



[www.coraclesociety.org.uk](http://www.coraclesociety.org.uk)

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at St George's Hall, Bewdley on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

PRESENT

Bruce Watson, Euan Raffel, Mark Dellar, Jude Pilgrim, Peter Faulkner, Terry Kenny, Gerwyn Lewis, June Lewis, Dave Purvis, Heather Berry

APOLOGIES

Dylan Jones, Malcolm Rees, Julie Rees, Darren Male, Irving Finkel, Rod Bowen, Wendy Gee, Pete Sullivan, Martin Baines, Marion Blockley, Diana Hill, Brian and Jane Pearce, Peter Badge

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Agreed as a correct record. Proposed by Jude Pilgrim. Seconded by Dave Purvis

MATTERS ARISING

Ironbridge Coracle Trust was successful in its recent HLF bid.

REPORTS

*Chairperson*

No report

*Treasurer*

The 2017 accounts were presented for approval. Nothing much of note. Income exceeded expenditure. Two donations of £500 each were made to Carmarthen Coracle and Netsmen's Association and Teifi Coracle Netsmen's Association, in order to purchase a fibreglass coracle for public demonstration use to protect their working boats from damage caused through public use.

Proposer: Jude Pilgrim, Seconder: Mark Dellar

Accounts were accepted

*Membership secretary*

Membership stands at 138 as of date of meeting, comprised of 97 individual members and 41 joint/family/associate members

*Secretary & archivist*

Many apologies for not being able to attend this year's AGM – sincerely hope will be able to see you all next year!

Another varied year with numerous emails / phone calls regarding coracles and many thanks to those of you who have helped me to answer these over the past year in particular I have to mention Euan in this respect.

The Society has been able to give advice on many articles, film / radio programmes this year which have included the following:

Coracles mentioned in the Countryfile magazine – Dylan & Karl contributed

Coracles on Saturday Night Takeaway. Euan contacted Harry Brigham from the States to help them out but at the last minute they were not required.

Advice given to 3dtotal Publishing regarding the use of coracles on the rivers.

Various interviews given by Dylan on Radio Cymru on coracles on Welsh rivers.

Dylan worked with a German TV film crew (ZDF – Second German Television) on the history of Prince Madog of Gwynedd discovering America centuries before Columbus and the legend of the coracle in America

Sorry if I have forgotten anyone from the above list.

Popular enquiries are:

- How to repair coracles?
- Coracle courses?
- How to hire coracles?
- Any members that give Coracle talks?
- People wishing to borrow coracles
- Any coracle members in America? (3)
- How to find green ash laths?
- Where to obtain calico?
- Any coracles for sale?

During the year the Society were invited to paddle down the river Waverley to raise funds to help create a 'green water land'. From memory I believe Steve Miles helped them out?

The Museum of English Rural Life were looking for coracle makers to work with them at the museum on a certain project.

Llangorse lake, not far from Brecon, are keen for the Society to attend a possible event in the future? Possible AGM?

Salisbury Festival also contacted the Society for possible present at their event

Coracle lessons were wanted in Scotland and East Anglia

For your information but I am sure you are aware that it is Owain Glyndŵr Day on Sunday in Wales and Karl and I will be representing the Society at Caerphilly Castle – various talks and events throughout day.

At the end of September, I have been invited by the Living Levels Landscape Partnership (an HLF funded project for the Gwent Levels) to take part in the 'Unlocking the history and archaeology of the Gwent Levels' day at Newport Wetlands. They want to make people aware of the existence of coracles in Gwent at one time.

As you can see all fun and games being Secretary of the Coracle Society! Once again many thanks for all your help during the year and I hope everything goes well at the AGM!

### *National Coracle Centre*

No report

### *Netsmen's reports*

Tywi – The extreme weather conditions added to various other factors meant we had a very poor and slow fishing season in 2018. Not wanting to dwell on the negative, here is some positive coracle news from the Towy....

Last September we welcomed the National Association of City and Town Sheriffs

of England and Wales to the Carmarthen Coracle. The day saw many distinguished visitors, who were all keen to learn about our history.

Television viewers would have seen us take part in the BBC 1 programme 'Britain Afloat' alongside the Teifi and Ironbridge coracles.

October saw the opening of Specsavers opticians in our hometown and the coracle featured in the day's celebrations when a miniature coracle was presented to two very proud Welshmen – Specsavers' founder Doug Perkins and designer Jeff Banks.

The interest in coracles always increases come March and this year was no exception. We worked with Carmarthen Town Council to produce a 'Coracle Trail' as part of the St David's Day and Welsh Week Celebrations in Carmarthen town. Six coracles were placed around the town, each with a history of an old coracle fishing family – visitors were given a map of the town to follow the trail.

Later that month, one of our miniature Towy coracles was travelling with Team Wales to the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games ready for the Welcoming Ceremony in April. Pictured is Team Wales representative Nicola Phillips presenting our coracle to the Yugembah people in the Gold Coast Fire Ceremony. It was given in exchange for a Fire Stick – both representing their country's ancient cultures.

Probably our most important news of the year was our additional home – we have joined various local river users and taken over an empty building on the Quayside. It's warm, dry and an ideal place for visitors to come and see our collection and us. We've welcomed local schools, cubs, beavers, our local special needs school and adult groups – it's been a very busy time. Our lease finishes at the end of March and our council want to knock the building down to make offices – so we're making hay while the sun shines and using the time we have to welcome as many visitors as possible. For those who are too young to visit, I've been taking the coracles around local nurseries. My initial feeling was that they were too young to

understand, but when there are cries and tantrums because they don't want to get out of the coracle, you know you've done something right!

The summer saw our popular Carmarthen River Festival take place on the Quayside – it attracted a record crowd of 2000+ people. It was great to welcome Frome Men's Sheds and their coracle collection again this year and an added nice surprise was receiving support from Black Rock Lave Netsmen – we will return the support soon!

We used the River Festival to unveil our new fibre-glass coracle, which was kindly donated by The Coracle Society. We named our coracle 'Logan' after Towy coracle man Matthew Dagnall's son, who suffers from mitochondrial disease. 10yr old Logan came to cut the ribbon on the new coracle and set sail on its maiden voyage with his dad to enter the Coracle Race.

Lastly, we have been contacted by a gentleman who is well known locally for his heritage work and story-telling. He has offered to work with us in promoting the story of the coracle to local schools, produce an education pack and also capture the old coracle stories on film. Last week we were advised that the grant application had been successful... so just when we thought it was getting quiet!

Teifi – Fishing season this year has been variable – salmon numbers were good this year, no sign of sewin. Natural Resources Wales are currently trying to reduce numbers of salmon that can be caught under the argument of reducing numbers. They are also currently consulting on reducing licenced months (2 months per season) without reducing the licence fee. Making changes to the licences doesn't deal with the real problem; poaching and pollution run off upstream. The Welsh Assembly has requested an independent inquiry to consult on National Resources Wales' proposals to amend the fishing bylaws, which will take place in the upcoming months.

We have received our Teifi fibreglass coracle from Arrowcraft Engineering, donated by The Coracle Society. The four-part mould was made from one of Rod Bowen's coracles and is a carbon copy of it; you can see stitching and patches! Has been put to use already – event with the local primary school at the end of the summer term, getting children and teachers out on the water, a Water Day event – getting public out on the water, and the recent Cilgerran regatta.

Mark Dellar and Rod Bowen did a build this year at Cilgerran Castle, which was well received by the public. This event was done in conjunction with an event 'Year of the Sea'.

### *Ironbridge Coracle Trust*

As mentioned previously, earlier this year the Trust were successful with its bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Work is currently underway to stabilise and secure the coracle hut, and planning is underway to set up a coracle trail in Ironbridge and set up a coracle interpretation centre at the Green Wood Centre (which will be one end of the coracle trail).

This year's coracle regatta was very successful, in spite of the weather. Approximate visitor numbers were 800-1000. The have a go session was very busy; we too have procured a couple of fibreglass coracles recently for public use. The novice race had an unprecedented twenty-four entries this year.

We've been doing more drifts through Ironbridge, usually Sunday mornings through the summer, from Dale End car park to the hut. Open invitations get posted on a Facebook page. Great for getting people out on the water and keeping up interest.

This year's coracle making course at Small Woods had seven participants this year, best numbers ever. Contributed success of the course to the Trust's activities.

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

President: Peter Faulkner

Proposed Dave Purvis; Seconded Gerwyn Lewis

Carried

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

Proposed Euan Raffel; Seconded Mark Dellar

Carried and elected en-bloc, with the proviso that should Peter's health deteriorate, Terry Kenny will take over as President

Chairperson: Mark Dellar

Proposed Jude Pilgrim; Seconded Euan Raffel

Carried

Vice chairperson: Malcolm Rees

Proposed Euan Raffel; Seconded Dave Purvis

Carried

Secretary: Dylan Jones

Proposed Euan Raffel; Seconded Dave Purvis

Carried

Treasurer: Euan Raffel

Proposed Jude Pilgrim; Seconded June Lewis

Carried

Committee: Gerwyn Lewis, June Lewis, Darren Male, Jude Pilgrim, Dave Purvis, Julie Rees

Proposed Euan Raffel; Seconded Mark Dellar

Carried and elected en-bloc

### PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

No report provided

### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None