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**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at The Good Life Experience on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup>  
September 2016**

PRESENT

Jude Walker, Mark Dellar, Paul Binks, Rod Bowen, Euan Raffel, Dylan Jones, Dave Purvis, Brian & Jane Pearce, Ian Harris, Steve Miles, Mike Petts and Bruce Watson

APOLOGIES

Dr Irving Finkel, Julie & Malcolm Rees, Martin Fowler, Wendy Gee, Peter Faulkner, Terry Kenny, Diana Hill, Caroline Brown and Karl Chattington.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Agreed as a correct record. Proposed by Dave Purvis. Seconded by Mark Dellar.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising

REPORTS

*Chairperson*

I have greatly enjoyed my year as chair of the Coracle Society, and looking back over the time since we last met at St Fagans I marvel at how quickly the time has passed.

The Society has managed to maintain its membership at around 100, which is great.

I had hoped our outing to the Countryfile Live show might have swelled our numbers, but although we gave coracle rides to over 400 people we did not feature more than 5 seconds on the TV coverage, so it may not have the impact we originally hoped. It was a terrific effort by all who attended, and a special thanks to Dave who first picked it up and followed through until he had made it happen.

Special thanks to the Cilgerran crew, who turned out in force, and whose red t-shirts and skills with the netting demonstration and Teifi coracle building on Saturday and Sunday was amazing to watch.

It was lovely to see Peter Badge at the show.

Unfortunately, the Bures regatta was cancelled this year, due to low water levels. Steve Miles reports that by the date of the regatta at the beginning of August water levels had recovered, but too late to re-issue the invitation to the regatta. Let's hope for a better outcome next year.

Members of the Ironbridge Coracle Trust were invited to attend the Ironbridge World War Two event that took place over the May Bank Holiday Weekend in Regatta Field and Dale End

Park. There was an excellent turn out in the fine weather and lots of interest from visitors and re-enactors alike. We were able to promote the August Bank Holiday regatta to those who wanted to try out a coracle.

Dave Purvis attended Portsoy Scottish Traditional Boat Festival, which featured coracles on the front page of its programme this year. I must mention currachs at this point, as during the year Dave has launched his currach challenge.

I was sorry to miss both the Carmarthen and the Cilgerran regatta, but I hear they went very well, and the races were well attended. Our newest regatta, at Welshpool, run by the Montgomery Canal Trust, was also very successful, with the Welshpool Town Council getting involved and expanding the event from its first year with many stalls from local tradesmen – lots of delicious food stalls in particular!

The Ironbridge Regatta had glorious weather for the first time in 3 years- everyone was so pleased to see the sun that when Jeremy Paxman turned up with a TV crew, no one actually pushed him in. Tern TV were making a series on rivers which will be shown next year – I'll make sure a notice goes on the CS website when I know when it will be shown.

The MacMillan Shrewsbury regatta took place on Friday 16th September. The event usually raises thousands of pounds for the MacMillan charity, and although not usually well attended by members, it is a fun event to raise awareness of the craft.

The Heritage Huts campaign set up by Dave Purvis has achieved what was desired. The hut can be seen at the National Coracle Centre at Cenarth, and the Ironbridge hut project is moving towards submitting a bid to Heritage Lottery Fund which will not just stabilise and restore the hut, but will interpret the heritage of coracles in Ironbridge, and the place of the Rogers' family in the history of the River Severn at Ironbridge. We have at last managed to get Telford Council to take an interest and assist us with structural engineers' advice and guidance. I managed last week to interview a member of Eustace's family, who has the shed visitors' book and one of his notebooks, as well as a fund of new stories about him and his father.

I must thank Dave Purvis for his help in getting to grips with the Coracle Society and its members. Thanks also to Euan of course, who is always ready to advise and help with technical problems, and to help out with events and activities.

Dylan has a fund of knowledge about coracles and has been a helpful secretary and archivist during the year.

We were all sorry to hear of Irlwyn John, Taf coracleman of St Clears. He passed away in January at age 85.

I have greatly enjoyed my time as chair, but I am going to have to pass on the baton to one of our Vice Chairs for next year, due to the time the bid to HLF will take over the next year.

Thanks to all the committee, and members, and I hope the Society will continue to gain members and expand its influence.

*Treasurer*

- Our finances remain healthy. Balance sheet for membership year 2015 shows expenditure slightly higher than income due to the payment of donated funds for the Tay Descent in 2014. There were also one off expenses for Sir Peter Badge's retirement gift and the coracle ales in particular, the latter we have recovered some of the cost through 'donations'. I believe we are down to the last few bottles now.
- Expenditure compared with 2014 was up by approx. £500, caused by Tay Descent and anniversary ale purchases.
- Income compared with the previous period was approximately the same, circa £1650 in 2014 compared with £1580 in 2015.
- Membership income is again approximately the same comparing 2014 to 2015 – approximately £40 greater in 2014 than 2015.
- IWA insurance and membership costs remained the same this year save for the increase in Insurance Premium Tax. Whilst the amount we pay has always been very competitive, I have been looking in to reducing our insurance cost and I believe this is possible. The IWA charged us a total of £223.60 in 2015 – our corporate membership premium of £54 per annum gives us access to their discounted premiums of circa £170. Having obtained a number of quotes, Zurich appears to offer the best price, comparable cover at £164.25 per annum. I am following up a couple lines of enquiry, but propose that we change insurer when renewal is due at the end of December.
- Website costs increased in 2015 due to the Society acquiring the domain (web site address) and locking it down until 2024. Underlying costs have remained largely unchanged – a £3 increase this year due to supplier cost increase/Brexit.
- As a result of the recent Bank of England interest rate decrease, the interest we earn on our deposit account will drop from 0.05% to 0.03% later this month. I have reviewed the market and there are no other banks offering a significantly better offering, either through instant access or fixed rate/term accounts.
- Finally, we have changed our online payments supplier from PayPal. The gains are modest - financially, we pay less in transaction fees and refunds are fee-free. Income is also automatically transferred to our bank account shortly after payment. Members with automated renewal via PayPal will be migrated across for the 2017 membership year
- Balances as of 14<sup>th</sup> September are as follows:
  - Current account £627.42
  - Deposit account £1244.89
  - PayPal and Stripe £0
  - Total £1872.31

*Membership secretary*

Nothing to report other than the membership remains healthy

*Secretary & archivist*

Another busy year! At the beginning of the year travelled up to Welshpool in mid Wales to deliver a talk on Welsh coracles which was organised by the Severn Rivers Trust. It was a good evening with various talks on rivers and wildlife on the Severn and it was nice to see a couple of Society members present.

Fellow Society member, Paul Barrett and I were filmed introducing the coracle back on the river Taff – as far as we know first coracle on the river since a hundred years. It was really well received and fair play to the presenter, Meinir Gwilym, she was more than willing to go on the river in heavy rain!

Karl Chattington and I represented the Society at this year's Royal Welsh Show in Builth Wells and I am pleased to report that the section we were on (Small Wood Services which included demonstrating wood turners, clog makers and lave fishermen) won two Gold awards for Best Non Machinery Stand and Best Stand Overall.

Karl Chattington has just completed a Wye coracle which will be displayed in St Arvans Church in Monmouthshire.

Many thanks to Roger Lewis and Mike Petts for representing the Society at this year's National Eisteddfod held at Abergavenny.

A gentleman called John Lloyd from Pembroke is trying to revive the coracle tradition on the river Cleddau via a project for Scouts with a view to using them on the Cleddau next spring. He has promised to keep in contact regarding this interesting project.

#### *National Coracle Centre*

It is my 25th season and admissions to the museum appear to be slightly less each year. Ten years ago I had over 12 thousand through the exhibition but for the last five years I have struggled to get to 5000.

This year a regular coach firm for the last 12 years decided to change their tours which has meant 20 coaches with an average of 30 per trip not coming. This also effects the sales in the shop.

I have however noticed a big increase of European visitors particularly from Germany. Not a lot of additions in the museum although I now have a life-size model of a monk (rescued from the local church exhibition) who is busy paddling at the front of the Donegal currach. He doesn't say a lot as he is a silent order monk.

Sorry I could not make it this weekend but I do at least have a coach booked in here which I couldn't cancel. When I retire from coracle museums I will have more time to attend events and actually use one.

#### *Netsmen's reports*

Tywi – no report received

Teifi - Mark reported a mixed season on the Teifi with a slow start but a decent end. The salmon stocks are pretty low.

They are worried about net limitation order with a ten-year review coming up – whispers of reducing once again! Mark has attended meetings throughout the year. Jude maintained Society will help in any way – important the heritage of the coracle to carry on.

#### *Ironbridge Coracle Trust*

The Regatta went well and bid to be placed soon for Heritage Lottery fund.

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

President: Dr Irving Finkel

Vice Presidents: Rod Bowen, John Davies, Peter Faulkner, Martin Fowler, Terry Kenny

Proposed Jude Pilgrim; Seconded Mark Dellar

Carried

Chairperson: Bruce Watson

Proposed Jude Pilgrim; Seconded Mark Dellar

Carried

Vice chairperson: Malcolm Rees

Proposed Euan Raffel; Seconded Dylan Jones

Carried

Treasurer: Euan Raffel

Proposed Jude Pilgrim; Seconded Brian Pearce

Carried

Secretary: Dylan Jones

Proposed Mark Dellar; Seconded Dave Purvis

Carried

Committee: Gerwyn Lewis, June Lewis, Brian Pearce, Jude Pilgrim, Dave Purvis, Julie Rees, Mark Dellar

Re-elected en bloc

Proposed Dylan Jones; Seconded Euan Raffel

Carried

### WEBSITE REPORT

Euan reported the email is up and running and we should embrace new technology.

Information will be relayed to members through email and also the journal. The website is going from strength to strength and was keen to have Archive in the journal which has been done. This restricted to members only.

Number of visits are down (9,000) but the number of hits on the website is well over 21,000 most from UK but also attracting interest from America, Canada and Australia. Popular questions are how to build a coracle and coracle fishing.

Contact Euan for items of news, publications on journal

### PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

- I am frankly distraught that I cannot be with you on Sunday. I hereby submit my Apology, but it is more heartfelt than Apologies to be read out to committees usually are. I am truly sorry.
- I attach a photograph which shows a window display in the shop of Arthur Beale in Covent Garden round the corner from the British Museum which was still in place up until a week or so ago.

- The coracle was made by someone in Reading.
- The girl I am not sure.
- But I was keen to show you that awareness of the Coracle is still sometimes discoverable in the bleak grimness of at least one of our major cities.
- I have written a story for children about the round ark business entitled The Lifeboat that Saved the World, which will be published by Thames & Hudson. We are at present negotiating about black and white drawings with the artist.
- Hopefully it will out in time to feature prominently in Christmas Stockings.

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Disappointing to see a low turnout for the AGM – is it due to location/time of year?

Dave Purvis mentioned Martin Fowler's new children's book on coracles – hopefully it will be on sale at various bookshops/museums in the coming year

Dave Purvis is eager to promote the currach

It was proposed that a £50 donation be given to the Teifi netsmen to contribute to their expenses in attending Countryfile Live