



# Cygnet Committee Annual Report

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The Cygnet Management Committee presents its one hundred and twenty-sixth report for the year ending 31 December 2016.

## Mike Arnold-Gilliat

It is with great sadness that we announce that Michael Arnold-Gilliat, variously known as Mike AG, MAG, the Dowager Chairman or just plain Gilliat, passed away peacefully on 16th June in Charing Cross Hospital, London, after a short struggle with pneumonia. He was 81. On hearing of his death, one of his contemporaries remarked that 'it would take a little time to get used to not having Mike there'. It will indeed; Mike AG was part of the very fabric of Cygnet RC, a quintessential administrator who always had his 'ear to the ground' and one who never missed an opportunity to network.

At Cygnet we are fond of proclaiming the demise of club grandees as the 'end of an era'; with the death of Mike Arnold-Gilliat, that epithet is amply justified, Gilligrams and all. He will be greatly missed by his multitude of friends and family.

## Club Members and Friends

In addition to the passing of the Dowager Chairman Mike Arnold-Gilliat, we have also said our final farewells to Eric Wale, who passed away in February. Although it is certainly not a nice way to start an annual report, the fact that even people who joined Cygnet in the 1940s and 1950s are still known around the club is a fantastic reflection of the kind of club Cygnet is.

Four new members were elected during the year. Encouraged by new CSSC membership rules, the club continues to encourage non-Civil Servant members to apply for so-called "linked" membership of CSSC to further strengthen our association with the CSSC.

A few marriages to report, with congratulations to ex Cygnet Captain Stuart Gibbons on his marriage to BBLRC member Helena Smith, and Bart de Groot on his marriage to Jasmine Voos. We wish both couples all the best and much joy for the future.

## Rowing

In this year the Club has made good progress developing committed experienced and new novice oarsmen whilst being represented at all major Head races and most regattas.

In 2016 the focus continued to be on boosting the membership by holding another two Learn-to-Row courses in April and September. The April course did not result in any new members, but the September course was slightly more successful, with two applicants voted in as full Cygnet club members.

This calendar year, the club has competed at the Quintin Head as well as the Head of the River and the Veterans Head. Regattas on the itinerary for the year included Borne Regatta, where a Cygnet/BBLRC crew won in the mixed coxed fours event, Chiswick Regatta, Putney Town Regatta, as well as Twickenham Regatta, and Barnes and Mortlake Regatta. Unfortunately, Cygnet did not enter a crew for Henley Royal Regatta.

At the end of the Regatta season the club entered St Neots, Henley Town & Visitors and Oxford City Regatta.

A squad of 17 rowers from Cygnet and BBLRC, joined by five supporting club members made the customary trip to Dusseldorf in October to row the Rhine Marathon. Starting the winter season, Cygnet entered crews in the Pairs Head, and three crews in the Vet Fours Head with good rows reported by all crews, including a win in Masters B Novice fours by Nick Rae, Cristobal Cabrera, Jeremy Pugh and Scott Livingstone, ably coxed by Anna Constantini. Six scullers were entered in the Scullers Head and we are happy to report that David French, in his first foray in a single, won the Masters B Novice pennant.

## **Coaching**

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During the first half of the year, members have stepped up to the plate to help out crews with coaching as the Captaincy did all it could to find a new coach. Alan Cox has been instrumental in coaching both novice and learn to row crews, with support from Sue Cole and Jenny Adams in the summer months.

At the beginning of the winter season proper, Sue took on a bigger role as coach and the Committee also agreed to spend more money on coaching by taking on Tim Male as the club head coach. Tim is an ex-GB lightweight oarsman who holds a number of indoor rowing records and has a fantastic coaching reputation. He has made an almost immediate impact in getting the squad, from beginners to experienced novices, committed to more training sessions and the results are encouraging.

As ever, coxing is an issue at Cygnet and we're very thankful for the coxing carried out by Robin Harries, Charlie Pretzlik and Jeremy Pugh.

## **Additions to the Cygnet Fleet**

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Due to the longevity of the fleet these days, no purchases were made to add to the fleet. Neil Pickford has continued to maintain the boats on a regular basis, and some boats have been to the Boat mender for hull overhauls. Scott Livingstone has also been helping out with minor repairs.

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.

## **300 Club**

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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 the marketing efforts to promote this important fundraising tool to all club members old and new carried out by Guy du Parc Braham have had a positive effect on the sale of 300 Club tickets and the Committee hopes that this progress can be maintained in future years.

## **General Meetings**

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### **Annual General Meeting –Held at the Boathouse on Sunday 28 February 2016**

Was attended by Vice-President and Chairman N J Wylie, Vice President Dr R P du Parcq, Vice Presidents, P L Rawkins, and A Cox and A Rawkins also M Israel, M Byrne, S Gibbons, M England, T Broadhurst, N Bates, C Cabrera, and J Hoare. Apologies for absence were received from S D Bush, N Pickford, J Pugh, Nick Rae, N Davison, and M Burman.

The existing twelve Vice-Presidents were re-elected. Re-elected were N J Wylie as Chairman; Ms M Israël, Hon Secretary; M Byrne, Hon Treasurer; and Dr R P du Parcq as Assistant Treasurer. Mr N Bates was voted Assistant Secretary and Mr C Cabrera as Social Secretary. Committee Members elected were P L Rawkins, S Gibbons, C Pretzlik, J Hoare and T Broadhurst. A Cox, P L Rawkins were re-appointed Trustees, Messrs N V Pickford and M Byrne were elected as 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 M Byrne; these were agreed subject to their signing off by one of the Independent Examiners.

### **Ordinary General Meeting & Election of Captaincy held on Tuesday 19 July 2016**

Chaired by N J Wylie – Vice Presidents Dr R P du Parcq, P Rawkins, A Rawkins attended. Also attended M H Israel, Hon Secretary, M Byrne, Hon Treasurer, D French, N Rae, I Mountain, C Cabrera, I Mountain, G du Parc Braham, R Harries, T Broadhurst and B Horsman. Apologies were received from N Pickford, J Pugh, M Byrne, J Hoare and C Shea.

In the Captain's absence, Vice Captain N Rae presented a brief Captain's Report, in which he listed the club's achievements during his captaincy, including continued coaching, sculling camps and social activities.

The Committee had added to the agenda a proposal to raise the subscription fees for 2017 from £260.00 to £290.00 for members of CSSC and from £320.00 to £360.00 for non-CSSC members. This was unanimously passed.

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

Captain: Jeremy Pugh; Deputy Captain: Nick Rae; Vice-Captain: Charles Pretzlik.

## ***Club Management Meetings***

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Five committee meetings were held during the year with a 70% 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 57. Items of special note are detailed below.

## ***Civil Service Sports Council***

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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. They have kept in touch through the year and we are determined to get as many members into CSSC as possible.

## ***“Cygnet’s” Bungalow***

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Again a 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 being carried out by 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 Bush who is and who always has been a staunch supporter and now manager of the bungalow since it was built.

## ***The Website***

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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](http://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 is also the main link for the Cygnet photo archive, which was completely digitised by Neil Pickford with input from Paul Rawkins in 2015. 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***

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The usual social events were held, such as the Club Picnic at Old Blades in Henley during Henley Friday, the End of Season dinner end September and the Club Lunch at Leander Club in Henley on Thames in October at which many members from BBLRC were present. The annual Clubs’ Day, organised by the Social Secretaries of both clubs was held in 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 but ultimately the award went to Scott Livingstone, who joined the club in 2015 and who has represented the club at head races and regattas since then.

The Wally Whedal Cup for Cygnet Sportsmanship & Endeavour, also known as 'Clubman of the Year', is an award about showing willingness and, eagerness in joining in the fun and lending a helping hand wherever needed. For doing all of this, after all the time and effort he has already put in over the years, the award went to Alan Cox for his commitment to coaching the main squad and the learn-to-row courses.

Before Christmas, older members attended a weekday lunch at the Civil Service Club, admirably organised by Lawrence McVeigh.

## ***At the End of the Year...***

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We look back at a year of mixed emotions. The loss of Mike Arnold-Giliat just over a year after the passing of Peter Sly indicated an end of an era. However, Cygnet enters 2017 full of hope under the coaching leadership of Tim Male who inspires the rowers to train harder, eat better, run harder and generally fills everyone with hope of a season of wins and pewter. The captaincy has plans to compete at Quintin Head, Hammersmith Head and, as always, the Head of the River Race and the Veterans Eights head. 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 2017 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.