

## From the (new) Captain

Rupert Bailey

2021 has been quite the year: blessed by a return to rowing but turbulent as we continue to battle the pandemic. Much like the tideway never quite sure of how choppy the waters or difficult the conditions we might face around the corner.

Like many, I have been so relieved to see the club and community coming together again on the water and off the water, with the social scene – End of Season Dinner, Club Day, Thursday suppers – along with plenty of time afloat during training and upriver at Hamhaugh's Sculling Camp. Thanks to all who have played their part and joined in along the way – offering a warm welcome to our newer members and friendly welcome back to our more experienced members.

With Christmas and New Year rapidly approaching, it gives me the chance to reflect on a term of solid Heads training and Racing in the active squad with a good showing both at Scullers Head and Fours Head weekend. We've seen some excellent progress for both our senior and novice athletes, under Head Coach Beth and Strength and Conditioning Guru Charlie's watchful gaze and have built on our summer successes. Great too to see our Learn to Row graduates spending more and more time on the water.

This year's awards and congratulations went to Mustafa Ozyurt, awarded the Wally Wheldal Cup as the clubman of the year for his huge efforts in bringing the club community back together and reuniting us all post-pandemic around the clubhouse and in the bar.

And to Rower of the Year, Matthew Gutteridge, awarded the J.P. Jeffries Cup, for his exemplary development as a rower and for representing Cygnet competitively across a range of Regatta disciplines.

Special thanks to our wonderful volunteers who make our club and wonderful family what it is – whether you are on committees, supporting Head Races, helping around the boathouse or pitching in behind the scenes: thank you. We couldn't do it without you and hugely appreciate all of your great efforts.

From here I look forward to Eights Season and a new year of rowing. Wishing you all a warm, healthy and happy Christmas with fair winds, calm waters and following stream for 2022.

## Contacts

[www.cygnet-rc.org.uk](http://www.cygnet-rc.org.uk)

Chairman 07753 863430 [chairman\[at\]cygnet-rc.org.uk](mailto:chairman[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk)  
Captain [captain\[at\]cygnet-rc.org.uk](mailto:captain[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk)  
Hon. Secretary 07530 747816 [secretary\[at\]cygnet-rc.org.uk](mailto:secretary[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk)

## Cygnets Bungalow *38 Hamhaugh Island, Shepperton*

The bungalow is ideal for a riverside holiday and is available for booking by members and friends between May and the end of October. Other periods and winter bookings may be available, please enquire. **Contact:**

**Derek Bush** [bungalow\[at\]cygnet-rc.org.uk](mailto:bungalow[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk) 07880 548804

## Cygnet 300 Club



This is our principal fund raiser which keeps our fleet maintained and up-to-date. Tickets are just £10 each and there are ten annual draws with a top prize of £100. All members and friends are encouraged to participate and active oarsmen especially are expected to have a 'few' tickets. All winners and draws are posted on the club website. **Contact:**

**Tom Broadhurst** • [tombroadhurst\[at\]live.co.uk](mailto:tombroadhurst[at]live.co.uk)

## Subscriptions and Donations

Active members: CSSC £360.00\* • non-CSSC £440.00  
Club friends: suggested minimum £20.00

For payment details please contact the Treasurer, Mr M. Byrne  
Flat 102 Westfields, Railway Side, Barnes, London or email

[treasurer\[at\]cygnet-rc.org.uk](mailto:treasurer[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk)

## 2022 Fixtures *for the one hundred and thirty second season*

January	29 <sup>th</sup>	Quintin Head (13.00)
February	27 <sup>th</sup>	Hammersmith Head (13.30)
March	26 <sup>th</sup>	HoRR (10.00)
March	27 <sup>th</sup>	Vets Eights (12.00)
April	6 <sup>th</sup> –10 <sup>th</sup>	Training Camp

## 2021/22 Club Events

December	11 <sup>th</sup>	BBLRC Christmas Party
February 2022	27 <sup>th</sup>	Cygnet AGM
September 2022	TBC	Planning for a big, black tie bash has begun, probably at a big posh venue in town or on the river. Watch this space...



# CYGNET ROWING CLUB

## December 2021 Newsletter

## From the Club Secretary

Marjorie Israël

First of all, my apologies for the lack of newsletters over the summer. Since the last newsletter, we had an OGM in July at which the a captaincy was duly elected for 2021/22:

**Captain • Rupert Bailey**

**Deputy • Martin Drage** (previously vice captain)

**Vice • Peter Goldsworthy**

Megan Eldred was also co-opted as the club's new social secretary, the previous one having taken over as Captain! Megan has a foot in both camps: coxing for Cygnet and rowing with BBLRC.

The committee would like to extend it's thanks to Cristobal Cabrera for his three years as Club Captain, much of which was spent dealing with the pandemic and keeping the active squad motivated despite not being allowed to get afloat – a tough task but one with a successful outcome.

We also look forward to Rupert building on the excellent work done by Cris in getting all active members training and racing this winter and the upcoming head and regatta season. And finally, please note that there will be an AGM at the end of February 2022, and the committee looks forward to getting more members from the active squad included in the committee.

*Alan Cox taking the briefing before Sculling Camp in September*



The Civil Service Sports Council (CSSC) celebrated its centenary on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Conceived on the cusp of the 'Roaring Twenties', itself a response to an influenza epidemic and the miseries of the WWI, the CSSC would become the largest voluntary sporting organisation in Great Britain embracing countless sporting disciplines.

In an era when success was measured primarily by acres of greenfield sports grounds, at its height the CSSC would boast a network of almost 100 locations throughout the country with the famous Chiswick Sports Ground at its heart. Born out of a sense of altruism, the founding fathers – Messrs Barson, Cox, Curtis-Bennett and Howard – sought to eliminate class barriers within the civil service and foster a sense of competitive sport and fair play, high ideals indeed.

Within five years of its formation, the CSSC was staging high profile cricket matches against the likes of Australia, New Zealand and the West Indies, iconic games that were played at Chiswick. Within a decade, it offered a springboard to those civil servants who aspired to compete at the Olympics and what would become the Commonwealth Games. At club level, for Cygnet it delivered the 'holy grail': a boathouse to call its own and the wherewithal to take on the 'gentlemen amateurs' at their own game, not least at Henley Royal Regatta.

After WWII, the CSSC rode a wave of prosperity and popular demand for sport and recreation; sports grounds were packed at weekends; some individuals rose through the ranks to make their mark in athletics, cricket, swimming and rowing among others; and membership climbed to almost a quarter of a million. Alas, times change: Thatcherism set in train a decades-long contraction of the civil service, team sports fell out of favour and members' work/life balances underwent profound change. For the CSSC, the challenges would verge on the existential.

Fast forward to 2020–21 and the CSSC again finds itself caught up in the midst of a pandemic, yet it remains undaunted, determined to remain a leading purveyor of sports and leisure in a digital age.

It has been a remarkable journey told in a richly illustrated publication, written by yours truly with design and typeset by Neil Pickford.



Shock and sadness greeted the news that Malcolm Burman had succumbed to a fatal heart attack on 15 September, barely a month after his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. A larger-than-life character, Malcolm was a Cygnet member for half a century; initially as a fit young blade, followed by a decade-long stint as club treasurer and latterly one of two independent examiners.

Malcolm, a British Telecom employee, joined Cygnet in 1971 and was better known to his close rowing contemporaries as 'Big Malc' or 'Beermeister'. Lest his expanded girth of later years suggested otherwise, Malc was regarded as 'a real boat mover' in his day, initially rowing in a pair with Mick Yetman, before settling into the engine room of the successful club Vllls of the 1970s. Hard to imagine now, but in those days the crew weekly training regime found Malc pounding round the local gym, weightlifting and running through Richmond Park – shy and retiring he was not.

Remembered by his contemporaries as a 'gentle giant' who was rarely if ever riled, Malc was always generous with his time and described as a 'bedrock club man'.

Also very much an 'ale man', many anecdotes about Malc revolve around the demon drink: Gary Fettis recalls an infamous trip to the West Country regattas during which 'much cider was taken' and one of their number ended up 'before the Beak'. Others recall the notorious Treen Avenue set who were always on hand to lead Malc astray; needless to say, local hostelries were more than happy to oblige and many a fitful night was spent in the club bar, the last train or bus home having long since been missed.

Cygnet has always been a marriage bureau first and a rowing club second and the club duly delivered at the 1978 annual dinner dance when a chance rearrangement of the table plan found the future Mrs Burman strategically sat opposite Malc. By the end of the evening, it was clear that their individual quests for a life-long soul mate had reached a mutually satisfactory conclusion.

Marriage and parenthood duly ensued, and the world was blessed with the Burman babes Rachel, Rheanna and Georgina, not to mention some more recent grandchildren. However, while rowing took a back seat, Malc found time to turn his auditor skills to the club treasury, conjuring up the necessary funds for new boats and blades, much to the collective relief of the captain (me) and expectant active members. A wise head on all things financial, Malc would later become a school bursar having taken early retirement.

Retirement proper allowed Malc to concentrate on the things that really mattered, namely family, living in a warm climate (Spain), the odd beer festival and the bi-annual canal trip with the likes of 'Warp' (Yetters), 'ngineer' (Wylie), 'Schedule' (Alan Cox) and 'Mumsy' (Rawks P).

Life in Spain settled into an agreeable social rhythm and Cygnet rather receded into the background. However, fate has a habit of springing surprises and a spur-of-the-moment Spanish real estate purchase found club chairman, Nick Wylie, unknowingly taking up residence but a stone's throw from the Burman household. History does not record Mrs Burman's reaction!

The canal trips were Malc's guilty pleasure. Colloquially referred to as the 'Fat Bastards Canal Cruise', these trips were meticulously planned by Malc down to the last lock-mile with the day's mileage strictly adhered to between breakfast, lunch and dinner. However, opening and closing locks can be thirsty business and the so-called 'in-betweenie' pint became a regular fixture of afternoon cruising, while an Indian restaurant was always de-rigueur for dinner, followed by a night cap on the poop deck.

Unlike some crew members, Malc never 'lost form', a stabilising influence and the voice of reason until the end. Looking back over the years, some accident nearly always befell one or other of the crew on these trips, leading Malc to add 'A&Es' to the landmarks of note when planning the schedule. As he wryly remarked at the end of his last cruise in 2019 "it's nice to have finished the cruise with the same number of crew members we started with". Sadly, the next cruise will start without its customary commander-in-chief.

*The latest addition to our fleet, a Janousek IV, will be named for "Big Malc" at a ceremony in January. See website for details.*

