

35th anniversary 1990-2025



The
Coracle
Society

Journal

Autumn 2025



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Cover image: Cornish Coracle Reborn in Portleven Harbour (Geraldine Jones)

The Coracle Society Journal - Autumn 2025

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Membership Renewals & Keeping In Touch

Membership renewals are now due for 2026. For the first time in many, many years there has been a change to the membership rates - the new rates are **£12** for individual members, and **£17** for joint, family or associate members. There is never a good time to raise prices, particularly in these times of high cost of living. However we believe this small increase - the first in over 10 years - still represents excellent value for money, and we hope you will renew for 2026. A reminder we need to receive your renewal by **31st January** to maintain your membership.

Unless you have automatic renewal set up, you can renew online using your credit or debit card and on some devices, Apple Pay or Google Pay. Alternatively, we still accept cheques and postal orders (UK members only) - these should be sent to the Treasurer along with the membership renewal form. Please note that the Treasurer's address has changed this year - please make sure you send your renewal to the correct address! If you have a standing order set up, **you** must contact your bank to update this - unlike direct debits, we are unable to amend these.

Automatic renewals

If you have automatic renewal set up, payment will be automatically taken on the anniversary of your last renewal payment. We had a number of members double pay their membership last year, which comes at a cost to the Society. **Please read your membership renewal notice carefully.** If you wish to make an additional payment as a donation to the Society this will be gratefully received, but please contact the Treasurer, as we have a separate process for accepting and recording donations. Should your automatic renewal be unsuccessful for any reason, we will attempt to contact you.

If we have your email address on your membership record, you will receive your membership renewal details by email. Otherwise, please find enclosed your personalised membership renewal form. If you use email and we don't have an email address on record for you, please consider signing up to receive email updates from us - postage is a significant cost to us, and providing your email means we can send more regular updates to you.

Finally, please let us know if your contact details have changed! 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 contact the Treasurer, or correct the enclosed renewal form and return to the Treasurer.

President's Thoughts

Peter Faulkner

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This year's AGM was at the 'new' homeground of Shrewsbury Town Football Club. There is an historic link with the world of coracles for, as many of you will know, Fred Davies, a member of the Davies family making the traditional Shrewsbury coracles on the Severn, was always on the river in his coracle when home matches were played at their previous ground at Gay Meadow which adjoined the river. Quite often the ball landed in the river and it was Fred's task to retrieve it so that the game could continue.

We are celebrating 35 years since the Society was formed. Over the years we have had our ups and downs but have kept afloat and retain that warm family atmosphere. Five years on from COVID, we like many other societies have seen a significant fall in membership but I am happy to report that membership is again back over 100. I would urge coracle owners to join the Society as it is a good way of keeping in touch and bringing likeminded folk together.

The Society now has a full complement of officers and I would like to thank Mark Dellar, who has retired as Chair, for his commitment and expertise during his years of office. Our new Chair, Charlie Quinnell, hails from Scotland and I know the he is keen to take up the paddle and take us forward perhaps into uncharted waters. Over the past 35 years there have been officers each having their own personalities and ideas. This reminds me of the old country adage "different men have different ways but all ways do"

Looking back through my reports as Chair and now President I have always given very grateful thanks to the serving officers of the Society for their work and dedication in carrying out their respective duties which collectively ensure that the aims of the society are kept in focus.

I now wish to single out three individuals for special thanks. The first being Euan Raffel who over the years has quietly and efficiently kept the website functioning, deals with membership and our finances, and for producing the Journal. On behalf of the Society, I would like to express heartfelt thanks for your dedication.

The second thank you is a posthumous one to Brian Pearce who was Membership Secretary for many years. He was greatly respected and loved by all who knew him. His wife Jane (the one with the black gloves) was a formidable opponent in her Bernard Thomas Teifi coracle. You will find more about Brian on the website.

The third name comes from north of the border a man who has raced sections of the river Tay in his coracle and now fearlessly dons the hat of Chairman, we welcome Charlie Quinnell. He speaks English, but is fluent in Gaelic and Gallic.

I think 2026 is going to be a bumper year for the coracling world. The media plays an important role for us, informing the public of our important place in the history of water transport. I firmly believe that coracles existed way beyond the last ice age and can boast the longest lineage of any water craft. I do sincerely hope that we can maintain our family atmosphere and work together to promote, protect and further the knowledge of coracles and allied craft worldwide.

May I take this opportunity to hope you winter well and remember - respect the water and take nothing for granted.

Chair's Chat

Charlie Quinnell

At last year's AGM Mark Dellar stepped down as Chair, which left a gap which nobody seemed able to fill. I owe much to The Coracle Society, having learned a lot over the years from members, and after a few months of having nobody step in to replace Mark as Chair, I said I was happy to stand in as interim Chair until the next AGM. I hadn't been on the committee long, and felt it wasn't really my place to do so, but the thought of this all coming to an end was too much. It's been a busy year, and a steep learning curve for me (much still to master).

One of the biggest tasks has been organising this year's AGM, which was in the end held with great success in Shropshire's wonderful county town, with help from Shrewsbury Town FC and a lot of very helpful people in the area. There were moments when I saw complete failure on the horizon, but we pulled together and it all worked. I can't thank those who helped organise that enough. The AGM itself was attended by about 20 people, which is pretty good going considering the size of our membership – which is also now back up to pre Covid levels! Through the regatta which followed and the inaugural Fred Davies Memorial Race we seem to have started a renewed interest and pride in the coracle in Shrewsbury, which looks like being carried on in the capable hands of Shrewsbury Men's Shed. I can't tell you how much I enjoyed meeting folk and just generally being in Shrewsbury, a place to which I intend to return.



Photo: Charlie Quinnell

The other big task has been organising the project to revive six lapsed designs and get them back on their native rivers. This continues apace, with encouraging signs in a number of areas. I am quite determined to see this project to fruition, and look

forward to hopefully seeing half a dozen extra coracle regattas, with paddlers from the Conwy, Dee, Cleddau, Taf and Wye travelling to compete in regattas and letting local rivalries drive a continuation of coracle use on rivers where they were once seen in large numbers. Key to this is the Men's Shed network, an organisation we hope to forge stronger bonds with.

Up here in the Highlands I have been able to get out and paddle a few times this year, but not as much as I should have liked. My new Wye Truckle has certainly had a busy year. I finished it in time to take it with me to Cilgerran on the wonderful River Teifi in west Wales in May where I had a great time meeting such friendly and generous people. Being taken out netting was one of the greatest privileges of my life. Diolch yn fawr iawn i chi, pobol Cilgerran!

On that trip I also paddled the truckle on the Dee at Bangor is y Coed, and have since added the Severn, the Ness, and the Beauly River. As I passed the Wye at Llangurig on my way to Cilgerran, I poured a mug of Wye water over her by way of a baptism. I'd rather have paddled but the Wye has had a dry time of it lately. My next build will be a traditional Taf coracle, which I'm looking forward to getting to grips with.

The situation of coracle netting on the Teifi, Tywi and Taf remains under constant threat as the authorities seem eager to pressure netsmen out of the fishery. This must be, and is, resisted doggedly by those for whom netting is a part of who they are, but public support, and support of the Society, is crucial to encouraging this resistance. I would urge members to speak up for the continuance of this priceless tradition whenever possible. Defending the rights of netsmen is one of the reasons the Society was founded, and is more important now than ever.

All in all we've achieved quite a lot this year. Let's be able to say the same for 2026! Happy paddling.

Insh Coracle Club Update

Raymond Green

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Over the years, visitors to the Highland Folk Museum in Newtonmore have watched demonstrations and several thousands have had a go themselves on the Mill Pond, meanwhile learning about coracles - ancient and modern - with the help of members the Insh Coracle Club. Things became very difficult after the storms of the 2021-22 winter when the Mill Pond was badly damaged by fallen trees and the water quality deteriorated.

It took until last winter for repairs to the pond, which required a massive excavation, to be completed. However, the 'repair' resulted in both bank and water conditions we felt were too dangerous for visitors and we decided we could no longer use the

pond. However, the Museum valued our contribution to the visitor experience and wanted us to continue. Together we agreed to try the nearby Curling Pond, which is of course very shallow in nature awaiting the winter freeze. A new sluice was built which raised the water level by about 12 to 15 inches - just enough for us to float and paddle. A short jetty was also built. A couple of trial days early in the season



Photo: Insh Coracle Club

demonstrated that it was possible to get visitors afloat and, after some minor works such as a more shelving beach, we decided to give it a go.

In the event this was a great move for everyone. There were several issues to be resolved as we moved in to summer. Our coracles are stored in our boat shed adjacent to the Mill Pond so we had to start earlier to carry all the equipment to the Curling Pond. No easy task considering a rough pathway through

bushes. Not just the coracles but all the bits and pieces such as information boards and chairs, for ourselves of course, the draw bench for demos, etc. Then it all had to be put back at night.

But it worked. We shortened some of our paddles to make it easier in the shallow water but otherwise paddling was fine. The area of water was much bigger than the Mill Pond but we dispensed with the safety ropes we had used as it was easy to wade in and help paddlers who were feeling lost. We did not worry about capsizing as even small children could sit on the bottom and await rescue (we had no wetting incidents at all!).

From a very slow and tentative start we had just over 900 paddlers this year. Paddling on most days was perfect. Beautifully peaceful surroundings on perfectly clear water, and the weather has been very kind to us. One interesting result was that very many folk did not want to come off the water.

The last day of the season was very special for us. As mentioned in previous Journals, we determined to build a replica Barn's Farm coracle. The task was taken on by Jeremy who, by much trial and error, completed his build just in time. The museum curators decided to put on a special event for the



Photo: Insh Coracle Club

inaugural launch of the coracle and so it was. A crowd gathered at the Curling Pond for the launch conducted with due ceremony and a splash of Drumguish Whisky. The coracle floated, didn't capsize, leak or sink. Jeremy paddled in a kneeling position as it has no seat, and off he went. It was a most tense and enjoyable moment.

So on to next year. The Museum, with our help, will move our boat shed to a new location beside the Curling Pond, the short jetty will be extended, we are planning on building a two person coracle, such as a Dee style, to give more flexibility. Not everyone can paddle but might still like the experience so a two-seater would open up more opportunity for us. Plenty of maintenance to be done, and of course some icebreaker paddling out on the Insh Marshes this winter. Roll on 2026!

Art And A Coracle

Edwin Deady

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The Facebook request was for the loan of a coracle for a photographic exhibition. The artist Oliver Raymond Barker's exhibition of his photography in November to February in St Ives includes a photographic essay of one of our Cornish legends, when an Irish Monk arrived by coracle. As well as the physical presence of a coracle, a series of photographs are of a monk paddling a coracle. In this case the coracle is my Peter Faulkner Boyne. Not wanting to be away from mine for the time needed on display I suggested we build one. So we did.

Unable to obtain willow the frame is of hazel. I used my round coracle template to give us the round ends but extended the middle slightly. The curve fits into the rounded end of the Boyne. Planted in our front garden, the frame took one and a half days to make. The rods were tied with hairy twine and black preserved twine. The photographs show my template with the broken arrows I used to mark out the curves, nice to reuse that which would be thrown away, birthed the frame sows an asymmetry which we might correct it or rebuild it.

Cruising Down The River Wye

Bill Laws

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"Is it an oracle?." An uncertain voice from the river bank greets the arrival of not one, but three Wye-based coracles around midday one Saturday in September.

Four hours later a young Mum (with small toddler), a Canadian octogenarian with a broken wrist, and an engineering student, had joined the estimated thirty or so people to have a go in a coracle.



Photo: Bill Laws

The riverside event, organised by Herefordshire Wildlife Trust's Hereford City Branch, was designed to highlight the rich biodiversity of the Trust's latest reserve, a former 100-acre dairy farm on the outskirts of Hereford at Bartonsham.

Conveniently the Farm's six flood plain meadows nestle in a wide loop of the River Wye which is regularly used by Coracle Society members Pete Redding and myself. On the day of the event we were joined by city councillor Jerry Milne with his coracle.

Following some tense Health and Safety discussions, we'd been persuaded to let the people paddle and joining company with a cheerful fisherman (he remained seated in the river nearby) awaited our guests.

We did not wait long. For the rest of the afternoon pensioners, children and random passers-by queued for a go. There was never a moment when the boats were not on the water and fully occupied.

There were some myths to dismiss:

"No, they are easy enough to handle: pop your bum in the middle and paddle from the front."

"Yes we made these: it's all wood, calico and water proofer."

"No, they're not new: people have paddled coracles here for centuries."



Photo: Bill Laws

Having satisfied their curiosities, the paddlers took to the water. Each had their way with our boats.

The octogenarian (a former documentary film maker) was a furiously independent paddler in spite of her injury, as was ten year old Holden who managed to slip into whichever coracle was immediately free for most of the afternoon. Similarly smitten with the delights of the coracle was the engineering student, himself a canoeist, who took to his coracle like the literal duck to water and earned extra points by requesting details of The Coracle Society.

Meanwhile the toddler's Mum was content to be rocked gently on the water until, handing her infant back to its other parent, she took on the paddling. "Very calming," she declared.

Somewhat tired and wet, Pete, Jeremy and I took stock at the end of the afternoon. As Pete put it: "It was a great event, and wonderful to see people of all ages and abilities getting into coracles and on to the Wye - they'll take away memories that will last a lifetime."

Meaderings And Musings On A Liking For Coracles

Pippa Scott

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No wonder the coracle is probably the most ancient form of water craft.

The appeal for me, has much to do with its simplicity. After all, what child isn't delighted to see how a half walnut shell floats on water? It must have been easy for the Ancients to understand that a simple framework of close-to-hand branches and an animal hide cover would create a useful floating vessel.

This is why I find the bull boat of the Plains Indians has particular charm. (I also like knowing that it was women who made bull boats, and also mostly women who used them). They were roughly made, yet it is possible that the design and purpose of them was unchanged during at least 1,000 years of use! It seems obvious that this will have been the first type of boat made in other places too. Apparently Caesar noticed, in 55-54 BC, how boats were made this way in Britain.

In 1974 whilst camping on the west coast of Ireland I watched seagoing currachs launched towards the Aran Islands. It was an amazing thing to witness and I didn't forget the sight, but it wasn't until a few decades later that I became interested in coracles.

Maybe unlike most people who have an interest in coracles I came from the direction of making rather than using.

Twenty years of willow basket making, a local supply of extra large willow rods, a visit to the marvellous National Coracle Centre at Cenerth, and a chapter on Irish coracle making in Joe Hogan's wonderful book 'Basket Making in Ireland' was more than enough inspiration for me to give it a go.



Photo: Pippa Scott

To make an Irish coracle using the traditional method of the River Boyne, like a bull boat, requires very little in the way of tools and equipment to construct. The willow rods for the framework need little or no preparation. The size and shape are easily adjustable and it is so much lighter to carry than a coracle made with laths. Although not the way that bull boats were made, I love the way that this Irish method of using the ground to hold the shape, connects with the earth itself.

So, although I have lived almost all my life in the watershed of the River Severn, my early years in Gloucester and the rest in mid-Wales, it is this style of coracle that I am most attracted to making.



Photo: Pippa Scott

Coracles are particularly associated with Wales, their story is well-documented and they have a firm place in the history of Welsh culture and its river fishing industry.

Indeed the word 'coracle' is from the Welsh 'cwrwgl'. For me there is a whisper of poetry within it, and of myth and magic.

Coracles play a part in numerous stories – the story of Moses in the Bullrushes, the Madog Legend, and in Mabinogion Tales. Of course there are modern day legends too, including crossings of the Channel, lengthy river trips, the rescue of animals and people (and footballs), and the crossing of the Brahmaputra river by the Dalai Lama, when he escaped from Tibet in 1959.

My favourite most evocative description of a coracle scene is by Dylan Thomas in a story called "A Visit to Grandpa's":

Grandpa did not answer, but inclined his face to the river wind, so that his beard was set dancing and wagging as though he talked, and watched the coracle men move, like turtles, on the shore... And he watched the coracle shells slip into the water lightly

A scene you can so easily imagine!

The excitement of a coracle race takes a lot of beating and the regattas held annually in Shrewsbury, Ironbridge and Carmarthen are fantastic family events, doing much to promote interest in coracles, and encouraging coracle handlers to develop their skills. Onlookers cheer and shout, one-armed paddling or two, any style will do, kneeling or seated, the enthusiasm of the competitors is wild! But also nothing can beat that gentle plish-plosh of the paddle on a quiet river or

canal, leaving nothing but ripples and pleats on the surface, and knowing there's a chance of sighting an otter, or a kingfisher or, looking downwards, a trout...

Perhaps most importantly of all, whether we are makers or handlers, the coracle connects us with our most ancient of ancestors.

As the much-esteemed former President of The Coracle Society, Peter Faulkner wrote in the Autumn 2022 issue of the journal: 'We are custodians of the oldest boat afloat'.

Sheds Around The World

Dave Purvis

Following the traditional Shrewsbury coracle build which I organised at the Shrewsbury Men's Shed in June 2024, we were invited to take a stand at Shedfest - UK Men's Shed Association's Annual General Meeting and Conference. This was held at Worcester University Arena that July, where more than 500 Delegates from Sheds all over the UK and Ireland and a few overseas partners attended.

The Society took a joint stand with Ripon and Shrewsbury Men's Sheds, and Heritage Crafts, and displayed a selection of coracle types and played the then recently produced "How to build a Shrewsbury coracle" video.

The reaction and interest in coracles from delegates was quite overwhelming and we all left on the day with a great optimism that a great bond between UK MSA and The Coracle Society would grow in the future. If sufficient coraclemakers can be found, there will be a tremendous potential for the Society to work in partnership with some of the 1200 plus Sheds now in the UK to help revive what is an endangered craft.

Following on from Shedfest, I received an email from Australian Men's Shed Association asking for my permission for them to use a photograph taken on our stand for their 2025 Sheds Around the World calendar, which naturally I was delighted to agree - I've never been a calendar pinup before!



My Introduction To Coracles

Sue Madden

In the past I have worked as a basket maker and so was interested to build a coracle out of willow. I went on a course a few years ago at Gorfanc and built a coracle there,



Photo: Sue Madden

which I was never very good at paddling and had to get rid of it when I moved. More recently I was living in Cumbria and got involved with the Clean River Kent Campaign based in Staveley near Kendal. I decided to try to 'grow' a coracle entirely from resources within the catchment area of the River Kent and use this as an awareness raising project regarding the health of rivers. The aim was to make a willow coracle and cover it with linen made from locally grown flax and then to try to waterproof it using a combination of linseed oil, beeswax and rosin. The idea was that the project would take 4 to 5 years. Unfortunately after the first couple of years I had to move yet again and am now in Wiltshire. The dilemma then was what to do about the project. I decided to finish

the coracle and use it as a prototype, so that I might be able to restart the project somewhere else.

Some compromises had to be made but as far as possible I tried to stick to locally produced natural and sustainable resources. The frame is of willow grown locally and it is tied with flax cord, also grown and processed locally. There was not time to grow sufficient flax to weave the covering, therefore I bought a commercial cotton-linen blend cloth, stitched on with the flax cord. The seat is not of local wood but is from a bit of waste wood left over from repairing my garage. The waterproofing is a resin that is made mainly from linseed oil and appears to be very eco-friendly as well as beautiful, as it makes the coracle quite see through. The current paddle is a plastic one for a paddle board, but I have an ash plank that grew locally which will one day be a paddle when I pluck up the courage to tackle it.

The coracle had a successful launch in beautiful weather on the River Wylie recently. This was easier than I expected so I am looking forward to being able to paddle it next year with a bespoke paddle. I hope to be able to take it back to the River Kent to paddle it on the river it has 'grown' from.

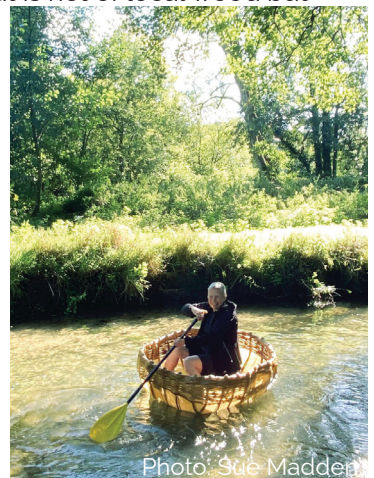


Photo: Sue Madden

Iraqi Guffa In Cenarth

Martin Fowler



Photo: Martin Fowler

When The National Coracle Centre was officially opened in 1991, Major David Goddard - who at the time ran the Exeter Maritime Museum - arrived with a coracle from Vietnam and a guffa from Iraq to add to my collection. The guffa was much too large and heavy to put into the museum and for ten years or so had to be kept outside.

It was made in Baghdad around the end of the 1960s from pomegranate wood, date palm and straw and coated with bitumen.

After ten years of Welsh weather the structure began to collapse, and I moved the remains of it inside the museum where it had been for the past twenty-five years. Although it no longer remotely resembles a full size guffa it is still a big talking point when I explain its history.

The stories of one of the oldest forms of water transport from the first civilizations of the world, together with the recent theories that such a craft was more likely to have been used by Noah during the great flood, creates a lot of interest in the museum.

I was therefore rather intrigued when a few weeks ago a lady was taking particular interest in my display and said to me that she had been in this very guffa on the River Tigris in Baghdad when she was sixteen years old.

Her father was Glencairn Balfour Paul who became the British ambassador in Iraq between 1969 and 1972. He was an old friend of David Goddard in Exeter and invited him to come to Baghdad to bring back a guffa to put into the Maritime Museum. That very guffa eventually made its way to Cenarth in 1991.

After thirty-four years running the Coracle Museum, I am still learning new things and hearing new stories.



Photo: Martin Fowler

A Very Modern Coracle

Robin Pocock



Photo: Robin Pocock

I first paddled a borrowed Shrewsbury coracle in 1997 at a traditional boat race festival on the River Dee at Chester. I won the coracle race, but I don't let on that there were only 2 in the race! Anyway, although it sparked my interest, I was unable to follow my passion until I retired 14 years ago. Now living on the river Severn near Shrewsbury I can enjoy making and paddling my own coracles, and making a few for other people too.

Some members may have seen my modern twist on a Shrewsbury coracle at the AGM. About 8 years ago I was helping my son with a building project. He had a small coil of underfloor heating pipe left over, which I saved with other useful stuff and offcuts of timber. Sometime later, I looked at the pipe and suddenly saw the potential. I saw a coracle! Having already made a couple of coracles out of willow and a failed attempt out of blue water pipe, I was keen to try out this versatile material.



Photo: Robin Pocock

I worked out my dimensions roughly along the lines of a Shrewsbury coracle. The lateral spars, bend by hand over a watering can, fit the standard width 1.5m of the fabric I chose for the cover. I found some 25mm water pipe for the gunnel and drilled this with 16mm holes to take the frame. The seat is a ventilation air duct.

The framework was secured with cable ties and fixed in the gunnel with pop rivets or self tapping screws. The cover is tightened and fixed onto the gunnel with cable ties through eyelets. The finished craft is surprisingly light and strong.



Photo: Robin Pocock

Just to take it one stage further, I made a 3 seater, what I call a 'Canoracle', which surprisingly, and coincidentally turned out to be almost identical to a Donegal Currach.

Cleddau Reborn

Dave Purvis

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This is a completed copy of an authentic Cleddau coracle which became obsolete in the early 1940's, and to date no original exists to date.

This copy has been built based on drawings and specification as shown in the book by James Hornell "British Coracles and Irish Currachs" published in 1938.



Photo: Angus Mylles

This copy was sold by auction at this year's Shedfest in support of the Society's

heritage coracle project. There was also a demonstration building of another Cleddau craft by members of The Coracle Society and Shrewsbury Men's Shed.



Photo: Dave Purvis

It Pays To Brivit

Peter Faulkner

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On holiday recently in Pembrokeshire, Vivienne and I visited the town of Narberth. It wasn't very long before we discovered the Maltings Antiques Centre. This comprised of two floors with a number of rooms all sporting a wide range of antiques and curios. My first stop of course was the book section which, to Vivienne's relief, drew a blank! However, upon entering a room on the first floor (mainly of antiques) I spotted a small bookshelf containing a more promising array of volumes; each having been carefully tied up with soft white string that sported a large label giving a brief description of its contents and the price.

I soon singled out a large quarto (four volume) book in heavy embossed brown boards. Emblazoned across the front, in large golden upper case letters, was the text "The River Dee by JS Howson, Dean of Chester". The preface was dated 17th July 1875, sixty years before Hornell came along. Knowing that there had been coracles on this river, a speedy search through the contents and Bingo! The magic word "coracle" jumped out from the page.

The following is the full account taken from page 52, with a detailed sketch of a Dee

coracle.

Very few ancient British words survive in our modern English language. One of these is the term "basket", which donated wicker-work in the oldest time, as it does now. It is interesting to recall this philological fact, when we see in this particular part of the course of the Dee those primitive boats of wicker-work which are named "coracles." This name, indeed, has by some been supposed to be Latin, and to be derived from the "corium" or hide, that was used to cover the basket-laths of which the boats are made. The covering now is usually of canvas coated with pitch. Each of these boats costs about £2 in the making, weighs about fourteen pounds and will contain two men. The mode of paddling in these boats is similar to that of the North American Indians, except that the latter paddle on the sides of their canoes. It is most obvious that a coracle-race must be amusing. The men who win such races on the lower part of the Dee, at Chester, almost always come from the neighbourhood of Bangor. These boats are useful, not only for ferrying across the river, but for netting salmon. The coracle here represented was so employed at the moment when it was sketched, and a splendid fish of twenty-two pounds, clean from the sea, was the result.



It is quite possible that this is the first time that this little gem has seen the light of day for a hundred years. There must be many such items out there waiting to be discovered and I would encourage you to check out any material you come across covering rivers, fishing and ancient forms of travel.

I wish you good luck with your briviting (an old Shrop word meaning "to investigate"). The bookplate gives the owner as James GJ Penderel Brodhurst Count De Boscobel, the Latin on the family crest reads 'Quo non ascendam crede penderel'.

Editor's note: £2 in 1875 is roughly equivalent to £200 today.

Teifi Netsmen Update

Mark Dellar

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The 2025 season was once again a poor fishing season on the river Teifi. The net fishing allocation of 12 possible licences was not taken to capacity this year due to varying reasons, including retirements and other commitments taking licence holders away from the river.

The fish that were caught and released were all in good health, albeit few and far between catches.

The reduced fishing season from 5 months to 3 is having a big impact on catch numbers as the governing body (Natural Resources Wales) have taken the productive fishing months out of the coracle fishing season.

The Teifi Coracle Netsmen Association have been busy again this year with demonstrations at public events around Wales - the Neath Steam and Vintage Show, and the Royal Welsh Show, to name a couple. The younger coraclers have been a welcome addition to the events again this year with the youngest being 11 year old Abigail Rogers. We even had help at the Royal Welsh Show from one family member visiting from Australia, Elisabeth Bisgood-Smith.

We were able to welcome our new chair Charlie onto the water in Cilgerran early in the fishing season and show him the ways of Teifi coracle fishing. With a few late nights on the water, we managed to catch the elusive Teifi sewin whilst enjoying the nights paddling and fishing on the river after dark.

Coracles In Cornwall

Geraldine Jones

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Photo: Geraldine Jones



This coracle has been returned to the water after many years stored away. The coracle arrived in Cornwall in 2003 when a currach making course was held as part of the festivities of that year's Basket Festival, where it and other coracles (and their coraclers) took to the water in the harbour.

After the festival the coracle – which has always been known as "The Teifi Coracle" – was put away into storage in the beams at the Salt Cellar Workshops, where it has lived until it was liberated this year and returned to the

water.

Since its rebirth it has been on a couple outings – one to Bere Ferrers for a festival on the River Tamar, and another back in the harbour at Portleven near the workshops.

The information sheet that came with the coracle identifies it as an Upper Dee coracle. Hopefully we can return it to the water again next year, rather than in another 20+ years.

Editor's note: based on these photos it does indeed look like a Dee coracle, and not a Teifi coracle. The Dee coracle is one of the rarest types and to see one both in such good condition and out on the water is wonderful!



Photo: Geraldine Jones

Bures Coracle Regatta

Steve Miles

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This year was almost cancelled again due to me having a sprained ankle, I don't recommend driving an old Land Rover in that condition. To be fair, running the regatta this year was not too great on the pain front either. Still, sitting in a dinghy showing punters what's what in coracle, made it all worth it.

Carol and I had three coracles between us, with Cat and Michelle bank side on crowd control and promoting the River Stour Trust. Without their help, the event could not go ahead.

We have now changed the date to the 2nd Saturday in August. This will coincide with the Bures market, with the idea of introducing more people to the idea that you can make a coracle and enjoy the water. Next year's regatta therefore is on **Saturday 8th August 2026**.

Access to the site has changed, so please check if you intend to join us next year. There will be signs up in time hopefully on the day. We do need helpers to keep the event going, as over the years the numbers attending have fallen, as sadly everyone is getting older.

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