



Cygnets Committee Annual Report

Marjorie Israel

1 January 2020

The Cygnets Management Committee presents its one hundred and twenty-ninth report for the year ending 31 December 2019.

Club Members and Friends

Four new members were elected during 2019. 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 2019, we sadly lost two Cygnets members. In April, Peter Jeffs passed away. Peter joined Cygnets as a veteran rower in 1966. He was very high up the ranks in the Civil Service and although he was not available to row that much, he was a very able Boathouse Executive Chairman in the 70s and 80s, as well as Club Chairman. Like Peter Pan, he always was the same affable person, continuing to do sports as long as he was able to.

We are also sad to report that Ian Stephenson passed away at the end of August after a long battle with cancer. He joined Cygnets in 1990 and although he had forays to other clubs, Ian was always a character at the Club, in tight jeans and very well-worn T-shirts, always happy to hop in any boat that needed him. A generous, positive-thinking club man, who liked his beer to go with the rowing, he will be sorely missed.

Rowing

During 2019 the Club made good progress developing committed experienced and new novice oarsmen whilst being represented at all major Head races and most regattas. The Captaincy organised an April training camp at the bungalow, with Sculling Camps organised in June and September.

The focus continued to be on boosting the membership by holding another two Learn-to-Row courses in April and September. Unfortunately by year end, no new members joined from these courses; we expect them to join in 2020.

The Club competed at the Quintin Head as well as the Hammersmith Head, the Head of the River and the Veterans Head. Regattas on the itinerary included Chiswick, Borne @ Chiswick Bridge, Putney Town, Barnes & Mortlake and Richmond Regatta, with crews making promising progress winning heats, if not finals. The Club also entered an eight, fours and singles at St Neots, with a win for Ross Stewart in the Masters A/B single. Peterborough Summer was on the rowing calendar but got cancelled due to bad weather, so Oxford Regatta finished a successful regatta season with promising improvements made.

A mini squad of 8 rowers from Cygnets and BBLRC travelled to Dusseldorf/Benrath in October to row the Rhine Marathon; all crews finished successfully on this warm, sunny day. Starting the winter season, Cygnets entered crews in the Pairs Head but sadly missed the deadline for the Fours Head. Five scullers were entered in the Scullers Head.

Coaching

Coach Chihiro Calvin coached up until her maternity leave; in her absence, club members have continued to follow her coaching programme. Alan Cox, supported by Laurent Couacaud has continued to coach the Novices, which have been entered in regattas this season, with wins in some heats.

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

Additions to the Cygnets Fleet

At the 2019 Ordinary General Meeting, the membership approved the purchase of a new Eight which was duly procured from Janousek Racing Shells. Following consultation with the membership, it was agreed to call this boat the "Noel Davison" – needless to say Mrs Eleanor Davison was delighted and the boat naming held on 22 December was attended by Cygnets and BBLRC members, as well as members from Tideway Scullers, Molesey RC and the Head of the River Fours committee. Iain Golder did a sterling job managing the maintenance of the Club boats; some boats were sent to the Boat mender for hull overhauls. The Mike Arnold-Gilliat Eight was sold; the Paul Rawkins Coxless Four and the Ronnie Lambe Coxed Four were traded in to partly cover the costs of the new Eight.

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.

300 Club

The 300 Club administration was taken over by Thomas Broadhurst, with support provided by Guy du Parc Braham. 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 these marketing efforts, to promote this important fundraising tool to all club members old and new, carried out by Guy has had a positive effect on the sale of 300 Club tickets. The Committee hopes that this progress can be maintained in future years.

General Meetings

Annual General Meeting –Held at the Boathouse on Sunday 24 February 2019

Was attended by Vice-President and Chairman N J Wylie, Vice Presidents Dr R P du Parcq, P L Rawkins, A Cox and A Rawkins also Ms M Israël, S Gourevitch, T Broadhurst, I Golder and N Rae. Apologies for absence were received from C Cabrera, N Pickford and P Brown.

The existing eleven Vice-Presidents were re-elected. 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 Mr R Bailey as Social Secretary. Committee Members elected were P L Rawkins, Dr R P du Parcq, A Rawkins, I Golder and H Jonstromer; Mr Cabrera was elected as Cygnet's first official Social Media Coordinator. No one was nominated as Assistant Treasurer; Mr Broadhurst was co-opted in the first Committee meeting following the AGM.

A Cox, P L Rawkins, N V Pickford and M Byrne were re-appointed Trustees and M Burman and A Naylor were appointed Honorary Independent Examiners.

The Annual Report had previously been circulated and was adopted. The Captain had sent his apologies, his report was read out during the meeting. Dr du Parcq and Mr Cox reported on progress at the Bungalow. The Annual Club Accounts were presented by Mr Byrne; these were accepted without conflict pending sign-off by the Hon Examiners. The committee accepted a proposal from the Committee of Management to change Club Constitution Byelaw 21 to clarify Rowing Safety requirements.

Ordinary General Meeting & Election of Captaincy held on Tuesday 16 July 2019

Chaired by N J Wylie – Vice Presidents Dr R P du Parcq, P Rawkins attended. Also attended M H Israël, Hon Secretary, M Byrne, Hon Treasurer, S Gibbons, C Cabrera, N Smith, S Sears, H Jonstromer, N Rae, M Drage, J Durack, R Stewart, S Livingstone, C Jaguers.

Apologies were receiving from T Broadhurst, R Harries, N Pickford, I Golder, A Rawkins.

The Captain Mr Cabrera presented his report, The administrator of the 300 Club presented un-examined accounts; these would be presented to the Hon Examiners. The meeting approved a proposal from the Committee of Management to purchase a new Club Eight, and to sell one eight, a coxed four, and a coxless four.

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

Captain: Cristobal Cabrera; Deputy Captain: Sam Sears; Vice-Captain: Tom Broadhurst.

Following the close of formalities, Richard du Parcq celebrated 50 years of unbroken membership of Cygnet in the usual manner.

Club Management Meetings

Five committee meetings were held during the year with an 85% 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 62. Items of special note are detailed below.

Civil Service Sports Council

The Civil Service Sports Council continues to support the changes to CSSC membership that allow for linked membership – the number of Linked members a full member is allowed was raised from 3 to 6 this year. Even more encouraging is the CSSC decision to allow Linked Members to have their own Linked Members after more than 1 year of membership from September 2019. 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

Again, a successful year for our second important fund raising source. The premises were fully in use from May until September and also at several weekends. One Training Camp and two Sculling Camps were held by Cygnet. Management of the Bungalow being carried out by Mr D Bush as Bungalow Manager. 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 always has been a staunch supporter and now manager of the bungalow since it was built in 1964.

The Website

The website continues 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.

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

The usual social events were held, such as the Club Picnic at Old Blades in Henley on Henley Friday, and the End of Season dinner in September. This year, the Club Lunch at Leander Club in Henley on Thames was held on 26 October.

The annual Clubs' Day, organised by the Social Secretaries of both clubs was held in August and it was very gratifying to see so many Cygnet members, old and new, attending this event.

The End of Season Dinner also saw the presentation of our 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 there were several to choose from but ultimately the award went to Ross Stewart.

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: James Durack.

Anna Costantini was voted Barnes Bridge Lady of the Year, a new award.

Before Christmas, older members attended a weekday lunch at the RAF Club, admirably organised by Lawrence McVeigh.

At the Barnes Bridge Ladies RC Christmas Party, Tom Broadhurst was voted Cygnet of the Year.

At the End of the Year...

We look back at a year of mixed emotions. Members of the squad are making improvements and we are hoping that we'll get a few more wins under our belts in the new year. Sadness that we have had to part with two more long-standing club members.

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 Club is looking forward to a year of milestones in the history of the club, with its 130th year of existence, 100 years of the Club's second home on Hamhaugh Island, and 90 years at the Civil Service Boathouse.

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.