problem, the Museum responded very positively to our suggestion of building a new coracle boathouse. We identified a site adjacent to the millpond and by mid-October 2019 we had agreed on both location and design of the building. On 10 December 2019 the project began in earnest when the Museum brought in an excavator to dig out the foundations. From then on the pace of construction was determined by the weather. The Museum supplied cement and aggregate to bed in some large recycled granite blocks for the foundations but we were unable to lay concrete until a brief warm spell in the first week of January 2020. Timber wall plates were screwed down onto the granite blocks on the 21 January and the wall frames of 3"x 2" timbers were erected the following week despite deep snow on the site.

The weather worsened and we were unable to work outside throughout February, but we utilised the time in the Museum workshops to pre-form the roof trusses and rip more timber into planks for the cladding. The trusses were not installed until 2 March together with waterproof sarking boards supplied by the Museum. These were left over from another construction job and they helped stabilize the roof. The wall cladding was completed the following week and the door frames were assembled and installed.

Three weeks to go to the re-opening of the Museum for the season and we felt under pressure to complete construction. Then 'lockdown' happened and we were locked out.

We were not allowed back on site until 7 July and immediately came under pressure to complete the build in time for the re-scheduled opening of the Museum toward the end of July.

A lengthy job was cleaning up some old sheets of corrugated iron for the roof. They were peppered with holes from previous use and some were quite buckled but were ready to be installed on 14 July. We scavenged guttering and drainpipe, ironmongery and old Heras fencing for the doors, roofing paint, flooring material for inside and groundworks outside, in short, all the finishing materials we needed.

The shelving for eight coracles was installed and at last we were ready to paddle them across the millpond from their temporary storage in the sawmill. Oh joy! The morning of 23 July was our last working day. We tidied the site, collected our tools and went home for lunch.

The coracle boathouse was built by three members of the coracle club with considerable support and help from Museum staff, for which we owe heartfelt thanks. Apart from screws, nails & wood preserver, the structure was built entirely from materials we 'liberated' from around the Museum. The timber was from trees felled in the pine woods surrounding the millpond; the logs had been milled by a mobile sawmill but we had to rip the timber into dimensions suitable for our purposes.

The building has one half wall and double doors covered with Heras fencing to enable visitors to see the coracles when we are not present.

There was a small "launching" ceremony on the Museum opening day 29 July 2020. Whisky from the local Speyside Distillery was sprinkled on the building (and a wee dram may have hit another target too).

Unfortunately, because of covid, we have not been allowed to have visitors on the water. Nevertheless, we have at least been able to chat to visitors from inside our 'cage' whilst maintaining social distancing. Looking forward to next year now.

During the summer we have amused ourselves though. The Insh Marshes and the River Spey provide many opportunities to have a paddle, socially distanced of course. We have also been out on the beautiful Loch Insh, although we found that even a light breeze made paddling upwind hard work - especially in the big fibre-glass Teifi!

What I Did During Lockdown

Martin Fowler

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Everyone will remember 2020 for obvious reasons, but will you remember how you got through all those weeks of lockdown, when many of us turned our hands to all those tasks we always promised we would do?

After setting up and running The National Coracle Centre for nearly thirty years I had reached the point where my enthusiasm was starting to wane! Between ten and fifteen years ago, there were over thirteen thousand people visiting the museum and over one hundred coaches - groups from many parts of the world booked each season. In the past five or six years, the numbers have dwindled to less than four thousand and coaches were down to between twenty and thirty.

For these reasons I was thinking perhaps there might be more to life than coracles, and having reached retirement age there might be a different challenge still in me. Then the pandemic decided to come calling!

Season twenty nine should have started, but instead I had no visitors, no business and nothing to do. The radical decision with three months of lockdown ahead of me was to completely re-vamp the museum, get rid of all the giftware and saleable items and scale the operation down.

I managed to complete all I wanted to do by mid-summer, but was reluctant to admit families of holiday makers into the museum at this point, waiting until September to invite people in - but by appointment only, which worked quite well.

During this time I acquired two new coracle frames. The first was kindly donated by the family of Bernard Thomas, the coracle maker from Llechryd four miles from Cenarth. In 1974 he crossed the English Channel to France in a Teifi coracle, which took him thirteen and a half hours. The last mile of his journey took four hours because of the turning tide. Bernard died in 2014 aged 91.

This is the frame of the coracle used.

The second frame was made by



Photo: Martin Fowler

Photo: Martin Fowler



students from the Welsh School of Architecture - Cardiff University, under the guidance of Raymond Rees, the coracle maker from Carmarthen. The same students travelled to Venice to build the frame of a gondola as part of their studies. In October I closed again and decided to send Sir Peter Badge photographs of the new museum layout, only to learn from Mary that Peter was now in a care home. Only weeks later he very sadly passed away.

I was first introduced to Peter in 1988 when he was in the area looking for possible locations to set up a coracle museum. Having tried Cilgerran, Cenarth was his next port of call. I had already set up Ronnie Davies a workshop to build his coracles in

what was once a room for smoking salmon. Peter could see the potential and asked me if I would consider constructing something to house his then small collection of coracles.

For some reason I decided this might be a good idea, thankfully the bank manager thought so as well!

His next request was to join him trying to create a coracle society. He already had connections with Geraint Jenkins at St Fagans museum in Cardiff and together with a few others such as Peter Faulkner, we had two or three meetings to get the Society started.

The idea was to hold the first full meeting of The Coracle Society in the new coracle museum during the summer of 1990. Unfortunately I had only built four walls with no roof at this point, so the meeting went ahead in the open air on a thankfully dry day.

The official opening of the coracle museum took place the following year and 2021



Photo: Martin Fowler

marks its thirtieth anniversary of opening. I hope that by next Easter I am able to re-open, depending on the pandemic restrictions! I need to open up a new website over the winter months and decide on how it will operate.

I am pleased to have looked after Peter's collection for all this time but very sad that he is no longer with us to see the new look museum and all the other coracle related projects in other parts of the country. Without Peter Badge there would have been no coracle museum and no Coracle Society, let us keep the coracle flag flying in his memory.

Coraclemaking In Minnesota USA

Midori Krieger

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We've been picking up a lot of trash during this pandemic and wanted to be able to reach trash in the middle of a nearby swale. One of our friends suggested we could get it if we had a round boat. You know a coracle, something I've only encountered in books till now.

Using YouTube and the instructions on the Society website, I was able to construct my first coracle. We floated it recently and it worked well with an adult and a child and three kids poling about in a shallow swale. We have plans to try a lake next and perhaps use it in winter as a roof on snow forts.



Photo: Midori Krieger

Three Decades Of The Coracle Society

In 2020, The Coracle Society celebrates its 30th anniversary. Here we take a look into the archives and have pulled a few articles from the Journals published in early years of the Society, which we hope will be of interest to you. Don't forget you can access the full archive of our publications by logging in to your account on our website.

1992

THE CORACLING DAVIESES OF SHREWSBURY by Peter Badge



It has been my very great privilege to have met and paddled a coracle on their beloved Severn with all members of the remarkable Davies family. These included John Senior, known as "Jack" (who sadly died last year), John, the present Shrewsbury coracle maker, his sons John and Mark and their sisters.

Many people have seen John making and demonstrating coracles up and down the country. He has undoubtedly made more coracles over the last ten years than any other coraclemaker. As a coraclemaker, he has two great virtues. He takes infinite pains to make sure the coracle "fits" its buyer, both

asto size and weight and that the latter understands how a coracle is to be used. He will never part with a coracle until he personally has shown the recipient how to use it. Moreover, if he says he will make a coracle by a given day, he will do so; a virtue not encountered universally in coracling circles. He is also a versatile craftsman, not confining himself to his own beloved Shrewsbury boat. Many differing examples of his varied skills are to be found in the Coracle Centre at Cenarth. Over the years, the Shrewsbury Coracle he makes has been modified. They are now larger and have more of a tumble home to their sides. Ironically, this is bringing them nearer to the design of the Shrewsbury Coracle displayed at the Welsh Folk Museum. This coracle



was made very many years ago, before both John and I were born when coracles could be bought in markets locally. This particular coracle was made on a mould by Mr. H. Hudson, a Shrewsbury boat builder. It is more like a lower Dee coracle than a conventional Shrewsbury coracle.

If one goes to the Isle at Bicton, it is possible to put a coracle in the Severn at one side of a field and travel for some six miles with the current and end up at the other side of the field. I have done this many times with the Davies family. It was on these fascinating journeys that I witnessed real skill in the handling of coracles. I also came to appreciate just how much they care about the Severn and adjoining land. The late Jack Davies would not allow Mark, his youngest grandson, to make the journey with a friend, when young, in case they succumbed to the natural tendency to "muck about". I clearly remember on one occasion John rescuing a sheep which had fallen from a steep bank on to a ledge and become entangled in brambles. Had he not done so, the sheep would undoubtedly have died.

I learnt so much about life on the Severn between the wars from the late "Jack" Davies as we drifted round the Severn. He described how they would make a coracle out of briars cut on the banks using a technique which was totally foreign to English and Welsh coraclemakers, but which would have been regarded as normal by the currach men of the Boyne or Owey Island. He also explained how, during the depression, they would walk from Frankwell (a district of Shrewsbury where the coraclemen used to live) a considerable distance up river where they would cut wood, float it down stream guiding it in their coracles, and then sell it in the Town as firewood. There was no D.S.S. in those days.

It is often thought that Eustace Rogers is the only English coracle maker. He has often been described as such, but he has never made such a claim. The Davieses have been making coracles at Shrewsbury for six generations at least, and it is profoundly to be hoped that they will do so for another six generations.

1995

RAYMOND REES

by J. Geraint Jenkins

When my book *The Coracle* was published in 1988, the only person who could write an authoritative introduction to the volume was my old friend, Raymond Rees of Carmarthen; a man who has first-hand knowledge of all aspects of coracle fishing. Over the years, Raymond has provided me with a wealth of information on the use and lore of the Tywi coracle, as befitted a person whose family has been associated with the river for well over two hundred years. Raymond and Edgeworth Evans, the Taf coracle man, and I became very firm friends and we spent many a fascinating hour on both river bank and a variety of hostelryes.

It was Raymond's grandfather, William Elias, B.E.M., the doyen of Tywi coracle men who was to instill in his infant grandson a love and respect for the ancient traditions of his beloved river. William Elias lived to the grand old age of ninety-eight and it was he who passed down the wisdom of many generations of river men to Raymond.

'To learn the skills of the coracle maker and the net maker takes many years of diligent apprenticeship', wrote Raymond. 'The patient learning of what is not only a science but an art is extremely rewarding and I suggest that this is a reason for the ancient craft's survival. Perhaps too, the uncertainty of the end result and the challenge of each new season. They have always held me in their fascination'.

Raymond was born in Carmarthen town in a cottage on the once-busy quayside, overlooking the River Tywi in 1933. From his infancy, that river and its activities was the force that influenced his life and work. Before learning to read and write, Raymond could operate a coracle. Although he spent many years on the technical staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, the threat of a transfer to another laboratory in the West of England in the mid 1970s was enough to make Raymond resign from his safe civil service post. After all, there were no coracles on the Bristol Avon. He and his charming and beautiful wife, Linda, decided to set up business as a fishmonger in Carmarthen market. Moving into a purpose-built shop in 1981, Raymond's business has flourished and he is now one of the leading members of the Carmarthen business community. Articulate, sociable and knowledgeable, the fishmonger's shop is a mecca for all those interested in the history and techniques of fish capture.

But the coracle and its traditions still remain Raymond's first love and at present he is preparing a folio of information and measured drawings that will be invaluable to all those who wish to construct a graceful Tywi coracle. Members of the Society will be able to purchase the folio at a reduced price. If any member would like to take advantage of Raymond's kind offer, they should get in touch with him at 22 Richmond Terrace, Carmarthen, Dyfed.

I value very greatly my friendship with Raymond, for he upholds the ancient tradition of a noble river; the tradition of his grandfather William Elias; the tradition of Dai Bigwn, the Yankee, Dai Losski and Wil-y-Ddr, and the many generations to whom River Tywi was the focus of their lives.

Spring 1997

Harry Sitting Bear

Martin Fowler

The highlight of 1996 for me was meeting a real-life Mandan Indian here in Cernarh, West Wales. The reason for his visit dates back as far as 1170, when legend has it a Prince Madoc had discovered America 300 years before Columbus, and landing on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, had encountered the natives, and a Welsh colony was thought to have been established there.

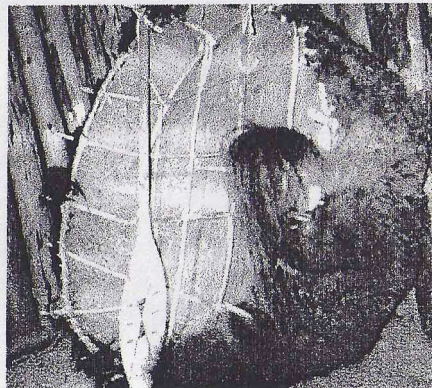
In the 1790's further expeditions to discover the Missouri River led to the great tribal lands of the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians. Amongst the Mandan Indians there were found to be members with fair hair and blue eyes, speaking a language similar to that spoken in Wales. The story of Madoc has become one of the great myths and legends of America and Wales, and because of this, a film company wanted a real Mandan Indian to come to Wales and try to re-tell the story.

It was a bright sunny day in August when I met Harry Sitting Bear perched on the parapet of Llechryd Bridge. The film crew were setting up for the opening shot, which included Bernard Thomas (coracle maker, fisherman and local celebrity) sculling to and fro in the river many feet below. The next scene involved Harry, who is a rather large man, easing himself into a Teifi coracle with encouragement from Bernard.

The pair were filmed locked in conversation about old customs and similarities between the two cultures. As I followed them on the river bank, the scene reminded me of those cowboy films as the goodies escape down river fleeing the enemy.

Later that day Harry and the crew visited the Coracle Centre, and he was very interested in the bull boat built by members of the Coracle Society. He explained that a buffalo, being a large animal, could provide a craft rather larger than the one here.

The photographs on display were also of great interest to him, as they were of an earlier generation



A Bull Boat from Knife River

from his own village. He promised to research the lineage of the people pictured and send me their names.

That evening I visited him at his hotel, and he showed me his buffalo robe which he had spread out on the bed. Many Mandan symbols were painted on it, each depicting aspects of Indian lore, legend and culture. Outside the hotel we stood looking up into a star-filled sky and he began relating further stories about his homeland, and on other such nights I wonder if I will ever meet Harry Sitting Bear again.



*Harry Sitting Bear
at the National Coracle Centre*

1999

YORKSHIRE PUDDING CORACLES



Boat that stays afloat so long as you don't eat it!

ROBBIE and Jack went to sea on a tasty Yorkshire pud boat. They took no money and forgot the honey, but at least it stayed afloat.

They may not have had quite the adventures of the Owl and the Pussycat, but at least the two youngsters can tell their school friends they have set sail in a giant pudding.

The three-foot diameter pud was the brainchild of their uncle, Simon Thackray, to mark the premiere of the Yorkshire Pudding Boat Songs at The Shed, an arts venue in Ryedale, North Yorkshire.

Helmsley bakers Thomas's made the pudding out of pizza dough, and numerous coats of yacht varnish helped to ensure it would float when it came to be tested out on a pond in Brawby, between Malton and Helmsley.

Jack, eight, and Robbie, nine, needed no persuading before climbing into the pudding to check it was seaworthy.

Simon said: "I was quite confident that it would float. I had given it enough coats of varnish, but we had two divers there just for safety."

The idea for floating puddings came to me when I was sitting in a pub one lunchtime. I thought it would be wonderful to go down the river on a Yorkshire pudding boat."

Simon Thomas, director of Thomas's bakers, said they had originally tried to make the puddings with traditional batter, but found this did not provide the required rigidity.

He said about 20-25kgs of flour went into each pudding, making a white bread dough which was then moulded around a chicken wire form.

He said "We had two or three prototypes before we came up with something we thought would work. We call them our high performance racing puddings."

By Nick Morrison



The Coracle Society Officers 2020-21

President	Peter Faulkner
Vice Presidents	Rod Bowen John Davies Martin Fowler Terry Kenny
Honorary Chairperson	Mark Dellar
Honorary Vice Chairperson	Malcolm Rees
Secretary/Archivist	Dylan Jones
Treasurer	Euan Raffel
Committee	June Lewis Jude Pilgrim Dave Purvis Julie Rees Peter Stanyon Bruce Watson
Teifi netsmen's representative	Mark Dellar
Tywi netsmen's representative	Malcolm Rees
Ironbridge representative	Terry Kenny

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