

25th anniversary 1990-2015



www.coraclesociety.org.uk

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Ironbridge Rowing Club on 25th August 2014

PRESENT

Dave Purvis, Dylan Jones, Euan Raffel, Peter Faulkner, Terry Kenny, Jude Walker, Malcolm Rees, Bruce Watson and 11 members of Society.

APOLOGIES

Martin Fowler, Martin Baines Julie Rees, Mark Dellar, Dave Nicoll

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Agree as a correct record. Proposed by Terry Kenny. Seconded by Euan Raffel.

MATTERS ARISING

None

REPORTS

Chairman

Now that we are coming towards the end another paddling season, it leads me to reflect on what has happened coracle- wise in the last 12 months since our last AGM here at Ironbridge.

Sadly we lost a most respected founder member and vice president, Raymond Rees of Carmarthen at the end of last year. Our deepest sympathy is extended to Malcolm and Julie Rees and their families on their sad loss, I am sure Peter Badge will say more in his President's remarks today.

This year I have attended more than 15 events, regattas and demonstrations under the Society banner-hard work sometimes, but very enjoyable non the less. They are always great fun, particularly if the weather is as good as it has been this year, and the nice thing is you are always assured of an enthusiastic and appreciative audience, which I enjoy, apart from those "Five o'clock Charlies" who always seem to lurk about at these events waiting to pounce when they see you are trying to pack up and get away home,-yes, I am sure we have seen them all, wanting to start up a meaningful conversation, oblivious to the fact that maybe you have been on your feet for three days, maybe skipped lunch, and not looking forward to the 100 or so miles journey home once you have managed to load up! God bless them I say!

Highlights: Included the great reception we received from the Scottish Canoe Association's Paddle 2013 Show in Perth for the first time last October-as reported in last year's Society

Journal. The highly decorated Boyne coracle which the Blairgowrie High pupils presented to me is now safely installed in Martin's collection at the National coracle Centre at Cenarth. We are invited back to the Paddle 2014 at Perth this October.

Another highlight was for the Society to be invited back to Portsoy on the Moray Firth again for their 21st Annual Scottish Traditional Boat festival in June.

This was the eleventh year that we have supported this event and now have a good circle of friends up there, not to mention the 20,000 or so visitors who all seemed to want to cram into our marquee at once, and the constant queues in the old harbour to have a "shot" at having a paddle-another occasion where we had to skip lunch until after the tide went out.

An exciting development this year was the inaugural meeting of the proposed "North Sea Ring"-a consortium of 43 traditional marine heritage organisations from around the North Sea area, including Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland and Germany. The Coracle Society is now one of the lead partners, representing the oldest craft by several thousand years ahead of the rest! A couple from the Viking Boat Museum (Vikineskibene Museet) at Roskilde in Denmark were particularly taken by one of Peter Falconer's Teme Coracles, and were thrilled to be allowed to take it for a spin around the Harbour and promising to have us at their place next year!

We were delighted also to be visited by a group this year of lady volunteers from Elgin Museum, home of the famous original Spey currach/coracle; they had come over specially to see us and were pleased to see live coracles in action. We were joined again also by Charlie Quinnell of Inverness, the Societies most northerly member, and an "extreme coracler" who promptly disappeared off into the open sea in the bay beyond the Harbour to play in the waves, despite the fact the yacht races had been cancelled due to the weather conditions. Charlie is a presenter for the Gaelic channel for BBC Alba from Inverness-we have thrown down the gauntlet by tempting him to become the first coracler to attempt the seven mile course on this year's Tay Decent in October-watch this space!

Hazel and I went down to the Carmarthen Water festival last month and decided to stay down for the week's holiday in the Pembroke National Park and enjoyed a tropical heatwave-is it always like that in Wales?

Congratulations to Julie and Malcolm for a most enjoyable and well organised day, and we very pleased to see Mark Dellar and Dan Rodgers from Cilgerran with their Teifi coracles supporting the event.

On Saturday gone we were at the Cilgerran Annual Regatta again, before coming to Ironbridge.

Conscious of the time constraints this morning, I will just share one more experience with you,

The Society had a display of coracles and a currach at the Heritage Skills Initiative Fair for the North East Civic Trust at Tynemouth Station over a weekend in June. It was combined with an enormous Flea Market (The Market, not the Flea!) which resulted in an attendance of over 9000 people, with many overseas visitors who were very attracted to our stand, which coincidentally was next to a local brewery stall offering free tasters. One Japanese lady was

very interested in our display, and we were bombarded with questions - "tell me all about coracle" and she seemed well satisfied with the answers. As she made off to go on to the free tasters after seemingly ignoring our pride and joy, the currach, when I drew her attention to it she said "I know all about currach", Oh says I, do you have currachs in Japan?

"No, I just know", then after thanking us, made off. Her English lady companion came over and whispered loudly - "She is a Professor in Gaelic Studies at Newcastle University!" For the first time in my life, I wished there would be a great hole in the ground to appear and swallow me up!

That is enough about me; I look forward to reading about our members exploits this year in the next Society Journal-please send them on to Euan.

Moving swiftly on:

Membership

Brian will give us an update on current membership shortly. From what I remember, we had 89 members in 2013, and hope we have increased on this this year?

Looking up previous AGM minutes, I noticed it was reported we had a membership of 127 in 2006-it would be nice to see us get back to these numbers in our Silver Jubilee year in 2015 and hope everyone will continue to invite new blood into the Society.

I have recommended to your committee this morning that we maintain membership fees at the current level of £10 for individuals and £15 for joint and associate members.

2015 - Silver Jubilee Year

As you are now aware, next year is our Silver Jubilee, and we are very pleased that Founder members, Sir Peter Badge, Martin Fowler, Peter Faulkner and Terry Kenny are still active members over all these years.

I think it appropriate that everyone in the Society pulls out all the stops to contribute to making this very auspicious year in the Society's history a thundering success, and help promote the work of the Coracle Society by helping organise more events, and more participation in events advertised on our web site.

I have also asked your committee to consider introducing a strap line to our logo-" 25 Years Anniversary 1990-2015" for use on the web, stationery and clothing with immediate effect, and to order more car stickers as before as a cheap form of advertising to go out to all members when renewing subs.

If time permits after the AGM and before the Ironbridge regatta begins, I would be grateful if we could have a "Brainstorming session" to hear any ideas which you may have for next year.

I have jotted some bullet points which I will circulate after the meeting for discussion.

That concludes my report for today, and I will take this opportunity to thank all the committee and all members for your tremendous continued support and effort, I have had a very enjoyable two year term of office.

Silver Jubilee events suggestions

1. Come and support events listed on the CS Events Guide on the web.
2. Run your own events locally. The CS have £10m Public Liability Insurance cover which is available for members to use, and we can help out with risk assessments, child safety policy etc.- ask the committee if you need any help with the organisation. We also have 3 CS vinyl banners strategically placed around the country for members to use at events: 1 with me at Ripon, 1 with Euan in Derbyshire, and 1 with Dylan at St. Fagans in Cardiff.
3. Support the established Regattas at Carmarthen, Cilgerran and Ironbridge by coming along and supporting them, and if you are in the area-pop in to see Martin Fowler at Cenarth-he would love to see you!
4. 2015 AGM - Peter and I are keen to hold it again at St. Fagans if they will have us, and the committee are in favour. What do members think? What would members like to see us putting on to mark the occasion? Would members support us at St. Fagans? Any alternative suggestions?
5. The Macmillan World Coracle Championships are being held at Shrewsbury on 11th September 2015. A super cause and they have raised £125k since 2007.

Does the CS wish to support this? We need volunteer teams of 4 paddlers-any takers?

Could be a fertile opportunity to recruit more CS members if we have a recruiting team/press gang there?

6. CS have been invited to help organise an event at Welshpool mid next year to promote more leisure use of the Montgomery Canal. Pat Ward is here to tell you more about it.

What do you think-any takers?

7. Finally - the Tay Descent, from Dunkeld to Perth in Scotland on 25th October 2014. A gentle(ish!) Paddle of 7 miles. Never been done before in coracles, any volunteers to form a team - that would certainly put the CS on the map?

Treasurer

- This year's balance sheet is slightly different to in previous years. As our financial year runs in tandem with the membership year – January–December – the full and final accounts I am presenting today are for the 2013 financial year. I have, however, provided an interim statement for the 2014 financial year on the reverse for your information
- Our finances continue to remain healthy. Last year, excluding income/expenditure related to the huts appeal, we had a surplus of just shy of £80. This year to date our surplus is currently approximately £450, though of course we have yet to incur expenses for the Journal
- 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 again, comparing 2014 to 2013. This will increase slightly towards the end of the year as a few members' standing orders come in in November and December. However given that membership is our only source of real income, we need to look ways of increasing income – whether through membership or other means, such as advertising in the Journal
- IWA insurance and membership costs remained the same this year. Our thanks to them for working hard with their insurer to do so. However, HCA membership costs have increased by nearly double this year (£24 to £42)
 - Chairman proposed pulling out of Crafts Membership for 2015 – **AGREED** from the floor
- One member has taken advantage of the Society's insurance cover this year. 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
- Finally, with regards to the huts appeal, a payment of £1000 was made to the National Coracle Centre so that work to restore that hut could start. The remaining funds await allocation, as the newly formed Ironbridge Coracle Trust continue to work on bid applications so that their project can commence. The remaining balance in the huts appeal 'pot' is £1563, of which £1000 is dedicated to the Ironbridge project due to donor wishes

Website & Journal

- Difficult to ascertain number of hits but doing really well.
- Number of visitors on site is around 1,500 a month.
- Number of page views are 3-5,000 a month which shows website been used.
- Visitors from all over the world including Canada, USA and Australia.
- Number of members on email is around 80%
- It was decided to continue the Journal in a hard copy format.
- Website needs more content - always in need for submissions!
- Conwy Richards site has been taken down.
- Need contents including photos asap

Membership secretary

Membership figures are as follows:

- 121 members
- 26 joint members
- 4 organisations
- 5 honorary members

Society archivist

Glad to say still plenty of interest in coracles with enquiries coming from all parts of the world.

Enquiries range from:

- Construction of coracle
- Suppliers of materials
- Images of different coracles – particularly from media
- Talks / demonstrations

In partnership with the National Museum Karl Chattington and myself skinned and pitched a coracle at St Fagans. It was well received with plenty of interest from the public. The process was also filmed by Terry Brewer a Research Fellow from Bristol University.

Tours of the Fishing collection at St Fagans have always included the coracles of course. If in the vicinity, please contact me.

Talks have been given in:

- Yale College, Wrexham. This was part of the college Exhibition theme on Journey, an exhibition that ran from September 2013 to February 2014. Exhibition consisted of contemporary art and historical artefacts which was used as an inspiration for creating new works. The history of the coracle in Wales was given by myself with Karl giving a handling demonstration

Other talks have been given in Ystradgynlais and Bettws

During the next few months at St Fagans Karl and I will be giving a few more talks and demonstrations

National Coracle Centre

No report

Netsmen representatives

Tywi (Malcolm Rees)

- Fishing stocks in decline. All fish are tagged.
- Angling fraternity are saying stocks are being decimated!
- There will be a Nets review next year which could mean catch and release for next season?
- Been interviewed by Radio 4 and filmed by Welsh Water which is good for the coracle tradition.
- Prince Charles visited Carmarthen and saw the coracles and was keen for the heritage to carry on.
- The Bishop of St Davids also came over.
- A hut has been constructed on the waterfront which they funded themselves – popular with school children who are taken around.
- Still working on branding west Wales.
- Members should have a look at Facebook – Carmarthen coracles which has 300-400 photos.

Teifi

No report

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

All Officers re-elected en bloc

Proposed Terry Kenny Seconded Judy Walker

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Provided as separate document (awaiting receipt)

UPDATE ON THE HERITAGE HUTS

Progressing smoothly. An interior image of hut whilst still in operation – therefore plans of dressing it up as it was. Certainly worth the effort in saving!

The Ironbridge Coracle Trust has been set up to purchase the hut.

AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

Passed

Jude Walker proposed Malcom Rees as new Chairman from 2015 **AGREED**