



Cygnet Newsletter

December 2014

2014 Christmas Edition

From the Captain

The fourth issue of the Newsletter this year, with Christmas just round the corner.

Since the last Newsletter Cygnet has been represented at and enjoyed some more of our favourite regattas:

At Henley Royal Regatta qualifying races, with lots of support from the bank, Cygnet again qualified a 2- (Bates/ French) for the Silver Goblets. They (we) were sincerely grateful for all those that turned out to cheer us on, and for their heat against Western Ontario University, Canada. Unfortunately youth easily triumphed over experience, but it was gratifying to have the Cygnet colours flying on the HRR course again.

Alongside BBLRC we also made a welcome return to St Neots Regatta weekend, including a number of mixed crews, and at the end of the Regatta season Cygnet raced at Henley Town & Visitors and Oxford City Regattas.

Following the end of the Regatta Season, six boats were entered in the Rhine Marathon at the beginning of October for a plethora of Cygnet and BBLRC crews. The largest contingent in recent years stretched the organizational talents of Benrath members (and Cygnet's Secretary) to the limit but they came up trumps. All crews completed the race safely, and the Seegig 4+ won Bronze in their category. Benrath's hospitality continues to astonish, and I would like to register my personal thanks to our RG Benrath friends again in this Newsletter.

Because of the clash with the Rhine Marathon, our entry to the Pairs Head was more limited than usual. However, our IM2 2- (Bart de Groot/Gavin Hunter) came a very creditable 6th out of 22 in their category, and a mixed crew with BBLRC came second in the Mixed Masters B/C 2x.

We had three crews racing in the Fours Heads. An IM1 4- in the Fours Head itself, whilst the Veterans Fours Head saw two strong Cygnet results: the 'Quad Squad' Masters B4x came 11th overall and 2nd in their Category, and our Novice 4+, racing as Masters, also came 2nd in their Category. The Scullers Head saw 5 intrepid Cygnets racing in near perfect conditions, with Bart de Groot taking over from Neil Pickford as fastest Cygnet sculler. It is now onwards and upwards towards the eights heads of 2015.

In terms of recruitment , I am pleased to say that our Learn to Row courses continue to bring in new members who will be integrated into the Novice Squad as soon as possible. Under the coaching efforts of Sue Grobler, this squad is rapidly becoming a very competitive group of rowers.

I'd like to finish by wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a successful New Year.

David French

Subscriptions and Donations

Are always due, please return this tear-off slip with your cheque to the Treasurer, Dr R P du Parcq, 39 White Hart Lane, London SW13 0PU. Active Members: members of the Civil Service Sports Council - £260.00, Others - £320.00; Club Friends: Suggested minimum - £15.00.

Enclosed my subscription/donation for £.....

Your name _____

Your address: _____

Post Code: _____

Your CSSC number _____ (please provide if you pay £260.00 Cygnet subs)

Fred Blasberg – RG Benrath – 1933 - 2014

It is with sadness that we inform you of the passing of Fred Blasberg on 30 November. Fred was involved at the very beginning of the partnership between RG Benrath and Cygnet and he would very much have enjoyed celebrating our half century this year. Unfortunately that was not to be. He died aged 81 after a long illness.



Fred was one of the few honorary members of RG Benrath. He was an active rower for over 60 years and held various positions on the management board. These began with responsibility for the Juniors and culminated in three decades as club secretary and editor of the Benrath club magazine. He held many rowing honours, and in 2004 was awarded the equator prize for having rowed 40,000 Km. The history of Benrath is inexorably linked to Fred Blasberg and club members affectionately called him 'Mr RGB'.

Because of his long-standing involvement with RG Benrath and its members, both young and old, as well as his role as one of the originators of the relationship between RGB and Cygnet, he held a very special place in all our hearts. At Cygnet, regular Rhine Marathon rowers will know him not only by name (having rowed in the boat named after him) but remember him as a cox during the Marathon and as an avid visitor to London and Henley for headraces and social functions. He will be missed.

300 Club

At the Special General Meeting, two more 2014 300 Club Draws have been carried out, with the following lucky winners:

£25.00	Mrs I Dominy, Stavros Kyris
£40.00	Andy Rawkins, Rob Henderson
£60.00	Matt Byrne, Miss R Rawson
£100.00	Phil Simpson, Stavros Kyris

We encourage all club members to set up a standing order for 300 Club Tickets. Remember that your total contribution for a year is the promised number of tickets x £10.00. You can, for instance, set up a quarterly standing order for £15.00, which will give you 6 tickets that year, and six chances of winning at each of the draws throughout the year. Please send an email to Guy (dupb01'at'gmail.com) when you have done this so that he can check that the money has made its way into the account and also so that he can allocate you your ticket numbers.

Finally, I'd like to report that a cheque for GBP2,130.00 was presented to the Club, representing the surplus from 300 club ticket sales for 2013/14, this money will be used for future equipment purchases.

Thank you!

Guy du Parc Braham and Nick Bates

Dates for your diary:

Saturday 31 January	Quintin Eights Head (13:45)
Sunday 22 February	Cygnet Annual General Meeting (12:00noon)
Sunday 1 March	Hammersmith Head (12:30)
Saturday 14 March	Women's Eights Head (09:30)
Saturday 21 March	Kingston Head
Saturday 28 March	Vesta Veterans Head (11:00)
Sunday 29 March	Eights Head of the River (12:00 - BST)

"Cygnets" Bungalow – boat available

As anybody who has done it knows, maintaining an old wooden boat can be a very time-consuming business, especially when that boat gets used by all and sundry, many of whom are not, shall we say, experienced "boaty" types.

Despite a thorough overhaul and re-fit about five years ago, 'Juppy', one of our venerable bungalow dinghies is past her prime and the bungalow committee have decided, with reluctance, to replace her with something that requires a little less maintenance - and able to handle a little more abuse!

We would like to give first refusal to any Cygnet member or friend who might be interested in taking her on - free of charge - before she is offered for sale.



If you are interested, please contact Nick Wylie (nickwylie'at'btinternet.com), before the HoRR (28th March), for more details or to make arrangements. Collect from Hamhaugh Island only.

Appeal for Cygnet Photographs

We have recently finalised a major exercise to digitise the photo archive. During the course of this exercise it has become clear that we have very few photographs of some eras, in particular the 1990s. As this was the club's most successful time in open competition, we would be grateful for access to any member's photo collections of that time. We don't need your entire collection of rowing photos, just a handful of your favourites. All prints will be returned after scanning.

Please contact Neil Pickford – **neilpickford'at'mac.com** if you can help.

From the Secretary

ACTIVE MEMBERS: DON'T FORGET TO GIVE ME YOUR EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS/
NEXT OF KIN DETAILS, FOR OUR RECORDS AND YOUR SAFETY.

To streamline our communications to you, can you please take some time to fill in the following questionnaire and send it to me, or the treasurer, whichever is most convenient. We'll then ensure that the details are entered in our club database, with due consideration to keeping your personal data safe from misuse. **Please note you only need to fill this is if you would like to change either your preferences, or a new address!**

I'd like to receive the newsletter by post/email*

I'd like to receive the weekly club news by email yes/no*

Your name: _____

Your address: _____

Post Code: _____

Your email address: _____

*Please delete as appropriate

Please send to **Marjorie Israel, 49 Oaklands Avenue, Osterley, TW7 5PY**, or email relevant details to: **marjorie_israel'at'hotmail.com**. You can also add this slip to your subs payment note to Dr R P du Parcq, Hon Treasurer, details above.

One Hundred Years Ago

1914 started with high expectations at Cygnet. An ambitious racing programme was agreed, a concert and dinner arranged and the club regatta was revived to include a race for double sculling skiffs with lady coxswains. It was also agreed to apply again for ARA affiliation. By the end of the year all this would seem like a dream of a bygone age.

The First World War would be unlike any other conflict, before or since. Arthur Miller, the author of the first volume of the club history, wrote: 'It can truly be said that 1914 heralded the beginning of an end of an era that crumbled in August and which by 1918 had disappeared for ever'.

Within months of the declaration of war on 4th August, the bulk of the active membership had signed up for National Service (many were already members of the Territorials) and attendance at committee and general meetings had dwindled to barely ten diehards too old to serve.

The remaining fixtures for the 25th season were cancelled and annual subscriptions were suspended for all serving active members. By December 1914 it was clear that it would not be 'all over by Christmas' and Cygnet went into 'lock down' mode with the likes of Wally Wheldal and the Easley Brothers 'holding the fort'. There would be many false dawns: thus a letter sent to all serving members at the end of 1915 expressed the hope that before the year (1916) was out things would be returning to some sense of normality.

A later annual report for 1916-7 was more circumspect: "It must, unfortunately, be realised how great is the number who are now deprived of the ability to participate in many other sports. Some of these could take part in the pleasure side of rowing and it is a sport that will be welcomed as one which can be shared with those to whom fate has been less kind. In arranging our fixtures, we propose to revive the 'Up River' trips in which those unable to take part in the vigours of racing could join. So when asked 'What of the future' we can surely say 'It is of the brightest'."

By the end of hostilities in November 1918, seventy nine Cygnet members would have served in the armed forces with eleven being killed. The first casualty would be A J Dunn who fell at Festubert in 1915. Throughout these years, the 'Old Crocks' struggled to keep the Club alive, discharging the essential duties of the club as best they could, and it was to their credit that the Cygnet Rowing Club stayed the course whereas many other clubs fell by the wayside.

Paul Rawkins - Club Historian

and finally ...

... at the end of this year of Remembrance, we'd
like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a
Successful and Happy New Year

