



Cygnet Committee Annual Report

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The Cygnet Management Committee presents its one hundred and twenty-fourth report for the year ending 31 December 2014.

Rowing

Another year and another Annual Report. In this year the Club has made good progress developing committed senior and novice oarsmen whilst being represented at all major Head races and most regattas.

2014 year turned out to be another development year, with the focus turned to boosting the membership by holding another two Learn-to-Row courses in April and September. The Olympics effect has abated and numbers of applicants were down; however an Open Morning was hosted in autumn, in conjunction with BBLRC, focussing primarily on new graduates arriving in London, particularly those joining the Civil Service, and this has brought on some more members. These activities cannot be successful without the continued help of the entire active membership.

This calendar year, the club has competed at the Quintin and Hammersmith Heads and entered two boats in the Head of the River, unfortunately culminating in the anti-climax of an abandoned HRR. Regattas on the itinerary for the year included Borne Regatta, Chiswick Regatta, where the novice double of Matt Byrne and Stuart Gibbons won the Novice 2x. At Putney Town Regatta the Gibbons/Byrne double won their Intermediate 3 race, and Stuart Gibbons joined Neil Pickford, Paul Persad and Jeremy Pugh in an Open Intermediate 3 quad race against a women's crew from Globe BC. The club was also represented at Twickenham Regatta where Jeremy Pugh won his first ever singles race in Masters E 1x; Barnes and Mortlake Regatta and at Marlow Regatta at Dorney Lake. The pair of Bates and French again qualified for the Silver Goblets at Henley Royal Regatta; in their heat against Western Ontario University Canada youth easily triumphed over experience, but it was gratifying to have the Cygnet colours represented at HRR. At the end of the Regatta season the club entered St Neots, Henley Town & Visitors and Oxford City Regatta.

Cygnet and the PLA

We are very pleased to report that Cygnet (and Furnival) won the annual PLA award for being the safest club on the Tideway. This annual award is based predominantly on the number of reports of poor navigation made against the club (none) and from compliance observations made by the TRRC over the course of the year and it is the third time in five years that Cygnet have been the recipients of this award.

The committee would like to thank the Captaincy and the Water Safety Adviser for the fostering of a good safety culture amongst the active membership, and the members themselves for complying with the advice they are given.

The award (£750.00) and plaque was presented by the PLA at a ceremony at the Civil Service Boathouse on 1st December 2014.

Special Award

At the ceremony, the PLA also presented a special award for "services to the improvement of River Safety" to Neil Pickford, Cygnet Water Safety Adviser, who has been instrumental in the production of a safety video on the navigational rules on the Tidal Thames. We are very proud...

At the end of the year, a squadron of 24 rowers from Cygnet and BBLRC made the customary trip to Dusseldorf in October to row the Rhine Marathon resulting in a bronze medal in the coxed Seegig fours for the crew of R Henderson, M Byrne, I Mountain and S Gibbons. Cygnet entered crews in the Pairs Head, Fours Head, Vet Fours Head and Scullers Head with some good results.

Coaching

During the year, Sue Grobler has been our head coach for the racing squad; she has created a strategic training plan for land training which is proving to be very effective. She's also been helping out with the Learn to Row programme and with coxing, which continues to be a problem at our club as well as others. Nick Rowett was around in the summer time to coach during the week.

Additions to the Cygnet Fleet

Cygnet counted one boat launch this year, with the acquisition of another single from the Janousek stable. It has long been a custom at Cygnet to name smaller racing craft after institutions associated with the club, and in this year, which saw Cygnet win the PLA Safety Prize for the third time in 5 years, it seemed appropriate to name this new single 'Port2Port'. Our photo shows Dr Richard du Parcq, Hon Treasurer pouring the customary bubbly over the bows of the boat during the naming ceremony held at the Boathouse on 31 August.

Picture of RduP naming Port2Port to be inserted here.

The fact that Cygnet continues to add to its range of top flight racing boats reflects both the success of the longstanding boat buying programme and the continuing generosity of members old and new in furnishing the necessary funding.

Club Members and Friends

It is with deep regret that we have to report that Fred Blasberg, long-standing member of Benrath, and one of the original contacts for the friendship between Cygnet and RG Benrath passed away in November 2014, his presence at Eights Heads and Rhine Marathons will be missed.

Eight new members were elected during the year. Encouraged by new CSSC membership rules, the club is urging non-Civil Servant members to apply for so-called "linked" membership of CSSC to further strengthen our association with the CSSC. By mid June, 37 out of the 66 active members were registered as members of CSSC.

And finally, we congratulate our Vice Captain, Ian Mountain, who married BBLRC Katie Coyle on 11th October; the latest in a proud tradition of Cygnet/BBLRC nuptials.

300 Club

The 300 Club is now being managed by Guy du Parc Braham and Nick Bates. The usual draws were held through the year and new ground was broken with the publication of the results on the Website and through Twitter; it is recognised that more marketing needs to be done to promote this important fundraising tool to all club members old and new.

General Meetings

Annual General Meeting –Held at the Boathouse on Sunday 23 February 2014

Was attended by Vice-President and Chairman N J Wylie, Vice Presidents, P L Rawkins and A Cox, Vice President and Hon Treasurer, Dr R P du Parcq also Club Captain D French, M Byrne, M Israel, N Pickford, N Bates, J Pugh, C Morgan, T Cohen, P Simpson, C Cabrera and N Davison. Apologies for absence were received from P A S Sly, S Gibbons, P Brown, K Tanner, M Collier.

Mr Sly was re-elected President as were the existing thirteen Vice-Presidents. Re-elected were N J Wylie as Chairman; Ms M Israël, Hon Secretary; Dr R P du Parcq, Hon Treasurer; and M Byrne as Assistant Treasurer. Mr N Bates was voted Assistant Secretary and Mr I Mountain as Social Secretary. Committee Members elected were M Collier, P L Rawkins, K Tanner and P Simpson. M A Arnold-Gilliat, R E Lambe, A Cox and P L Rawkins were re-appointed Trustees and M Burman and T N Davison re-appointed Honorary Independent Examiners.

The Annual Report had previously been circulated and was adopted. The Captain's report was presented and adopted. The Annual Club Accounts were presented by Dr R P du Parcq; these were agreed subject to their signing off by one of the Independent Examiners.

Ordinary General Meeting & Election of Captaincy held on Tuesday 24 July 2012

Chaired by N J Wylie – Vice Presidents P Rawkins, A Rawkins, Vice President and Hon Treasurer Dr R P du Parcq. M H Israel, Hon Secretary, Club Captain D French, N Pickford, N Bates, I Mountain, R Harries, P Simpson, S Gibbons, B de Groot, C Cabrera attended. Apologies were received from P A S Sly and P Persad.

Dr D French presented his Captain's Report, in which he listed the club's achievements during his captaincy, including continued coaching, sculling camps and social activities.

There being no other nominations the following were elected to Office:-

Captain: David French; Deputy Captain: Nick Bates; Vice-Captain: Ian Mountain.

Club Management Meetings

Five committee meetings were held during the year with a 80% attendance record. The dates of meetings were mostly set at the end of each meeting.

British Rowing was advised that the number of members for whom affiliation payments were due was 68. Items of special note are detailed below.

Civil Service Sports Council

The Civil Service Sports Council continues to support the changes to CSSC membership that allow for linked membership. Informal feedback from CSSC HQ is that they are pleased with the way Cygnet is making use of the new membership categories.

“Cygnets” Bungalow

Again a fairly successful year for our second important fund raising source. The premises were fully in use from May until September and also at several weekends. Two Sculling Camps were held by Cygnet.. Management of the Bungalow has now been transferred to Mr D Bush as Bungalow Manager. Mr Bush will present a full report at the Annual General Meeting.

The Cygnet Management Committee expresses its heartfelt thanks to Mr Phil Brown, who stepped into the bungalow management breach when it was most needed.

Legacy

We are grateful for a generous legacy from Mrs Margaret Jones, sister of the late Peter Roche.

The Website

The website has been completely re-designed by Neil Pickford, with Club officers able to post information themselves. Club members can get access to members-only sections by requesting a password from the Webmaster, Neil Pickford. All members and friends are urged to log on to www.cygnet-rc.org.uk.

Members and friends alike can now also follow the club's activities with the official Cygnet Twitter account @CygnetRC, and through this have access to regatta results, Tideway news from the PLA and British Rowing initiatives.

The website will also be the main link for the Cygnet photo archive, which has been completely digitised by Neil Pickford with input from Paul Rawkins. The Committee of Management extends their heartfelt thanks to Mr Pickford who continues to work very hard for the club and its members.

Social Events

The usual social events were held, such as the Club Picnic in the President's garden at Henley during Henley Friday, the End of Season dinner end September and the Club Lunch at Leander Club in Henley on Thames in October. The annual Clubs' Day, organised by the BBLRC Social Secretary Ms Katy Owen, was held on 31 August and it was very gratifying to see so many Cygnet members, old and new, attending this event.

The End of Season Dinner also saw the awarding of our two annual awards:

The G.P. Jeffries Cup for Cygnet Rower of the Year. This goes to the oarsman who has improved most over the past 12 months - and there were several to choose from, with at least three of our scullers de-novicing for example, and our Novice 4+ continuing to work hard. It was difficult to single out an individual, but given how quickly he has picked up the rhythm, and his admirable attendance at training, congratulations to Nick Rae.

The Wally Whedal Cup for Cygnet Sportsmanship & Endeavour, also known as 'Clubman of the Year', was another category where we had more than one worthy candidate. This award is about showing willing, jumping into new boats, crews, and races, and putting up with what crewmates/ coaches/ other river users throw at you. For doing all of this, and staying smiling, congratulations to Louise Johnson.

Before Christmas, older members attended a weekday lunch at the Civil Service Club, organised by Mark Arnold-Gilliat and Lawrence McVeigh.

At the End of the Year...

Cygnet is entering 2015 with plans to compete at Quintin Head, Hammersmith Head and, as always, the Head of the River Race and the Veterans Eights head.

In addition, we are all looking forward to the **125th Birthday celebrations** of the Club, culminating in a Reception at the House of Lords on 18 July and the 50 years' association with RG Benrath which we're also celebrating this year.

The club continues to be active both on and off the water. The Captaincy follows the policies laid down by previous holders of office and encourages club members to be further involved in club organisation. There is a constant hunt for coxswains, experienced or willing to learn and it is hoped that coaching will continue on both a professional and amateur basis. It is expected that 2015 will involve a very active racing season and the need for a high level of individual fitness will be necessary, so circuits remain on the menu.

The relationship with many other clubs both on and away from the Tideway are excellent, in particular that with Barnes Bridge Ladies Rowing Club remains as strong as ever. The camaraderie between members is remarked upon and Cygnet remains a very friendly and happy club.