

Ordinary Crew

Neil Pickford

Four Civil Servants. Their mission: To win the World's Toughest Row and prove that ordinary people can do extraordinary things. And Cygnet RC are proud to be assisting them as they progress with this project, starting with a training session which took place at the club on 7th March. Keep up-to-date at www.ordinarycrew.com



Bungalow Working Party

Neil Pickford

Much work and many improvements were reported to the Management committee meeting on 19th April. For all their efforts over the weekend, grateful thanks were recorded to the following members: Alan, Martin, Matt, Raph, Mustafa, Jordan, Charles, Nick and Ross.

Henley Friday

Neil Pickford

Once again members and friends of both clubs were welcomed for the traditional 'Henley Friday' on the lawn at Old Blades. Sadly it looks like this was to be the last as Old Blades is on the market. It was fantastic while it lasted and Cygnet RC would like to extend their profound thanks to the Sly family for their amazing hospitality over the last 48 years.



2026 Fixtures for the one hundred & thirty sixth season

July	11 th	Kingston
July	25-26 th	St. Neots
August	1 st	Henley Town & Visitors
September	28 th	Scullers Head (9am)
October	3 rd	Rhine Marathon
	4 th	PairsHead (Sunday, 10am)
November	21 st	Fours Head (12.45pm)
	22 nd	Veteran Fours Head (1.30pm)

2026 Club events

July	18 th	Clubs Day with BBLRC
July	19 th	OGM (and captaincy elections)
September	TBC	Sculling Camp
December	TBC	Christmas lunch at the RAF club
December	TBC	BBLRC Christmas Ball

Cygnet 300 Club



Benjy Heffer

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 are expected to have a 'few' tickets. All winners and draws are posted on the club website. For more details and to buy tickets, contact [300club\[at\]cygnet-rc.org.uk](mailto:300club[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk)

Subscriptions & Donations

Matt Byrne

Active members: CSSC £450.00* • non-CSSC £550.00
Club friends: suggested minimum £20.00

Cheques "Cygnet Rowing Club" to: Cygnet RC Treasurer, Flat 102 Westfields, Railway Side, Barnes, SW13 0PL or for other payment details contact [treasurer\[at\]cygnet-rc.org.uk](mailto:treasurer[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk)

Cygnets Bungalow

Ross Stewart

The bungalow at No. 38 Hamhaugh Island, Shepperton, 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 with the secretary [bungalow\[at\]cygnet-rc.org.uk](mailto:bungalow[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk)

Other Contacts

www.cygnet-rc.org.uk

Chairman: Charlie	chairman[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk
Captain: Jordan	captain[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk
Hon. Secretary: William	secretary[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk
Ass. Sec. (website): Neil	admin[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk



CYGNET
ROWING CLUB
www.cygnet-rc.org.uk



July 2026 Newsletter

From the Captain

Jordan Hunt

A brief round-up from the 2026 Head and Regatta seasons (thus far).

Alas **Quintin Head** in January was cancelled due to the river being red flagged but our VIII finished a respectable 11th in division in the **Hammersmith Head** on 28th February,

The VIII placed 14th in the small club category at the **HORR** on 28th March and the 4x placed 6th in Open D in Vets Head the following day.

Large crowds lined the Tideway as always, for the University Boat Races on the 4th April, which is great for us as the Boathouse Exec's funds were greatly increased through the sale of refreshments for that crowd.

Hammersmith Regatta

Open 4- lost to Sons in the semi-final

Open 2- lost to AK in the semi-final

Chiswick Regatta

Open 4+ lost to Vesta in the semi-final.

Walton and Weybridge Regatta

Open 2- of Will and Mickey lost in semi-final to St Georges, after winning the quarter final against Eton.

Open 2- of Jordan and Benjy lost in semi-final to Eton, after winning the quarter final against a different Eton.

Open 4x lost to Burway in the final.

Masters 4x lost in semi-final to Thames Tradesmen.

Masters 4- lost to Molesey in the final.

Barnes and Mortlake Regatta

Open 4- lost in the semi-final to Furnivall.

Marlow Regatta

Open 4+ after the time trial the crew consisting of crew of Clara (cox), Benjy, Jordan, Mickey & Tom C. qualified for the H final, which they won.

Open 1x Will qualified for the C final, where he finished third.



The latest addition to our fleet, a Filippi coxed IV arrived at the boathouse in April and very splendid it looks too.

A joint naming ceremony took place on Saturday 23rd May, along with BBLRC who had a Hudson coxless IV to pour some fizz over. The Hudson was named for Jackie Darling while the Cygnet boat was christened Phil Brown after her benefactor, Rubina Curtis doing the honours with the fizz and Nick Wylie with the speech.



Colin Dominy passed away on 3rd January. He was just weeks short of his 90th birthday.

Colin joined Cygnet in 1954 aged just 17 having just come to London to take up employment as a civil servant with the Air Ministry. He took to the Thames like a fish to water and would become one of the most experienced and sought after coxswains on the Tideway.

Along with other club stalwarts, Colin was another who would certainly leave his mark on the club. Contemporaries recall an individual who may have been short of stature but was utterly dedicated in everything he did whether it be coxing, rowing or cross-country running. He was literally a lightweight, but in every other way a heavyweight with a fierce determination to win.

Colin rose to prominence in the second half of the 1950s when Cygnet was enjoying something of a resurgence and in 1956, a 'junior'/'junior-senior' VIII won a string of victories with him at the helm. By the end of the fifties, Cygnet had undoubtedly won more events in the junior and junior-senior Vllls class than ever before, Colin having had a hand in most of them, variously coxing and coaching.

1965 Colin accepted an invitation to cox Nautilus, the forerunner of the National Squad, coached by George Plumtree. Nautilus had its moments, winning The Golden Oar in Antwerp among other international events, but it never fully lived up to expectations and by the late 1960s Colin was back at Cygnet, becoming club captain in 1968-69.

Colin was also a very fast runner and in an era when running was a central feature of winter training, he regularly led the pack on evening laps round the bridges or through Richmond Park. An indispensable team participant in the Oarsmen's Cross Country organized by Black Heath Harriers, he usually led the Cygnet contingent home, not least in 1969 when Cygnet won the event outright.

Colin met his wife Isobel at the rowing club – the Civil Service Boathouse working its usual magic – 'Issy' having taken up rowing at St George's. They were married in 1967 and together made for a formidable rowing couple in the boathouse. Both were also early supporters of Henley Women's Regatta and contributed financially to its success.

Colin would remain at Cygnet until the 1980s when they moved first to Twickenham then Reading Rowing Clubs

Colin's twilight years were spent in his birthplace, Tisbury in Wiltshire where he moved to be closer to his family.

John Simkins, who has died at the age of 78, joined Cygnet in early 1974. As a British Telecom engineer he perfectly matched the original criteria for Cygnet membership – an employee of the Post Office.

In contrast to the late 60s and early 70s, when graduate civil servants featured prominently, Simkins and his cohort were tradesmen and engineers. John wasted no time in applying his skills to overhauling the boat trailer, painting the changing room and refurbishing the showers.

Johns rapidly developed an affinity for rowing. An early triumph was stroking the Len Freeman Cup Novice IVs event in April 1975, an event which had attracted twelve entries. The four-length win was a performance that would be matched in other club events like the Balfour Fours.

For a committed pipe smoker like Simkins, lifestyle changes such as moderating one's alcoholic intake and giving up smoking were simply out of the question. Despite this breach of etiquette, it was becoming clear that Simkins was seen as a safe pair of hands, always a bad sign in a bureaucracy-bound club like Cygnet, and by 1976 he had been sucked into the committee.

Throughout 1977–78, John rowed in the powerhouse of the Plumtree VIII. Nothing less than six days training a week would do and John ensured that we all kept up to the mark. The training paid off, and a bunch of rookie senior Cs ascended through the ranks to senior A by the close of 1978, having made two appearances in Thames Cup at Henley Royal along the way. When Alan Azzaro stepped down as captain in late 1978, John was the obvious choice for the job.

By the mid-1980s, a romantic interest (Gill) found him transferring his allegiance to AKRC where he swiftly ended up as secretary of Hammersmith Regatta. One of his last appearances on the water at Cygnet was in the 1990 Business Houses Head when the club marked its centenary with a captains' VIII.

Sadly, ill health led to Gill's untimely demise. John took redundancy from BT, started a boat chandlery business in St Neots and qualified as a gas engineer to 'MOT' pleasure boats. Somewhere along the way, he met Christine; they married in 2000 and emigrated to Portugal where he ended his days.

As fellow Cygnet member Rod Beer commented, he was an unassuming soul who loved his rowing and the Club. Whatever else, he surely hid his light under a bushel.