

25th anniversary 1990-2015



www.coraclesociety.org.uk

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Ironbridge Rowing Club on
Monday 26th August 2013**

PRESENT

Dave Purvis, Dylan Jones, Euan Raffel, Peter Faulkner, Jude Walker and 19 members of the Society

APOLOGIES

Martin Fowler, Brian Pearce, Malcolm and Julie Rees, Mark Dellar

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Minutes of last meeting accepted. Proposed by Terry Kenny. Seconded by Martin Baines.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising

REPORTS

Chairman

Time has flown since appointed Honorary Chairman at St Fagans last year! Certainly been a busy year with ever increasing number of enquiries from event organisers for Society to attend various shows as demonstrators. Chairman feels our members are shy and therefore been doing a lot himself with fellow member Chris Morgan. Obviously been unable to do everything on their own.

The usual shows have included the following:

- Scottish traditional boat festival at Portsoy
- Guisborough Forest Festival
- Wild about Wood festivals at Castle Howard
- Shepley Folk Festival – wet weekend in south Yorkshire!
- Heritage Skills fairs at Tynemouth and Catterick
- Islay of Islay led and built five coracles over a day and a half

The Society have agreed to attend for first time the Scottish Canoe Association's annual Paddles Exhibition in Perth in October. We will expect a number of enquiries from canoeists next year?!

It is hoped more members will get involved in these events – great fun and there is genuine interest for all things coracle. Therefore keep your eye on the Events section on our website. Volunteers are needed for an event at Sarehole Mill in Birmingham, which may become a regular event in our calendar.

We have been unable to accept all invitations - Henley regatta and the Valetta Boat Show in Malta.

Membership is marginally down on last year, which is not surprising in view of the economic climate! Propose to leave annual Membership fee at £10 and £15 but would exhort on members to try and bring at least one new member each year into the Society. We really could do with a membership of over 100 if we are to remain viable.

Thanked all the committee members for their continued support and please give feedback on your coracle experiences

Treasurer

The Society's finances are healthy, however income is down by £175 over this period (this is roughly the same amount the society's income was up during the 2011-12 period)

Expenditure is slightly up over this period by £130. This is due to the purchase of trophies and banners, for the purpose of increasing Society awareness at events and key regattas

Membership income is slightly down. This is partially due to costs incurred through members joining/renewing online (approximately 54p per individual membership), partially due to a reduction in member numbers

Journal costs are down compared with the previous period, with the difference approximately £129. This has been due to the purchase of a new printer – taking into account this cost, the Journal cost approximately £44 less to produce and post over this period

We should aim to reduce the cost of producing the journal further, by inviting/encouraging advertising. Potential sources of advertising could include suppliers of coracle making materials and providers of coracle making courses

IWA insurance costs are unchanged this period. Corporate membership costs have increased by £2 to £54

One member has taken advantage of the Society's insurance cover this period. The Society should continue to encourage other members to do so – the insurance cover is available for members to use at events where they are supporting the society and members using our insurance cover for events helps to offset the cost of obtaining the insurance cover

With membership income down, ideas to increase the society's income are encouraged

Secretary & Archive

Interest in the Society has come from all parts of the world via letters and emails and in particular from France this year.

2012 saw the passing of David Tew and the Society were indebted to the family in passing his newspaper clippings, photographs and copy of Nets & Coracles to the Society.

Various TV companies and researchers from the BBC have been in touch regarding the history of the coracle. The coracle is still making the news!

Photographs of previous regattas have been stored in the museum's archives.

Membership report

The membership secretary was unable to attend, His report was as follows:

"Total membership at 20th August is 89, comprising 77 individual members and 12 joint/associate members. 72 members renewed from last year. 2 members are still unpaid for this year. My thanks to Euan for his competent management of the Society database which makes my work much easier."

Chairman proposed not to increase membership – remain at £10.00 All agreed

Society secretary/archivist

Various enquiries received over the past 12 months, including:

- how to repair a coracle
- selling coracles
- how to make a coracle
- where to see coracles

Constant stream of enquiries from researchers as well, such as:

- River Wye coracle. James Roberts is trying to construct a smartphone app – natural history of the Hay on Wye area. Wanted to know history of Wye coracle
- Oxford University Press – writing a short piece on English coracles, ably assisted by Sir Peter Badge. Society's assistance will be acknowledged in the book
- An American lady, Patti Hanson, writing an article about coracles for American children aged between 8 and 12. Particularly interested in information regarding personalities and legends of coracle fishermen

Society in demand to attend various festivals, giving talks and demonstrations, etc:

- Karl Chattington will be representing the Society at the Heart of the Valley Show in Pontardawe this year, September 7th. Demonstrating his skills on the nearby river. Aim of show is to reconnect people with the rural heritage of their area and in particular for children to learn about history and simplicity of the coracle
- Karl and I (Dylan) will be heading to Wrexham in November. The Memorial Art Gallery at Yale College of Wrexham runs exhibitions as an educational resource for its students and the wider community. The gallery's next themed show is going to be based on ideas of Journey, which will run from September 2013 until Easter 2014. I will be giving a talk on Welsh coracles and Karl will be giving a demonstration

National Coracle Centre

Martin Fowler was unable to attend – open today and was unable to close. Centre has had a pretty good year and is ticking over nicely. Has been running the Coracle Centre for 18 years

Netsmens' Representative

The Netsmen representatives were unable to attend. It was disappointing the AGM at Carmarthen was cancelled. Malcolm and Julie Rees send their regards. Sad to note there are only around 20 fishing licenses left in Wales

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Irlwyn John resigned his post due to ill health.

The officers were re-elected en bloc. Proposed Terry Kenny; Seconded Judy Walker. Carried

Judy Walker: committee member

Proposed Peter Faulkner; Seconded Terry Kenny

Carried

It was reported that Bernard Thomas is in a home and his daughter has given his coracles, etc away

WEBSITE REPORT

Website visits (each time someone views the site) are up over this period, with totalling 14841. This is up from around 9000 in 2011-12

Website page views have nearly tripled over this period, totalling 61096. This is up from around 21000 in 2011-12

Demographics:

- Top 5 countries where visitors are located are UK, US, Australia, France and Canada
- Most searched for terms are coracle, coracle society, coracles for sale, coracle regatta, coracle making/building course
- Most visited pages are coraclemakers directory, history (brief history of coracles and the society), events, noticeboard, news, links and membership

Use of email campaigns has increased, now that the mailing system is fully installed. This has led to more frequent communications with members and a reduction in postage costs. Over 80% of our members have provided us with their email address to benefit from communications from the society this way

There have been 10 campaigns since the system was set up in late 2011, including the huts appeal, spring newsletters, membership renewal reminders and interim updates to members regarding upcoming events and calls for content for the journals/newsletters and website

Average response rate (people reading the emails) to email campaigns is 59%, with an all time minimum of 48% and an all time maximum of 75%

There is a need to improve and expand the website to provide more information to visitors. This is particularly more significant now that Conwy Richards' website, which contained good information on many aspects of coracles, has now gone offline. Members support is requested with this. Suggested areas to include on the website include:

- coracle types, history and use – including fishing
- coracle construction

Any comments on the website, or suggestions for changes or improvements, are welcome and gratefully received

Journal/newsletter costs are reduced due to the purchase of a new printer. Postage costs for 2013/14 should reduce slightly due to less international postage required. We need more members to send in content for publication – we are currently reliant on a small handful of members and are struggling to get enough content to produce a decent sized journal. Content could be anything, from articles in newspapers, to event reports or even just captioned photos from events or other coracle activities

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Sir Peter Badge was unable to attend. His report was as follows:

"I am sorry that Mary and I will not be with you for the AGM and regatta in Ironbridge, May U thank the committee and officers for all their hard work. Our

Chairman deserves praise for the way he has discharged his duties, despite the considerable distances he has covered to do this.

One of our initial aims was to foster an interest in coracles in areas not possessed of a coracle tradition. Dave has discharged this function magnificently. His work with the Bede Currach in Durham and his encouragement of school coracle making courses generally, but also particularly with the Teifi coracleman, Mark Dellar, deserve particular mention.

Whilst on the subject of traditional coraclemen, I enjoyed very much the BBC visual and sound article on Raymond and Malcolm Rees, shown on the Society's website.

It was also heartening that Malcolm and Julie Rees played such a conspicuous part in the Tywi River Festival last June.

I fully understand why Irlwyn John, our Vice President for the River Taf, has retired on health grounds. He has maintained the Taf coracle tradition with distinction and we thank him for doing so.

Finally may I congratulate the committee on its choice of venue. The river Severn at Ironbridge Shrewsbury and Bewdley has shown that the use of coracles in the time honoured manner is not confined to the rivers of Wales."

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Heritage Huts Appeal – set target was £5,000 and £1,300 has been raised so far. It will be used for match funding. The hut is in pieces. It is hoped more money will be raised at Castle Howard and then to be wrapped up with funds to be split between Martin and Ironbridge.

£1,000 came from floor to be used only for Ironbridge hut

Water Recreation Challenge Fund for Wales – Chairman reported on developments so far. The scheme was to be piloted in 2/3 schools with Netsmen used as consultants. Tywi and Teifi Netsmen happy with arrangements