

30th anniversary 1990-2020



www.coraclesociety.org.uk

Newsletter

Spring 2020

Coracles in the USA

Euan Raffel

One of our US members, Walt Peebles, exhibited coracles and curraghs at this year's Quiet Adventures Symposium, held at Michigan State University near Detroit back in February, before the coronavirus started to take effect in the western hemisphere. We hope to receive a report from him in due course, but some initial feedback from Walt was that the event went well and he was kept busy chatting to visitors. Those of you who follow us on Facebook may have seen this photo of Walt at the Symposium, taken by a visitor to the event.

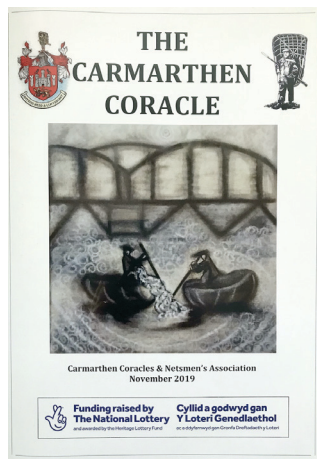
Thank you to Walt for flying the flag for us at this event and we look forward to hearing more from you about it!



Photo: Cynthia Donovan

Carmarthen coracle education booklet

Julie Rees



Carmarthen Coracle and Netsmen's Association have recently 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 will be going out to all local primary schools within the county. Teachers and members of the public will have access to our comprehensive research on the 'People's Collection Wales' website.

Both will be an ideal resource tool for history, Welsh herit-

age 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.

Ironbridge flooding – impact on the Rogers family coracle shed

Marion Blockley

Well, what a year it has been and we are only 4 months in to it!

We are all concerned about Covid-19 and when we will be able to get out safely on the water again with our friends. We have forgotten what life was like during the February floods.

Each November and January/February the River Severn usually floods, and it has been known to rise 20ft or more. The last time it did this was in 2000. It does seem reach this peak about once every 20 years, stretching back to records in 1908, 1928, and of course the Great Flood of 1794 which the Iron Bridge survived.

This year was worse than usual as the river rose to high water level twice and took three weeks to go down as the ground in the flood plain was totally saturated. We also had an incident of flash flooding in Dale End before the river level rose.

We watched nervously as the river level rose to a high water level of 21ft. Fortunately we had managed to get the new timber supports and braces into place underneath the shed in the three weeks before the flood. These took the load of the shed from the random collection of worm-eaten props and poles that had supported it since the 1920s.



The river level rose higher and higher, but fortunately didn't reach floor level. Harry Rogers knew where to site the shed. We lost four weeks work and were due to start back when Covid-19 struck and our carpenters had to down tools!

It is now the end of April and we are hoping to start back on site within the next week or so, with completion around the end of June.

Meanwhile we have a fascinating exhibition in the New Coracle Shed at the Green Wood Centre, but

can't open it to visitors. Luke Perry is working on a magnificent sculpture of Tommy Rogers to be installed along the river-bank next to the Museum of the Gorge which displays one of Eusty's coracles.

We did have a whole programme of coracle related activities to launch at Easter through to the end of December. Never mind we'll find another way of delivering some of them online! We still don't know whether we will be able to run the August Bank Holiday Coracle Regatta this year, but as soon as we know will let everyone know via Facebook. Hoping to see you all again soon.

Ed: the new coracle shed had its soft opening in December. The official opening was due to take place around Easter, however this has been postponed due to the coronavirus lockdown in the UK

Update from the Towy

Julie Rees

Sadly due to the current situation, the organisers have 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.

Following the change to the fishing by-laws, this year's coracle season for the Towy will commence on the 1st May (usually 1st March).

As we are classed as a commercial fishery, we are still permitted to fish but will obviously be practicing the self distancing guidelines (which is no problem when you're on a big river!).

We had hoped the Welsh Government would have revised the licence fee to counteract the 2 month loss in our season, but unfortunately they have decided to keep the licence fee for the Towy, which is set at £555. This, we fear, will act as a deterrent for the current licence holders wishing to renew for 2020 and is another blow to ensuring the survival of our tradition.

2020 events calendar

Due to the coronavirus, most of the usual events have been postponed or cancelled for 2020. The only events in our calendar right now are the following courses; we are waiting to receive confirmation regarding the Ironbridge regatta at the end of August

Coracle making workshops - 11/12 and 18/19 July 2020 (2 courses)
Carno, Caersws. Contact Pippa Scott - 01686 420423 or email pippa.gorfanc@gmail.com

Details for the 2020 AGM and regatta to be confirmed - we will communicate this in the usual way once this has been organised

The Coracle Society Officers 2019/20

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