



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Shrewsbury Town Football Club, SY2 6ST
on Saturday 23 August 2025**

PRESENT

Pete Redding, Richard Green, Charlie Quinell, Peter Roberts, Dave Purvis, Arran McLachlan, Rich Steadman, Robin Pocock, Gary, Julie, Dylon, Gary Fruland, Stephen Rodderick, Monika Juergens, Steven Miles, Peter Stanyon, Peter Faulkner, Jude Pilgrim, Raymond Green.

APOLOGIES

Mark Dellar, June Lewis, Sue Madden, Euan Raffel

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Agreed as a correct record. Proposed by Pete Redding. Seconded by Dave Purvis.

MATTERS ARISING

None

REPORTS

Chairperson

It's less than a year since I took over as interim Chairman. In that time I've been hunting for new members to beef up the committee, with some success. The Coracle Users' Group on Facebook which I started a little over a year ago has continued to grow, with currently 229 members last I checked. These include people in various countries, even somebody in Iraq who builds Guffas which is rather exciting. I've been trying to encourage as many members of the group to join the Society, and a number of them have. It's been great to see members posting questions and receiving answers, and showing off pictures of their coracles – some of them rather inventive. There are a fair few folk who are keen to learn how to build, so there is definitely a market for more coracle making courses if we can find people who know how to build coracles and are willing to run courses.

A highlight of my year – and frankly my life – was my visit to Cilgerran on the Teifi back in May where I was very kindly taken out netting. I can't express my thanks in words to Mark, Catrin and Rod and Barbara who were extremely generous with their knowledge, hospitality and time. I learned a lot while I was there, and came away with some incredibly special memories. Let's hope we can keep the fishing going and that I won't be one of the last people to experience this. It really was a privilege afforded to few. Also I would like to thank Martin at the National Coracle Centre in Cenarth who was very kind when I made my first return visit there having first visited about 33 years ago as a wide-eyed child. A marvellous place and long may it continue.

There have been few regattas so far over the summer, but as well as our own here in Shrewsbury this afternoon there is the Cilgerran Coracle Day today which owing to an unfortunate oversight on my part clashes with the AGM and means that a few members couldn't attend. Hope to do better next year on that front. There is also of course the annual Ironbridge regatta which will be in September, and the Carmarthen regatta took place last month with quite good attendance. It'd be nice to see the Bures

regatta resurrected over in East Anglia in the future. The Teifi netsmen had a pitch at the Royal Welsh Show with have-a-go sessions, which is important for getting folk interested in coracles.

The project to revive the six designs that have lapsed has been making slow progress, and we're hoping after a meeting last night to move to apply for funding for that soon. Progress that has been made includes my building of a Wye Truckle as a means of learning how to do that with the view to make one of the Youtube videos for the project. I'm not alone there as Pete Redding is about to make one too so it'll be great to see one in use again on the Wye, and even for angling I think I'm right in saying. Great stuff. The next one I build will be a Traditional Taf, which I've been slowly working out and gathering wood for. If anyone is versed in building in laths such as any of the River Severn styles and would be interested in tackling for instance a Conwy, or an Upper or Lower Dee for the project, do please get in touch as we're rather short of builders for this project.

Through the tireless efforts of our man in the North, Dave Purvis, we have had a presence at a number of events such as Shedfest, and the Harrogate Wood Show which seem to have attracted some attention. Thank you Dave. Unfortunately, we weren't able to attend the Scottish Traditional Boat Festival in Portsoy this year after twenty years of attendance. I'm hopeful that this will be a blip though, as there are actually quite a few coraclers in Scotland, something I hope to build on.

Lastly it's been great to see such enthusiasm in Shrewsbury during our efforts to arrange the AGM and the regatta this afternoon, especially with the new Fred Davies Memorial Race in collaboration with Shrewsbury Town FC who very kindly let us use this place for our meeting. Many thanks to them. Hopefully today's regatta and race can become an annual fixture and a focus for the use of the Shrewsbury coracle. It'd be good to see coraclers from Ironbridge and who knows perhaps even Welshpool in subsequent years coming and developing a friendly racing rivalry with the Shrewsbury paddlers. The Shrewsbury Men's Shed have been brilliantly enthusiastic and have done great work in terms of networking and enabling today's event to happen, so many thanks to them.

As for the rest of the year I look forward to building the Traditional Taf coracle, and spending as much time as I can paddling on the River Beaulieu and the Conon, the Ness and the Findhorn during what looks set to be a spectacular autumn in the Highlands. Hopefully I'll get myself out of bed early enough when the tide is right to actually see a beaver from my coracle on the Beaulieu too.

Looking beyond that I hope we can see a real revival in coracle use especially with the project to revive the lapsed traditional designs. Wouldn't it be great to see people on the Conwy, the Cleddau, the Wye, the Taf and both sections of the Dee where coracles were used traditionally out for a paddle for recreation or with a fishing rod? And who knows perhaps we'll see regattas there, and paddlers bringing their local designs of coracles to other regattas, and a bit of friendly rivalry developing to really ensure coracling continues for many years. I think if we can achieve that, we'll have done our job in terms of passing on to future generations what is, with the possible exception of flint knapping, our oldest piece of continuous tangible heritage. *Secretary*

No report as such as Dylan has been absent. Usual stream of enquiries by email. Few enquiries from the US on where to locate materials. Quite a few coracles have been rehomed this year. A secondary school student has been in touch regarding a school project they have started, lots of questions on where to find information, materials, etc. The project will involve building coracles. He has been asked to keep us up to date with his project and we will send some resources to him – copies of books, etc.

Secretary

Life for me has got a bit busy over here in Northern Ireland and it's been difficult with everything going on in the mainland to be present to the Society's needs. However, I've had a few trips back home to my coracles that are stored in Nottingham and have paddled down the Trent with my brother.

Back in August our inquiries to the society were coming through slowly and they were rather thin on the ground but have steadily increased during the year. It's been great to see the large interest in coracles that were for sale. Each coracle has had about four or five people asking about them, which, compared to last year is a big shift and so it's been great to see coracles all over the country being exchanged. Hopefully we'll continue to see that next year.

What I found wonderful is connecting members of the society together. Recently we had an inquiry for a about traditional waterproofing and coatings for calico that wasn't bitumen and what we'd expect for soon after to have somebody tell me their story of using all natural materials for their coracle that were harvested and waterproofed using beeswax and rosin.

Over this summer we've had more inquiries from the media. Such as the BBC, interested in today's AGM and recently Sky Sports covering Fred Davies and Shrewsbury Town Football Club which has been fantastic. Thank you for everyone who's been involved in those.

I really appreciate everybody's work in the society, especially to those who I've directed inquiries to. Thank you to those down in Wales that usually get a steady stream of questions. Particularly Julie Rees and Mark Dellar. Thanks also go to everyone else who's contributed.

Along the year there have been a few people who have shared history and their experience with coracles, their adventures and building stories which has been a great kind of revival and feels like the interest in coracles is coming alive again compared to last year.

One inquiry of note was somebody that had a very worn-out paddle and they were asking what sort of paddle it was. It was great to do a bit of an investigation to work out roughly where this paddle came from. So, over the year as I say we've had a good increase in general interest compared to last year and hopefully next year will be the same.

Treasurer

Balances today – current account: £1006.62, of which £238.66 is ringfenced as part of the coracle preservation project

The insurance premium for 2025 was held at 2024 rates. However, the annual membership rate for IWA (which enables us access to our discounted and very comprehensive insurance arrangements) has increased for the first time in many years, from £54 to £73.

Insurance was used twice by members during 2024.

The domain (website address) was due for renewal during 2024 and was renewed for 10 years, the maximum available

Significant expenditure compared to previous years is mostly attributed to the £1000 match funding the Society added to the coracle preservation project. Unused funds (end of 2024 - £138.66) are ringfenced for future phases of the project

Outgoing donation of £468 was to Teifi Coracle Netsman's Association, to purchase informational banners to use at events. These were first used in Brest, France during Summer 2024 at a major international maritime event

Otherwise business as usual

We have recently set up an online shop which will enable us to raise funds through selling products. Currently listed on the online shop are the limited edition 35th anniversary window stickers and member plaques. We have had some sales already

99 members – 70 individual, 29 joint/family/associate members. We have had a recent strengthening of numbers as we welcome new members to the Society

National Coracle Centre

No report

Netsmen's reports

Teifi Coracle Netsmen's Association

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 have taken the productive fishing months out of the coracle fishing season.

The Teifi coracle group have been busy again this year with demonstrations at public events around Wales, the Neath Steam and Vintage Show, 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 11yrs 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.

All preparations are done for the annual coracle race day in Cilgerran with the weather forecast in our favour this year and a full race card we are hoping for a great day on the banks of the Teifi.

Happy paddling all

Mark Dellar

Carmarthen Coracle & Netsmen's Association

Coracle fishing is a highly skilled and ancient method of fishing for sewin (sea trout), which has been a tradition in Carmarthen for several centuries. The coracle man proudly stands at the top of the Carmarthen town crest.

The coracles have a very short fishing season, which starts on the 1st May and ends on the 31st July – with no fishing permitted at weekends and they are governed by tides, weather and flood water.

Since the last update, we've had another busy year:

We've taken part in various television programmes, including Cais Quinnell with British Lions & Wales International Rugby celebrity Scott Quinnell and S4C's Ne-wff-ion.

We've welcomed several local schools, including Model CIW School, Richmond Park School and Myrddin Primary School.

We were proud to lead the St David's Day Grand Parade again this year, it's always a great privilege for us to be included in this important town event.

A warm welcome was given to Ann Davies MP, who visited us at The Quay Centre to learn more about the challenges we face. We discussed river pollution and she agreed to make enquiries into why a Towy coracle fishing licence is approx. £700 per year, the highest licence fee on the Welsh rivers. We explained this fee is a huge financial challenge to the coracle fisher-folk, as they also need to pay for material to make their coracles, paddles and nets on top of their licence fee - this will no doubt deter any coracle person from continuing the tradition in Carmarthen.

We have also been involved with the water testing project with Achub Y Tywi and continue to report the serious discharge from the Mekatek outlet to National Resources Wales – however, this has been ongoing for 20+ years.

Our coracle collection has been relocated upstairs in The Quay Centre as we had outgrown the small room downstairs. This allows us more space for school visits and only last week we welcomed visitors from UWTSD, Trinity Dublin and Alaska.

The coracle collection was open for dignitaries to visit during the Carmarthen River Festival on Saturday 19th July, when we hold our annual coracle races and youngsters are able to experience this old tradition in the safe environment of the coracle pool

Julie Rees

It was noted it was a poor season and it is unsure who will be taking their license out for 2026.

Ironbridge Coracle Trust

The Ironbridge Coracle Trust has had a quiet but steady year delivering 'have a go' sessions in Ironbridge to a range of groups. The Trust has loaned coracles to a number of exhibitions that have been touring the country and spreading the coracle word. These include the 'Weave only a Trace' basketry exhibition in Jackfield and 'Basketry: Rescuing, Reviving and Retaining' which has been to three venues in Staffordshire, North Wales and Nottinghamshire.

Most significantly, we are now working in partnership with the events team at Telford and Wrekin Council to deliver the Ironbridge Coracle Regatta as part of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Festival. The regatta has been growing year on year into a very successful local event but it was getting to be an increasingly large burden on a small team of volunteers. We hope that this will make the event more sustainable into the future and will mean that we can focus our efforts on having fun in coracles, rather than organising the bins and the toilets.

Mary Lewis

Insh Coracle Club

We lost our millpond under the storm Arwen couple years back and we're now using the curling pond in the folk museum which is a much bigger area of water for us and we've only had six weeks that we've not been able to use it. So far this year we have had 518 people out on the water which is not bad going really. We've given about 7 application forms for Coracle Society membership out and whether they have responded or not we are unsure. We got a lot of people who want to build coracles, taking pictures, having a paddle, and having a great time. There has been a lot of people from America, Holland, Germany, Italy, and France so we are learning all the languages about small boats and river fishing. They also were quite interested in the whole idea of coracles. Another thing that's happened with us is that one of our members has built a coracle from the loose pattern of a plan of a Bronze Age coracle found in Fife in 1975. He's managed to keep upright and it floats. Other than that, we been struggling with the low river levels of the Spey.

Raymond Green

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

President: Peter Faulkner

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

Proposed Jude Pilgrim; Seconded Pete Redding

Chairperson: Charlie Quinnell

Vice chairperson: Pete Redding

Proposed Dave Purvis. Seconded Jude Pilgrim

Secretary: Jude Pilgrim

Proposed Dave Purvis; Seconded Charlie Quinnell

Treasurer: Euan Raffel

Proposed Charlie Quinnell; Seconded Peter Stanyon

Carried

Committee: Mark Dellar, Gary Fruland, June Lewis, Steve Miles, Dave Purvis, Pete Redding, Richard Green, Simon Rouse

Carried and elected en-bloc

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

A very warm welcome to you to this AGM at the new home ground 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 here 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. Six 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 Chairman, for his commitment and expertise during his years of office. Our new Chairman Charles Quinnell, hails from Scotland, and I know 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 Chairman 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 and Facebook page functioning, deal with membership 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 Coracle 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 Charles 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.

Meeting closed