



Captaincy - old and new

In July's Ordinary General Meeting we had the annual captaincy change-over. At the meeting, the Chairman thanked the outgoing Captain David French and his team for all the hard work done during his two-year Captaincy, and for handing over a happy club to the new Captaincy. The meeting welcomed the new Captain, Jeremy Pugh, with his Deputy Captain Nick Rae, and David French as his Vice Captain. In his acceptance speech, Jeremy indicated that it is his intention to focus both on strengthening the core of the Senior and Intermediate Squad and on bringing on more members through the next Learn to Row course.

The Captaincy has already made a good start on this, with 11 guys and 16 gals showing up for the first Learn to Row session in September, and ultimately eight new members voted in in November.

Marjorie Israel

REPORT: House of Lords Reception - 17 July 2015

Quite a few months have passed since we all congregated at that stalwart location of British Government, the House of Lords. It turned out to be a great event, where a select group of Cygnets and Benrath members had the opportunity to walk through the Houses of Parliament, accompanied by a very knowledgeable guide before joining the rest of the group of Cygnets and their other halves for a once-in-ten-years opportunity to rub shoulders with a real-time Lord. Great speeches by Lord Moynihan, our host, by Nick Wylie on behalf of Cygnet, and by Nick Kennedy on behalf of RG Benrath. It was fantastic to see so many members, young and old, from Benrath, Cygnet and BBLRC at this venue.

Our alcoholic intake lived up to past standards. However, I am sure the catering/security staff at the House of Lords will think twice about extending the evening from 8pm to 10.30pm without building in a longer 'kicking-out' margin next time they allow us to book a reception there.

Marjorie Israel



Speeches by Lord Colin Moynihan, Nick Wylie and Nick Kennedy - all in the picture!

24 October 2015: Last Celebration of this Anniversary Year

The ever popular Henley Lunch at Leander Club was given some added pomp due to the circumstances this year and was the last chance for members to give their blazer an airing and listen to the Chairman's now very well-rehearsed speech. It was very pleasing to see a good number of Barnes Bridge Ladies at this event, and we hope that they will come back next year.

On this special occasion, we had invited Robert Treharne-Jones, 'The Voice of Rowing', as guest speaker, and he amused all and sundry with stories from the world of rowing commentators.

We also launched "A History of Cygnet Rowing Club 1890-2015", a hardback book, fully re-written and updated in full colour. If you'd like to order a copy (and you really should), please see the separate section below.

The weather was foul so the Chairman's Waddle to The Flower Pot was abandoned and we got stuck into the beer at Leander instead - well it was our birthday dinner. Many thanks are due to Philip Beckett, Stuart Gibbons and Cristobal Cabrera who have been instrumental in organising the lunch, and in persuading so many people to attend this last official event of the Cygnet rowing year.



Subscriptions and Donations

Are always due and can be paid by electronic payment (please inform the Treasurer by sending an email to treasurer@cygnet-rc.org.uk) or by cheque.

If you prefer to pay by cheque, please return this tear-off slip with your cheque to the Treasurer, Matthew Byrne, Flat 102 Westfields, Railway Side, Barnes, London SW13 0PL.

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*: _____

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

* note that you do not have to provide us with your address unless you have moved house since the last Newsletter!

Change of Address

Please note that we usually send out newsletters by email. If your email changes, please do not forget to notify the Club Secretary - secretary@cygnet-rc.org.uk or by sending a brief note to Marjorie Israel, Club Secretary, 126a Upper Tooting Road, London SW17 7EN.

Club Photo Archive

Many thanks are due to Neil Pickford, who with input from Paul Rawkins has added a whole host of photographs past and present to a special section on the Website. This surely makes us the first Rowing Club which has an electronic archive of club photographs from the 1890s to the present day.

Please take some time to have a look at these photographs, and if you have more information on who is displayed in the photos, do let Paul Rawkins know (see his contact details in the section on the Club History below). We also welcome any additional photographs that you may have, please send them to Paul and they will be returned to you after scanning.

The photo archive will be available to all club members via the website. See link [here](#).



The image above is the first known photograph of Cygnet RC, Putney Embankment, June 1891

Get your order in: the 125 Years Cygnet History is out...

As part of our 125th Anniversary, Cygnet Rowing Club is very pleased to present an all new and completely updated edition of the club history. Sample chapters of the book, pictured opposite, can be viewed on the club website.

“A History of Cygnet Rowing Club 1890 - 2015’ is a high quality, hardback book which has been substantially rewritten by Paul Rawkins and contains 84 full colour pages of text and photographs, much of it unearthed since the previous edition, published in 1990.



Paul Rawkins adds: ‘This publication has been a true team effort. Rhodri Waters, Richard du Parcq, Neil Jackson, Marjorie Israel and my wife, Juliet, all put many hours into editing and proofreading. The ‘icing on the cake’ was Neil Pickford’s design and typesetting skills which turned this publication into a work of art. My thanks are also due to Chris Tarry who made a generous contribution to the costs of the publication’. So if you are looking for a good read over Christmas this could be just the ticket. Remarkably, it will cost you just £15.00 (plus £3.50 post and packing), the same price as an earlier soft back edition back in 1990.

You can order your copy via the website or by e-mailing Paul Rawkins direct on prawkins@googlemail.com. If you do not have access to the Internet, please fill in the slip overleaf and send it to Paul Rawkins as indicated.

ORDER FORM

A History of Cygnet Rowing Club 1890 - 2015

YES, please send me 'A History of Cygnet Rowing Club 1890 - 2015' for the bargain price of £18.50 per copy (includes 2nd class postage and packing); or £19.00 for first class postage.

Number of copies: _____ total cost: _____

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1965 - 2015: 50 Years of Friendship

2015 was the 50th Anniversary of Cygnet's friendship with RG Benrath in Germany so as well as our annual pilgrimage to the Rhine Marathon, many Cygnets and Barnes Bridge Ladies travelled over early for some specially laid on extras...



The weekend started with a private tour of Schloss Benrath: the steps outside have been immortalised plenty of times during our trips to Benrath, but the inside was a complete mystery to most of us.

In the main house, visitors are immediately struck by the shiny floor inside, preserved by the insistence that all visitors wear felt slippers. Note: this would never work in the UK!

Once the tour was over, we all trooped back to the RG Benrath Boathouse, where a superb buffet dinner was provided, instead of the usual spaghetti Bolognese.

Proof of how good the dinner was: nobody took the time to take pictures, we were too busy eating!



After dinner, some very entertaining speeches were delivered by the Benrath Chairman and Nick Kennedy, Mucha Mucharowski and Christian Tichelkamp. Lawrence McVeigh spoke as one of the 'original three' who first made contact with Benrath in 1965, whereas Chairman Wylie spoke on behalf of Cygnet and BBLRC.

On Saturday, after the pain of the marathon, some well-earned Alt Bier and a rush back to the Boathouse/hotel rooms, the troops gathered for dinner with Schweinshaxe followed by more beer and live music in the Urdenbach Beer Tent.

Of special note was the presence of Lawrence and Liz McVeigh and Richard and Diane Du Parcq during the weekend. They regretted that they had never travelled to Benrath before. Well, apart from Lawrence McVeigh, one of the initial group of visitors fifty years ago!

And finally.....Steaming into history

Paul Rawkins, Club Historian writes: No club history can be exhaustive and one area we failed to touch on in our recent tome was the ever-present menace of the river boat steamer or pleasure launch as we now term them.

Writing in his Dictionary of the Thames in the late 19thC, Charles Dickens devoted more than a page to lambasting these craft: 'Steam launches are too often the curse of the river. Driving along at an excessive rate of speed, with an utter disregard to the comfort or necessities of the anglers, oarsmen and boating-parties, the average steam-launch engineer is an unmitigated nuisance. There are some owners who show consideration for other people, but their number, unfortunately, is very limited, and for the most part the launches are navigated with a recklessness which is simply shameful.'

No matter. Steam launches continued to proliferate and became a familiar feature of our stretch of the Thames. Today, any Cygnet member who has rowed over the last twenty years or so will at some point recall encountering one of four steamers - Henley, Connaught, Clifton Castle and Cockney Sparrow - that still ply their trade up to Richmond and Hampton Court.



Built in 1896, the Henley has witnessed almost as much Thames-side change as Cygnet. Likewise the Connaught, which was built in 1911 and remains one of the finest example of an Edwardian pleasure launch on the Thames. The Clifton Castle may be less graceful than the aforementioned two old ladies, but she has probably seen more action in her time. Built in Dartmouth in 1926, her historical claim to fame dates back to 1944, when she landed US troops on the beaches of Normandy. By comparison, the Cockney Sparrow is a relative newcomer: she was built on Eel Pie Island in 1976.

So the next time one of these launches washes you down during an outing, before you prepare to empathise with Dickens, spare a thought for the fact that some of these old ladies can lay almost as much claim to our stretch of the river as we can!

Date for your Diary

Sunday 28 February - noon - Cygnet Annual General Meeting - Civil Service Boathouse