



The *Coracle* Society

Journal

Autumn 2023



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Cover images (from top): Teifi coraclers at the Neath Show (Mark Dellar); Coracle Races at Carmarthen River Festival (Sarah L Evans Photography, provided by Julie Rees)

The Coracle Society Journal - Autumn 2023

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Membership Renewals & Keeping In Touch

Membership renewals are now due for 2024. 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. Membership rates are unchanged at £10 for individuals and £15 for joint, family or associate members.

If you set up automatic renewal online for your 2023 renewal, payment will be automatically taken on the anniversary of your last renewal payment.

If we have your email address on your membership record AND you've 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 members who 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. 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 2024.

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 our postage costs have increased significantly over the past few 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, please 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 payment.

President's Thoughts

Peter Faulkner

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First I must offer my sincere apologies to everyone for not attending last year's AGM. I hadn't even tendered my apologies. The oversight occurred during a particularly difficult period of ill health that has plagued me for over 18 months. There are however clear signs the illness is beginning to loosen its hold at last. I have only been out in my coracle once this year and that was thanks to Conwy Richards, who assisted me in and out of the coracle. After a few awkward paddle strokes I was away, free as a floating leaf skimming across the weir pool; the thrill of my first launch in July 1987 was relived. So "old age" doesn't come on its own! However, I was shocked at the speed with which it overtook me. May I offer you this adage - take nothing for granted.

The "magic" was still there and the experience was indeed a tonic to mind, body, and soul. I urge you to never miss an opportunity to get out there on the water. It is a great comfort to know that the Society too is still very much afloat after 33 years. On behalf of the Society I would like to sincerely thank and congratulate all of the officers, who give of their time freely and unstintingly for our Society's good. We would like to hear about your personal coracling experiences so don't be shy - let's make the next journal a bumper edition. Winter well and always remember the RNLI motto: RESPECT THE WATER.

Chair's Chat

Mark Dellar

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As the 2023 coracle year comes to a close, it is a good time to reflect on what a great summer we have had showcasing the art of coracle making and demonstrating. From the traditional uses, to the modern take on coracle paddling, anyone who has been in or taken part in the process can be proud of keeping a tradition alive.

As the Society moves on year to year we lose members and committee personnel, but with the efforts put in by all we gain new people to replenish and build on the society.

I would like to thank all the committee for their time and effort in keeping the Society running.

As Dylan has now officially stepped down from his role with The Coracle Society, we would all like to take this opportunity to thank him for his efforts of the many years supporting and guiding the Society and wish him well in the future.

I won't start naming the various exhibitions and events as I'm sure I will fail to mention

more than one, but I would like to thank everyone who has and continues to take part in the events for their dedication, passion and commitment to the coracles.

One comment that has stuck in my mind and has strengthened the passion for exhibiting coracles to the public was received earlier this year from a lady visiting the Welsh Game Fair, where the public had the opportunity to have a go in a Teifi coracle on the Vaynol Estate lake.

She was beaming from ear to ear (or it could have been the nerves) putting on her lifejacket, expressing that she had never been in a coracle before, but had seen them numerous times on the river in Cenarth as a little girl.

With a nervous step she was in and on the water for the first time. With the expert guidance around her she came to be at ease in the coracle and found it calming and easier to paddle than she first thought. The time passed too quickly and her session came to an end, but the smile had not and as she reached the bank she commented to the lads that "this has always been a dream to have a go in a real coracle and it was a life goal ticked off, Dreams do come true."

There are a lot of exciting projects in the pipeline for the coming year or two so members please keep an eye out for news and events for 2024. If you have anything you want to promote get in touch via the website.

Happy coracling!

Hide Covered Boyne Coracle For Sale

This beautiful Peter Faulkner-built hide covered Boyne coracle is for sale by its owner in the Oxford area, and is in a very good condition. £400, buyer collect.

For more information, please contact Euan Raffel



Insh Coracle Club Update

Raymond Green

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Photo: Raymond Green

Life for the Insh Coracle Club moves as quickly as a coracle in a headwind on a loch - slowly. Our 2023 focus of operations has once again been the Millpond at the Highland Folk Museum in Newtonmore. Conditions have varied throughout the summer season, both on and off the water. During a very dry spell in June the water became very low and of poor quality. There was barely enough area for two coracles at a time but we still managed to get nearly a thousand visitors afloat by the end of the season.

One little experiment has been very successful. The millpond is quite shallow and we deem it safe for children to paddle. However our coracles are, as coracles are, too big for children to paddle so we decided to make something more suitable for their size. We settled on the more dumpy shape of the Cleddau.

Taking the dimensions from Hornell we reduced the length from 52" to 41", breadth from 40" to 32", depth at the front from 14" to 13", and amidships from 13" to 12". The seat is 7" wide, the distance from the bow to the seat front edge is 17". It is bolted to the underside of two pieces of wood fixed to the sides of the gunwhale. It is supported on the underside by two square posts fixed to the bottom.

The basket, both ribs and gunwhale, is made from narrow strips of plastic left over from a double-glazing window installation. They were bent into shape using a heat gun and woven into the same pattern as Hornell. The cover is, again, our favourite material - a double duvet, sewn on to the gunwhale and waterproofed with bituminous paint. A further strip of plastic is fixed around the outside of the gunwhale.

It looks kind of pretty and children love it. For sure not a traditional craft, but they enjoy paddling on their own!

Bures Coracle Regatta

Steve Miles

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Sadly, we had to cancel this year's regatta.

Partly the reason for cancelling is we do need help on the day from experienced coraclers. Sadly Dick's passing has left a hole, as there would be just myself on the

water with my coracles. One of these needs replacing - especially after a rather enthusiastic coracle polo match at Ironbridge, which resulted in bits of lath floating in the bottom.

The regatta is a relaxed event with the focus on meeting new people and old friends, sharing skills and advice. We have races, the poacher's run being a favourite - yes it does involve running.

This is a call for anyone who would be willing to help support us and the River Stour Trust to resume the regatta in 2024! This is due to take place on Saturday 3rd August, 12pm - 4.30pm. The regatta takes place at Bures Recreation Ground, on the Essex/Suffolk border. If you are able to help - particularly as experienced coraclers out on the water, but also in any other capacity - please do get in touch. You can contact me via the Secretary, or alternatively contact the River Stour Trust - coracles@riverstourtrust.org. There is more information about this event - including information on the various roles we need support with - on the RST website: www.riverstourtrust.org/events/coracle-regatta. We hope to see you there!

Models Donated To National Coracle Museum

Nigel Peckett

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This model coracle was bought by my parents in the 1960's when they went camping in Wales. They must have visited Cenarth. I don't know anything about this trip, because I had left home and was at Leeds University. They gave me the model when they learnt that I had built a Severn type coracle. The model lived on my sideboard for many years and went with me to various events. Some years ago, it went on a trip to Wales where it went to Cenarth and the Welsh coracle rally. After that, it went in any bit of water I could find because it was a coracle in Wales - nobody ever said anything to me. Eventually I ended up in Pembroke and by chance met some coraclers from the River Taf with fibreglass coracles, and they let me have a go with them at pair net fishing.

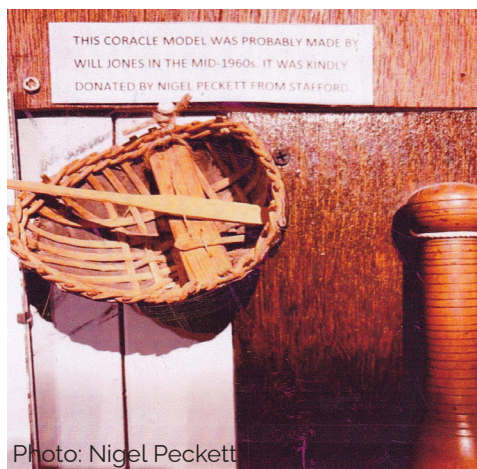


Photo: Nigel Peckett

The curragh was given to my brother in about 1966. I helped him build it but managed to cut my thumb (I still have the scar) by demonstrating how to correctly(!) use a sharp knife. He never finished it after that. Sometime in the 1970's I was given the model curragh, finished it and it lived next to the coracle on my sideboard. Some

Photo: Nigel Peckett



years ago I went to the Dingle peninsula. In the harbour were several curraghs and I managed to beg a go in one. They are amazingly light and fast, even though the oars look just like pencils.

I finally parted ways with these models this year, donating them to Martin at the National Coracle Centre where they are now on display.

Rick Stein Visits Carmarthen Coracles

Julie Rees

It was wonderful to welcome celebrity chef, restaurateur, writer and television presenter Rick Stein as he made a special visit to film with the coracles of Carmarthen.

He was presented with a miniature coracle and enjoyed a local produce buffet, before venturing with his camera crew in their boat to follow a night of coracle fishing. Did they catch anything?

You'll have to watch the programme, when it airs in spring 2024, to find out!



Photos: Julie Rees



Updates From The Teifi Coraclers

Mark Dellar

With another coracle fishing and demonstration season closed, it's once again time to put pen to paper.

The 2023 coracle fishing season saw a good number of salmon caught and released, with the fishermen seeing a rise in salmon numbers over the last 2 years which leaves a thought of hopeful optimism for the future of salmon fishing. The sewin/sea trout season, on the other hand, was one of disappointment. All who paddled their craft throughout the season were left wondering where the fish had gone and when were they going show.

The coraclers and women were once again spreading the word of the Teifi coracle's history and uses, appearing on shows like Weatherman Walking with Derek Brockway and articles in The Guardian newspaper.



Photo: Mark Dellar

The Teifi Coracle Netsmen Association were busy throughout the summer with exhibition work across Wales, starting with a new venue at the Neath Steam and Vintage Car Show, demonstrating the uses and history of the coracle.

Students and staff from Ysgol Cilgerran visited the river Teifi for a taster session on the water, with a lot of the students showing great coracle handling skills.

Then it was on to the Royal Welsh Show, where the guys and gals camped onsite for the week. This enabled us to take all the fibreglass Teifi coracles with us, meaning we were able to get the general public in a Teifi coracle for the first time in the show's history.

During Cilgerran Festive Week, Rod and Mark held a presentation during afternoon tea in the village hall on how to build a traditional Teifi coracle. The coracle races were next on the agenda, where we helped the Festive Week committee set up and manage the day's activities on the water. Unfortunately we had to abandon the novice

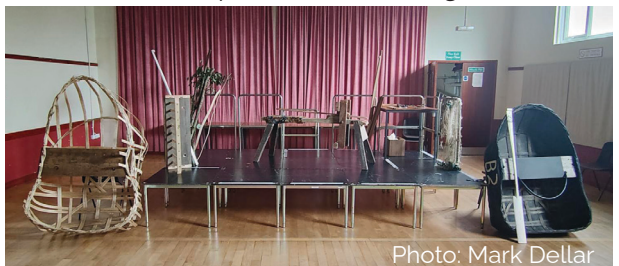


Photo: Mark Dellar

and beginner races due to the fast moving water this year but the day was a great success; our congratulations and thanks to the Festive Week committee and volunteers for a successful and entertaining week.

The final outing for the coracles in 2023 was the Welsh Game Fair, where the Association once again travelled to the Vaynol Estate near Bangor for a weekend of exhibition work explaining the history of coracles and their varied uses and also giving the visitors the opportunity to have a go on the water in the coracle.



Photos: Mark Dellar

Finally, the Teifi Coracle Netsmen Association sadly lost one of their members recently. Mr Peter Davies was a Master coraclemaker and fisherman and he will be sorely missed. We would like to extend our deepest sympathies to Doris, Matthew and the rest of the family for their loss.



Photos: Martin Fowler

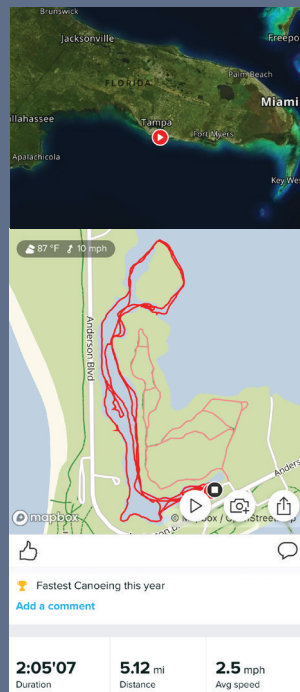
Five Miles From Home Challenge

The Five Miles From Home Challenge is an international event, which this year was hosted by Welsh Sea Rowing, Scottish Coastal Rowing and Ocean to City. The idea behind this event is, within a given time frame, cover a distance of 5 miles 'as fast or as stylishly as you can'.

Member Gary Fruland took part this year, albeit in a kayak rather than a coracle, whilst visiting Florida. Some comments from him on taking part:

"My wife Sue and I were swarmed by mosquitoes when we went to rent a kayak due to rains overnight but with wind and sun they let up their assault long enough for me to kayak the 5 miles needed for my challenge. Some day I will do it in a coracle or a bull boat! The temperatures were in the high 80's and the weather was perfect!"

This event is open to most types of human powered craft. It would be great to get some coracles and currachs on the scoreboard in 2024! Details for next year's event are yet to be released, but this year's event took place at the end of September. There is a small entry fee. More details about the event available online: <https://linktree/5MilesFromHomeChallenge>



Carmarthen River Festival

Julie Rees



The weather was finally on our side as the rescheduled Carmarthen River Festival took place on 28th August. Bumper crowds turned out to enjoy a family fun day by the river. Primary age children were able to experience paddling their own coracle in the safety of the coracle pool. Thankfully the water was only knee deep as one little boy decided to stand up and dive in - he enjoyed the round of applause from the crowd so much, he wanted

to do it again!

(cont...)

Then the coracle races started... The winner of The Coracle Society Novice Race was Skye Foxcroft. As always, we are thankful to the Teifi Coracle Netsmen Association for joining us on the day for the main races. The crowds turned up in droves to cheer on the coracles - it was a great sight to see.

The Coracle Society Officers 2023-24

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

Contact Us

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