



Cygnet Committee Annual Report

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The Cygnet Management Committee presents its one hundred and twenty-second report for the year ending 31 December 2012.

Rowing

It's hard to believe how quickly the year has flown by. In that time the club has made good progress developing committed senior and novice oarsmen whilst being represented at all major Head races and most regattas.

In this Diamond Jubilee Year, we've had some challenges on the river with the stretch downriver from Hammersmith Bridge closed for rowers for two months to enable the construction of moorings for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Pageant on 3rd June. The temporary navigation rules were revised as the process went on. Our application to participate in the pageant was not successful, so instead club members helped out with getting the other participants of the pageant on the water. Safety Notices from the Water Safety Adviser were sent out regularly to advise members of additional hazards on the river.



For the Club, this year turned out to be a development year, with the majority of the senior squad deciding to venture out into the non-rowing life, and the focus was turned to boosting the membership by holding two Learn-to-Row courses during the year. The first course commenced in April, with eight keen potential new oarsmen taking to the water under the inspiring leadership of Clare Bayley and Neil Pickford, with the support of many of the membership.

With the success of the GB Squad at the London Olympics fresh in our (and other people's) minds, and with the co-operation of the CSSC, a second learn to row course commenced in September with 16 aspiring rowers ably led by Tom Watson. Upon completion, eleven applied for full Cygnet membership, a very good result indeed.

This calendar year, the club has competed at the Quintin Head and entered two boats in the Head of the River, finishing 204th and 354th. Other regattas on the itinerary for the year included Borne Regatta with a win for Bart de Groot and Gavin Hunter in IM2 pairs, and a win for Rob Henderson and Peter Sheaf as the two Cygnets in a BBLRC/Cygnets Mixed IM3 Coxed Four. The Novice Four managed to win their heat and semi-final, before being beaten to the post in the final. At Twickenham Regatta, this Novice Four of Ben Jenkins (bow), Jamie Jenkins, Peter Sheaf and Tom Gilbert (stroke) coxed by Marjorie Israel, won their novice pot in three rounds. At Barnes and Mortlake a mixed IM3 Coxed Four won with Cygnets Rob Henderson and Jeremy Pugh, but the newly crowned IM3 Coxed Four lost in the final to Medway Town after beating Parrs Priory and AK in the previous rounds. This four also rowed at Marlow Regatta on the Sunday 1k course, thus getting a flavour of higher level rowing events. This proved to be the end of the regatta season, as the irreplaceable St Neots Regatta was cancelled due to flooding.

At the end of the year, a number of rowers made the customary trip to Dusseldorf in October 2012 to row the Rhine Marathon with a gold and bronze in the coxed fours for the crews of N Pickford, N Bates, D French and M Collier (gold) and J Widera, P Sheaf, T Gilbert and M Byrne. Cygnets entered crews in the Pairs Head, Fours Head, Vet Fours Head and Kingston Small Boats Head with some good results.

Coaching

During most of the summer season, Stephen Feeney coached at Cygnets before leaving to pursue a coaching career with King's College School. Nick Rowett helped out with coaching of the Learn-To-Row recruits during the summer months, before he left for South Africa. Kirsty Simpson has been a great help as the second Learn to Row head coach and she designed a training programme for the winter months as we continue to look for a new coach to support us through the winter and beyond.

Additions to the Cygnets Fleet

Cygnets counted one boat launch this year, with the acquisition of another coxless pair/double from the Filippi stable. It has long been a custom at Cygnets to name smaller racing craft after institutions associated with the club, and in this year, which saw the resurrection of Cygnets 300 Club, it seemed appropriate to name this new pair '300 Club'. Our photo shows Alan Cox pouring the customary bubbly over the bows of the boat during the naming ceremony held at the Club Bungalow on 15 September.



The fact that Cygnets continues to add to its range of top flight racing boats reflects both the success of the longstanding boat buying programme and the continuing generosity of members old and new in furnishing the necessary funding.

Club Members

It is with deep regret that we have to report that old-Cygnets members Guy Doyle and Bill Williams passed away this year; both were friends of Cygnets long after they were active as rowers, and they will be missed. We also record the death of Mike Roche in April 2012 who stroked the successful Senior A VIII in 1978.

Twenty-seven new members were elected during the year. Encouraged by new CSSC membership rules, the club is urging non-Civil Servant members to apply for so-called "linked" membership of CSSC to further strengthen our association with the CSSC. By mid June 54 out of the 68 active members had registered as members of CSSC.

300 Club

After a few low-profile years, the 300 Club was 're-launched' under the stewardship of Nick Bates with administrative support from Alan Cox. The usual draws were held through the year and new ground was broken with the publication of the results on the Website and through Twitter; it is recognised that more marketing needs to be done to promote this important fundraising tool to all club members old and new.

General Meetings

Annual General Meeting –Held at the Boathouse on Sunday 26 February 2012

Was attended by Vice-President and Chairman N J Wylie, Vice Presidents M A Arnold-Gilliat, Dr N Jackson, P L Rawkins, A Cox and A Rawkins, Vice President and Hon Treasurer, Dr R P du Parcq also Vice President and Hon Secretary R E Lambe, Club Captain S Gibbons, Vice-Captain C Bayley, M Byrne, M Collier, M Israel, N Pickford, N Bates, J Pugh, H Henderson, T Whateley, S Gourevich and N Davison. Apologies for absence were received from P A S Sly, P Simpson, I Stephenson, R Henderson.

Mr Sly was re-elected President as were the existing thirteen Vice-Presidents. Re-elected were N J Wylie as Chairman; Ms M Israël, Hon Secretary; Dr R P du Parcq, Hon Treasurer; and M Byrne as Assistant Treasurer. Mr P Simpson was voted Assistant Secretary and Mr T Whateley as Social Secretary. Committee Members elected were R E Lambe, M Collier, P L Rawkins, I Stephenson and N Bates. M A Arnold-Gilliat, R E Lambe, A Cox and P L Rawkins were re-appointed Trustees and M Burman and T N Davison re-appointed Honorary Independent Examiners.

The Annual Report had previously been circulated and was adopted. The Captain's report was presented and adopted. The Annual Club Accounts were presented by Dr R P du Parcq; these were agreed subject to their signing off by one of the Independent Examiners. The Bungalow Report would be submitted to the Club Treasurer by the Bungalow Secretary.

The Management Committee Proposal to replace the engine on the launch was carried, for an estimated cost of £3,000.00.

Ordinary General Meeting & Election of Captaincy held on Tuesday 24 July 2012

Chaired by N J Wylie - sixteen members were present.

Mr S Gibbons presented his Captain's Report, in which he listed the club's achievements during his captaincy, including continued coaching, sculling camps and social activities.

There being no other nominations the following were elected to Office:-

Captain: Nick Bates; Deputy Captain: Matt Byrne; Vice-Captain: Gavin Hunter.

Club Management Meetings

Five committee meetings were held during the year with a 60% attendance record. The dates of meetings were mostly set at the end of each meeting.

British Rowing was advised that the number of members for whom affiliation payments were due was 74. Items of special note are detailed below.

Civil Service Sports Council Annual Conference

The Club was not invited to the Conference in 2012 as a result of a change of policy by CSSC HQ. If we are to attend in future it will be through London Region. Despite approaching both HQ and London Region, it was not possible to get an invitation this year. Mr P Brown will follow this up at the appropriate time for 2013. On behalf of the Club, Mr Brown attended a Special General Meeting held at short notice in Manchester to defeat a move by one Departmental Association to cancel the recent changes to CSSC membership, e.g. linked membership. Informal feedback from CSSC HQ is that they are pleased with the way Cygnet is making use of the new membership categories.

“Cygnets” Bungalow

Again a fairly successful year for our second important fund raising source. The premises were fully in use from May until September and also at several weekends. Two Sculling Camps were held by Cygnet and the Civil Service Canoe Club made use of the Bungalow for two weekends as well. Management of the Bungalow has now been transferred to Mr P Brown as Bungalow Operations Manager, with the support of Mr Philip Lambe as Local Operations Manager and Mr Derek Bush as Building Maintenance Manager. This committee will present a full report at the Annual General Meeting.

The Cygnet Management Committee expresses its heartfelt thanks to Mr Ronnie Lambe, who has done such a sterling job as Bungalow Secretary over the years and notes that it has been necessary appoint a committee to fill his shoes.

The Website

The website is operational, with Club officers able to post information themselves. Club members can get access to members-only sections by requesting a password from the Webmaster, Mr T Watson. All members and friends are urged to log on to www.cygnet-rc.org.uk.

Members and friends alike can now also follow the club’s activities with the official Cygnet Twitter account @CygnetRC, and through this have access to regatta results, Tideway news from the PLA and British Rowing initiatives.

Social Events

The usual social events were held, such as the Club Picnic in the President’s garden at Henley during Henley Friday, the End of Season dinner in early October, and the Club Lunch at Leander Club in Henley on Thames in October. The annual Clubs’ Day, organised by the BBLRC Social Secretary Ms Katy Owen, was held on 1st September and it was very gratifying to see so many Cygnet members, old and new, attending this event.



At the by now traditional waddle (pub crawl) that precedes the BBLRC Christmas dinner, the Captain presented the Wally Wheldal cup to ‘club man of the year’ Jeremy Pugh, and the GP Jeffries cup for the ‘rower of the year’, Gavin Hunter.

At the End of the Year...

Cygnet is entering 2013 with plans to compete at Quintin Head (28 January), Hammersmith Head (4 March) and, as always, the HoRR/Vets HoRR on 17/18 March. There are exciting times ahead.

The club continues to be active both on and off the water. The Captaincy follows the policies laid down by previous holders of office and encourages club members to be further involved in club organisation. There is a constant hunt for coxswains, experienced or willing to learn and it is hoped that coaching will continue on both a professional and amateur basis. It is expected that 2013 will involve a very active racing season and the need for a high level of individual fitness will be necessary, so circuits remain on the menu.

The relationship with many other clubs both on and away from the Tideway are excellent, in particular that with Barnes Bridge Ladies Rowing Club remains as strong as ever. The camaraderie between members is remarked upon and Cygnet remains a very friendly and happy club.