Cygnet Newsletter

April 2015

Peter Sly – President of Cygnet Rowing Club 1975 - 2015

It is with great sadness that we record that Peter Sly, our Club President of 40 years, passed away peacefully at "Old Blades" in Remenham on 9th March 2015, surrounded by his wife Pat and children Prudence and Oscar.
We will remember with fondness and awe the "tour de force" that was Peter Sly. His larger than life presence, his vocal support for any Cygnet Crews rowing at Henley Royal Regatta and his stories over a pint of beer – they will be missed.

Reflecting the different facets of Peter's life, please see obituaries by Cygnet's historian Paul Rawkins and from Benrath's Ferdi Picker.

From the Captain

First of all, our love goes to Pat, Prudence and Oscar on the loss of Peter Sly. A long time friend, supporter, and stalwart of the club he was the source of many happy memories - one of my favourite Cygnet moments is passing Old Blades in the Henley Qualifiers, hearing Peter's vocal support from the bank, and spying him under his wide-brimmed hat.

In good Cygnet spirit, the Head Season is now finished, with the Masters B crew coming 7th out of 11 i(in 20:18) n a strong field, and the Cygnet/Tideway Scullers Masters F finishing 8th out of 19 i(in 21:47) n their field in the Veterans Head of the River. Our Benrath friends had brought over some Altbier and Killepitsch, so after the race, the club bar was put to good use.
The Novice eight reported a good row in the Head of the River itself ;they finished 10th out of 15 in a time of 21:55. With both eights (and supersubs) improving all the time, we should be able to get strong racing combinations out of both for the summer regattas – as well as some sculling crews.

David French

Cygnet Bungalow

Derek Bush is busy organising a bungalow working party for the week of 14-21 June. Anyone helping out can stay at the bungalow free of charge as long as they advise Derek by email or text 07880 548804 of nights required.
There are still some weeks available for rent, so if you are interested, please get in touch with Derek as soon as you can. A week's stay is £250.00 for Cygnet friends.
21-28 June
12 – 19 July
20-27 September
All of October weeks.

Subscriptions and Donations

Are always due and can be paid by electronic payment (please inform the treasurer by sending an email to treasurer'at'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, 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)

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

Dates for your diary:

02 May	Chiswick Amateur
09 May	Borne at Chiswick Bridge, Bedford Amateur
16 May	Putney Town
23 May	Twickenham
30-31 May	Metropolititan

Cygnet 125... an Invitation

Some Celebratory dates for your diary:

Friday 03 July	Clubs Day at Henley – with special events planned
Friday 17 July	Reception at the House of Lords, as guests of Lord Colin Moynihan See invitation below – please RSVP to Paul Rawkins: prawkins@googlemail.com
Saturday 23 October	Club Henley lunch at Leander RC

HOUSE OF LORDS

The Lord Moynihan

requests the pleasure of the company of

for Drinks and Canapés on behalf of Cygnet Rowing Club
in the Cholmondeley Room and the House of Lords' Terrace

on Friday 17th July 2015
at 6.00pm for 6.30pm

Please reply to: Paul Rawkins
Telephone: 020 8748 4415
email: prawkins@googlemail.com

CYGNET ROWING CLUB

Please present this card with photo ID
at Black Rod's Garden Entrance
(not transferable)

Please take note of the Cygnet 2015 merchandise flyer

Attend these events and look the part – A flyer with special merchandise for the birthday celebrations is enclosed.
You can order your merchandise by filling in the online order form on doodle (http://doodle.com/vwymttcuw26fk7ie) or by sending the order form to Cygnet CXXV Kit – 49 Oaklands Avenue, Osterley, Middlesex TW7 5PY

Obituary: Peter Sly – President of Cygnet RC 1975 - 2015

In 1950, an erstwhile club historian wrote "Cygnet had ever been a club to foster the social side'. No member embodied the spirit of that remark more than Peter Sly, Cygnet's longstanding club president, who passed away on 9th March 2015 at the age of 85. He died as he had lived, surrounded by his family in the peace and tranquility of 'Old Blades', his beloved residence at Henley-on-Thames.

Peter Sly never claimed to be an accomplished oarsman, but he was one of the sport's great extroverts. Nothing pleased him more than 'holding court' at Cygnet lunches and dinners or in the comfort of 'Old Blades', the most select enclosure on the Henley course at regatta time. Indeed, no visit to Henley Royal Regatta was complete without a pilgrimage to 'Old Blades' to be lambasted by Sly for one's shortcomings as a sportsman, a spouse, a club officer or whatever else came to mind.

Courtship rather than sportsmanship initially enticed Peter Sly into the world of rowing. Peter was smitten with Pat Heron, a business associate at Crown Agents (a government procurement agency for governments overseas), who filled her leisure hours coxing the women's first VIII at the Civil Service Ladies Rowing Club (now BBLRC). Sly rapidly concluded that joint enterprise held the key to a deep and meaningful relationship with Ms Heron, so he joined Cygnet, the men's counterpart of CSLRC.

More accustomed to the unscrupulous world of big business than the gentle art of pen pushing, Peter Sly took Cygnet by storm. Norman Cowling, an active member at the time, recounts "Peter had an immediate impact on all aspects of club life". In next to no time, Peter's 'can do' attitude had secured the club its first boat trailer and a new coaching launch, shaken up the club social scene and reorganized the club's finances, entrusting the boat fund to a sleek new merchant bank in the City.

Richard du Parcq, who was doing his first stint as club Treasurer, recalls "I well remember climbing, no staggering, out of Peter's Roller in St James St, after a goodish lunch, for a spot of customer feedback to the bank." Soon afterwards the bank went bust, but not before club funds had been withdrawn in the nick-of-time, following an astute tip-off from Sly.

Never one to let the grass grow under his feet, in 1972 Peter attained an ARA Silver Coaching Award and promptly set about putting it into practice. Success followed a few months later with an easy win for a Cygnet Novice VIll at Worcester. While this would be his only claim to coaching fame, his greatest contribution to the sport lay in the world of women's rowing.

By the mid-1970s, Pat was juggling multiple roles as Mrs Sly, Captain of CSLRC and Secretary for the Womens' (National) Rowing Committee. These were formative times for women's rowing: CSLRC had graduated to the nucleus of the women's national squad, while several CSLRC members would participate in the 1976 Montreal Olympics. Peter was hugely supportive throughout, becoming a serial cheer leader for women's rowing, a renowned supporter at home and international regattas and a champion of Henley Women's Regatta.

A man for all seasons, Peter Sly was the obvious choice for Cygnet club president, an office he was invited to fill in 1975 and one he held until his dying day, a time span of 40 years. Reputedly the longest serving club president on the Tideway, Peter once quipped that it was the least onerous post he had held in his life, apart from Church Warden. In reality, he moulded the presidency to suit his character and the two were ultimately indistinguishable.

Peter Sly never won a Henley medal, but he had the next best thing: a superior piece of real estate located half way along the Henley course. Suitably lubricated with a glass of wine or two, Peter would happily recount how in 1977 he was alerted at the eleventh hour (by Len Huggett) to the auction of two riverside workmen's cottages close to Remenham. Sly subsequently 'bet the ranch' to acquire the two properties and the builders moved in to transform them into 'Old Blades'.

A high spot of the early years of Peter's presidency was the President's Lunch held in the River Room at Old Blades where momentous decisions were taken, but none remembered. These occasions were always preceded by generous libations at the Flower Pot while Pat was slaving over a hot stove back at base.

Always happy to imbibe with the 'Last of the Summer Wine' set, Peter was equally at home with the younger membership, or quaffing 'Alt' beer with our friends at R G Benrath in Germany. Some members were greater butts of his jokes than others, but he was a shrewd judge of character and had a warm spot in his heart for everyone. 'Old Blades' rarely turned away a deserving waif or stray.

Latterly, Peter was often to be found taking 'walks' along Remenham Lane on his mobility buggy, wearing one of his 'trade mark' wide brim hats. This mode of transport suited him very well and allowed him to arrive in style at the President's Lunch at Remenham Club during regatta week. Following a lunch replete with port and brandy, he would happily motor back up the towpath to 'Old Blades', oblivious to all the regatta goers who had been mown down in his wake.

In sum, to quote Norman Cowling again, "Peter Sly was a genuine life enhancer. You could not have a dull time in Peter's company; he would not allow it." The rowing world will be a poorer place without Peter Sly; at Cygnet he will be sorely missed as the club prepares to celebrate its 125th anniversary, devoid of its most vociferous dignitary.

Paul Rawkins, 20th March 2015

From Benrath

The President of our London friends has passed away. For those that knew him, this news is exceptionally sad, as Peter Sly was such a key part to our partnership with Cygnet Rowing Club.

Peter was a gentleman. Whoever met him commented on his imposing stature, as well as his larger than life gestures and facial expressions. One of my earliest memories is from the 70s: with his enormous hat and his cigar he was "The Godfather" incarnate.

Peter Sly was a patriarch. I have a vivid memory from 10 years ago during a visit to Henley Regatta how Peter came down from his house above the Thames in order to greet the throng of visitors assembled on the patio by the river.

Peter Sly was a force for our integration and not just for members from his own club. He was always concerned about the Benrath rowers and their safe journeys while the UK. Through these acts of kindness both Peter and his wife Pat showed enormous hospitality.

These memories and descriptions of him can barely scratch the surface in describing the fond memories many of us hold for this gentleman, some of us as a result of over 50 years of his friendship with RG Benrath. He himself took great joy in this partnership between the clubs, a good example coming from his congratulatory speech for our 75th anniversary when he said: "Many lasting friendships have been made, although there have so far been no marriages!". You could see him smiling when he said that. He also gave us occasion to smile a lot, for example through his speech to RG Benrath in German.

The older "Head" competitors from Benrath will remember the "After Head Regatta" at Peter's house in Henley. From the 80s Peter was often in Benrath with his wife Pat, his children Prudence and Oscar as well as his mother-in-law (Peter couldn't really pronounce the German for Mother-in-Law, *Schwiegermutter). Benrathers were always welcome as guests of Peter and Pat when they visited the Thames. And in 2005 we were lucky to enjoy this on a grand scale again at a big party in Peter's garden by the banks of the Thames for the 40th anniversary celebration of the two clubs' partnership.

Thank you, Peter. We shall not forget you.

Ferdi Picker, March 2015

CYGNET RC CXXV

125th Anniversary Kit

Let's be honest, most people have a secret kit fetish. Indeed some only join a club in order to get the tie, the badge, the outrageous blazer, the kudos and rowing clubs are better at feeding a kit habit than most. Cygnet is no exception and this year is a real bonanza for all you kit freaks out there!

This is partly due to our new kit supplier but mostly because it's our 125th Anniversary and that definitely requires a bit of bling....

Cuff links - £10

These are not specifically branded for the 125th anniversary but certainly a rather natty addition to your formal club attire. They are made in nickel and inset with white, navy and sky blue enamel. Probably the most subtle (ie. least offensive) of all the offerings and come boxed for £10/pair

Blazers - £200

Nothing new here, it's the same age–old cut in the same deckchair inspired fabric. But Henley Royal wouldn't be the same in just a navy blue blazer now would it? If you fancy some lairy club colours then our birthday year would be the perfect time to invest.

Clothier of Cambridge still have enough Cygnet fabric for about eight blazers so it's first come first served.
£200 sounds expensive but this blazer should serve you well beyond the 150th anniversary, especially if you spill enough Pimms and beer down the front of it.

Mess jackets for ladies are also available.

All blazers will require a measurement appointment. TBA.

Ties - £25

These are special **limited edition 125th anniversary ties**. Similar in style and colour to our regular club tie but with wider spaced stripes and the addition of the club crest and CXXV logo - which is something to aim the Pimms at.

They're made of silk and only 50 will ever exist - although if you wait 5 years or so the captain will probably flog the last, forgotten ones he found in the back of the caboose to you in the bar, after training one night, for a tenner.

Tee shirts - £20

Blazers, ties and cuff-links are all a bit formal and as has been mentioned, offer nothing for the discerning Cygnet Lady - cue the oh–so–amusing "no discerning Lady would join Cygnet" aside from Gledders.

So with that in mind and for the members who don't come to many formal events, we're also offering a short sleeved navy blue tee-shirt. The CXXV logo is printed metallic and sky on the rear with the club logo on the front.

We'll need at least 10 orders to be able to print these. If we can get 20 orders then they'll only be £15 each.

It's going to be a bit of a headache coordinating this as the suppliers are all different. Preferably, if you have internet access please add your name and choices to this link...

Cygnet CXXV kit

If you don't have internet access please complete the attached order form and return to the address provided.

The aim is to get all this kit done in time for events at Henley Friday and/or the House of Lords in July.

Therefore the order deadline is Friday 29th May.
All prices are maximums. Payment on collection.

CYGNET RC CXXV

125th Anniversary Kit

Order form

The best way to order is on–line at **http://doodle.com/vwymttcuw26fk7ie**

Otherwise please fill–in the details below and return this form to

Cygnet CXXV Kit, 49 Oaklands Avenue, Osterley, Middlesex TW7 5PY

By Friday 29th May 2015 please.

Your Details: Name: _____

Telephone number: _____

Simply tick the box. If you want more than one of anything, write the number required instead.

Men's tee shirts

Cuff Links £10	Tie £25	Blazer £200	Tee shirt S £20	Tee Shirt M £20	Tee shirt L £20	Tee shirt XL £20	Tee shirt XXL £20
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Women's tee shirts

Tee shirt WS £20	Tee shirt WM £20	Tee shirt WL £20	Tee shirt WXL £20
☐	☐	☐	☐