



# Cygnet Committee Annual Report

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1 January 2023

The Cygnet Management Committee presents its one hundred and thirty-second report for the year ending 31 December 2022.

## 2022: return to normal

Rowing life went back to normal during 2022, which was a big relief to everyone.

Club meetings were held at the CS Boathouse, with provisions made for Zoom attendees during General Meetings. This required some technical adjustments at the boathouse end with webcam and microphones.

Away from the Club, we joined the nation in mourning the passing of Her Majesty the Queen and reflect on her lifetime of dedication and service to others.

Captain Rupert Bailey wrote: "I'm sure many of you, like me, whether a civil servant, public servant or in our wider society and community will recognise the values with which she delivered her steadfast leadership and immense contribution to society and the nation. I know many of you have served, and continue to serve, in a range of capacities and will likely have been moved by these events and touched by the sentiments and emotions of reflection and appreciation that we have seen these past few days and in the days ahead. On behalf of Cygnet, the Civil Service Rowing Club, I echo this spirit, along with renewed dedication as King Charles III accedes the throne: God Save the King."

There were still some issues for water training. The North arch of Barnes Bridge continued to be closed on and off through the year, to enable the installation of the new foot bridge under that arch, with temporary navigation rules directing crews rowing upstream to use the centre arch of the bridge. At the time of writing the foot bridge had been installed but it has not yet been officially opened as there were concerns about pigeon droppings making the bridge slippery and thus unsafe. For anyone going through the arch on a regular basis, this is not as big a surprise as it apparently was for Hounslow Council.

## Club Members and Friends

Unusually for the Club, only one new member was elected during the year. Your Secretary likes to think that this indicated a lull before a bumper year of new members in 2023. A summertime learn to row course using the "Get Fit & Row" format was held for a small number of people, regrettably nobody was inclined to continue with a club membership.

Encouraged by new CSSC membership rules, the club continues to encourage non-Civil Servant members to apply for so-called "linked" membership of CSSC to further strengthen our association with the CSSC.



In 2021, we sadly lost another stalwart and very longstanding club member when Ronnie Lambe passed away in August. Ronnie officially joined Cygnet RC, with his chum Vic Reeves on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1947, he under the happy impression a sparkling career as a club oarsman beckoned. In truth, and as Vic Reeves confessed some 60 years later, they had only ever intended him to be a coxswain, a role that he accepted with his customary equanimity. As so many fellow Cygnets, Ronnie married a member "from next door" in 1960 at which time his coxing days were over. Since then, he carried out years of secretarial duties at Cygnet, the Cygnet Bungalow Committee and the CS Boathouse, Putney Town Regatta and Borne @ Chiswick Bridge Regattas.

Even when he retired from all those roles, many still remember seeing him (and his old chum Vic Reeves) looking dapper in their Club blazer at Club events.

We will miss him.

## Rowing

2022 was off to a strong start with squad training in full swing, on the water and on land. Inclement weather meant rather more on land than we would like, but it hasn't dented the enthusiastic training effort.

The club kicked off head season with participating in Quintin Head, followed by the Hammersmith Head, the Eights Head of the River (the first one since 2019) and the Veterans Eights Head.

Following the head season, club members attended a training camp from 6 - 10 April, at Reading RC for some calmer water and a change of scene with a chance for some pre-season training to get sprint racing off to a good start.

Cygnets crews took part in the usual tideway events, Hammersmith Regatta, Chiswick Regatta, Borne @ Chiswick Bridge regatta, and Barnes & Mortlake with promising race results, but no pewter. Away regattas attended were Walter/Weybridge Regatta, St Neots and Henley Town and Visitors.

At the end of the year, four racing Cygnets participated in the Scullers Head, and three crews from Cygnets and BBLRC participated in the Rhine Marathon in Dusseldorf. The club also raced in Pairs Head, Fours Head, Veterans Fours Head, finishing the year in the traditional Quintin Plum Pluddings.

## Coaching

Beth Davidson continued coaching and her training programme kept the squad competitive, fit and sane. Beth coached outings of a vast variety of boat types, including eights. In the meantime, Charlie Girdler-Maslen organised and coached many on-land training sessions, both with individuals, and circuits in smaller groups.

The membership was very thankful to the CSBE Captain Chris Jageurs for the implementation of the Shed Development plan. The club can now use what can only be described as a first-class land training facility with an excellent fleet of ergs and weights equipment which has transformed training sessions.

As ever, coxing continues to be an issue at Cygnets and we are very thankful for the coxing carried out by both club members and BBLRC members.

## Additions to the Cygnets Fleet

Maintenance was carried out on the existing fleet as required, under the capable management of Iain Golder. Following the decision in 2021 to purchase a Coxless Four, this was duly purchased and on 24<sup>th</sup> January the boat was named 'Big Malc' with many of the Burman family joining Club members to mark the occasion and to toast our newest member of the fleet.

In addition to the 'Big Malc', the Club also purchased a replacement launch, following approval by the membership at the AGM, ensuring that the coach can safely escort and coach club boats during training.

The fact that Cygnets continues to add to its range of good 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.

## 300 Club

The 300 Club administration is firmly in the hands of Thomas Broadhurst, The usual draws were held through the year. The results continue to be published on the Website and through Twitter. It is recognised that marketing efforts to promote this important fundraising tool to all club members old and new, in the past had a positive effect on the sale of 300 Club tickets and the Committee hopes that this progress can be maintained now that Club life is slowly returning back to normal, and new active members are encouraged to purchase as many tickets as they can afford.

## General Meetings

### **Annual General Meeting –Held at the Boathouse and virtually on Zoom on Sunday 20 February 2022**

Was attended by Vice-President and Chairman N J Wylie, Vice Presidents Dr R P du Parcq, P L Rawkins, A Rawkins, also Ms M Israel, M Byrne, I Golder, N Pickford, C Cabrera, R Bailey, S Gourevitch, M Guttridge, N Jackson, L Coucaud and G du Parc Braham. Apologies for absence were received from Messrs P Goldsworthy, M Ozyurt and T Broadhurst.

Eleven Vice-Presidents were re-elected; Messrs M J Hughes, Dr R P du Parcq, R E Lambe, N J Wylie, P L Rawkins, C F Shea, A Cox, S D Bush, Dr N M Jackson, A J Rawkins and P Brown. On the Committee of Management, re-elected were N J Wylie as Chairman; Ms M Israël, Hon Secretary; M Byrne, Hon Treasurer. Mr N Pickford was voted Assistant Secretary and Ms M Eldred as Social Secretary. Committee Members elected were P L Rawkins, A Rawkins, I Golder, C Cabrera and M Guttridge. A Cox, P L Rawkins, N V Pickford and M Byrne were re-appointed Trustees and A Naylor was re-appointed Honorary Independent Examiner.

The Annual Report had previously been circulated and was adopted. The Captain presented a brief report. Mr Chairman presented the Bungalow Report. The Annual Club Accounts were presented by the Hon Treasurer; these had not been completely reviewed due to the loss of Mr Burman, so adoption was postponed to the Ordinary General Meeting.

### **Ordinary General Meeting & Election of Captaincy held virtually on Zoom on Tuesday 20 July 2021**

Chaired by N J Wylie – Vice Presidents Dr R P du Parcq, A Cox, N Jackson, P Rawkins, A Rawkins and P Brown attended. Also attended M H Israel, Hon Secretary, R Bailey, Captain, N Pickford, M Drage, C Cabrera, S Gourevitch, T Broadhurst, H Jonstromer, C Pretzlik, S Sears, D Marshall, P Beckett, M Ozyurt, L Couacaud, M Eldred, A Stromberg and C Jaguers. Apologies were received from M Byrne, I Golder and R Walters.

The Captain, Mr Bailey provided a report and the meeting thanked Mr M Drage and Mr P Goldsworthy for their work as Deputy Captain and Vice Captain respectively.

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

Captain: R Bailey; Deputy Captain: M Gutteridge; Vice-Captain: H Jonstromer.

At the meeting, under other business, Mr M Kearney was proposed as the second Hon Examiner and was subsequently voted in. The Accounts for 2021 will be submitted for approval and presented to the membership at the 2023 AGM.

### ***Club Management Meetings***

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Five committee meetings were held during the year with an 80% attendance record. The dates of meetings were mostly set at the end of each meeting. British Rowing was advised of the number of members for whom affiliation payments were due. Items of special note are detailed below.

### ***Civil Service Sports Council***

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The Civil Service Sports Council continues to support the Club and communication between Cygnet, the Boathouse Executive with CSSC is improving. The changes to CSSC membership that allow for a full member off CSSC to link with 6 Linked members linked membership plus the decision to make a Linked member after more than 1 year of membership a Full CSSC member and allow them to have their own Linked members are encouraging. Informal feedback from CSSC HQ is that they are pleased with the way Cygnet is making use of the new membership categories. They have kept in touch through the year and we are determined to get as many members into CSSC as possible. It is still a challenge to get Cygnet's Learn to Row courses published on CSSC documentation, but we will persist in our attempts.

### ***"Cygnets" Bungalow***

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Again, a successful year for our second important fund-raising source. The premises were fully in use from May until September and has proven very popular in a year when travelling overseas was a lot more complicated than it used to be. Management of the Bungalow being carried out by Mr D Bush as Hon Bungalow Secretary. Mr Bush will present a full report at the Annual General Meeting.

The Cygnet Management Committee expresses its heartfelt thanks to Mr Bush who is and who has always been a staunch supporter and now manager of the bungalow since it was built.

### ***The Website***

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The website continued to be updated by Neil Pickford, with Club officers able to post information themselves. It provides most relevant information about the club and its activities. All members and friends are urged to log on to [www.cygnet-rc.org.uk](http://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. The website is also the main link for the Cygnet photo archive, which we can highly recommend to all members. The Club recognises the increasing importance of social media and is thankful for members' efforts in keeping the outside world informed about all things Cygnet.

## Social Events

Cygnet returned from the Pandemic in strong voice celebrating our 132nd Cygnet birthday on 12 February as organized by our Social Secretary Megan, with three renditions of Happy Birthday led by the Chairman and a very enjoyable night at The Crossing in Barnes.

The usual social events were held, such as the Club Picnic at Old Blades in Henley during Henley Friday, the End of Season dinner and the annual Clubs' Day. It was very gratifying to see so many Cygnet members, old and new, attending these events.

The End of Season Dinner also saw the awarding of our two annual awards:

The G.P. Jeffries Cup for Cygnet Rower of the Year. This goes to the oarsman who has improved most over the past 12 months and Mustafa Özyurt was the lucky man to win this award.

The Wally Whedal Cup for Cygnet Sportsmanship & Endeavour, also known as 'Clubman of the Year', is awarded to the rower who showed willingness and eagerness to lend a helping hand wherever needed; and the recipient of this award was Martin Drage.

After a couple of years without social events, 2022 saw a "rower's revenge" on the social scene with the BBL/CYG centenary ball on 24 September- a bow tie affair with 150+ rowers and friends past and present joining us at the Richmond Hill Hotel. The event celebrated the centenary for BBLRC in 2022, the Civil Service Sports Council centenary in 2021 and the Cygnet Bungalow centenary in 2020 and was very well attended with "Oh my God look who's here" being heard during the pre-dinner drinks.

## At the End of the Year...

We are all relieved that the COVID-19 pandemic has abated enough that life returned to normal, although it has certainly not gone. We are grateful that the medical experts have managed to produce vaccines so rapidly and we now know that these have made a big difference in the lives of those who have been and continue to be vaccinated. We are proud to see club members with jobs in the NHS not only doing their utmost at work, but still manage to help out at the Club; we hope the companionship and support from their rowing friends has made their life a bit easier.

Looking forward to 2023 the captaincy has plans to compete at Quintin Head, Hammersmith Head and, as always, the Head of the River Race and the Veterans Eights head. 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 2020 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 is 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.