

Coracles - further details

Typical Welsh craft had a flat bow which was where the fisherman would scull from with a figure-8 stroke; this enabled him to brace his position with his feet apart thus stabilising the craft. The aft might be pointed or round or flat – it didn't matter too much.

Stepping into the craft was tricky as they were inherently 'wobbly'! Standing on the riverbank with the boat in the water, the fisherman would use the paddle as a vertical prop in the water then step into the middle of the boat and sit down, then brace himself. Getting out was a reversal of this process. Simple!

When fishing, usually in pairs, the fishermen would side-scutt with a net between them.

Bernard Thomas, a fisherman on the River Teifi & TV personality, crossed the English Channel in a coracle on July 18th 1974. It took him 13 ½ hours, the last mile of it took 4 hours because the tide turned. On reaching land he planted a Welsh flag in the sand. The cushion he used to sit on was found in his house when he died.

Coracles were used the world over, each with its local design to suit the water conditions. Some in India were big enough to transport elephants!

Our replicas were built as part of the Cleddau Coracle Project in collaboration with 3rd Pembroke Sea Scouts.

The National Coracle Museum in Cenarth (Carmarthenshire) has many examples, and a wealth of information, of craft from all over the world.