



Cygnet Newsletter 2012

10 February 2012

From the Captain

The 2012 land and water training is now well underway for Hammersmith Head (Sun 4 March) and the main Head weekend on 17/18 March. The number of available oarsmen is now starting to pick up but we need more seniors available if we are to get the eights out and record some good Head results this year. We are also starting to see some potential new members and our next **Learn to Row** course is being planned as we speak. If you have any friends/relatives who want to start rowing, get in touch with our vice-captain Clare Bayley (vice@cygnet-rc.org.uk) over the next week.

Captain's Holiday

The Captain has now disappeared to South America for three weeks. In his absence, deputy Rob and vice captain Clare will be running the show so any queries to them please, particularly if you want to take out club boats at non-squad times.

Cygnet and the CSSC

Following a meeting we've had with the CSSC at the end of 2011, we've been encouraging our non-civil servant members to sign up to CSSC Linked membership. A huge thank you to everyone - once all application forms have been processed, all members rowing from the boathouse (and then some!) will be a member of CSSC. The CSSC hierarchy have been very pleased with our efforts and we'll be working with them to promote the club across the substantial CSSC membership base in the coming months.

What we now need is your annual sub of £230 for 2012. Thanks to those of you who have paid already. For those of you who haven't paid yet please ensure you transfer £230 to the Cygnet RC account (sort code 72-00-05, account number 71834000) by the end of this month. You won't be able to compete in the March Head races if you haven't paid your subs. Please copy me and our club Treasurer Richard du Parcq (cc'd into this email) into your confirmation of payment so we can look out for it.

Cygnet London Marathon Runners

Nick Bates and Andy Naylor are running the London Marathon this year for MIND and Anthony Nolan charities respectively. Having seen them hone their running skills on the now legendary Cygnet three bridge run, I'm sure you'll join me in sponsoring them both as they pound London's streets on 22 April. No word on fancy dress costumes so we're assuming they're both opting for 'vanilla' running gear and targeting a competitive time. You can sponsor them both via their links below.

Andy Naylor: <http://www.justgiving.com/Andy-runs-london>

Nick Bates: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/NickBates>

Stuart Gibbons

Subscriptions and Donations

Are always due, 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 - £230.00, Others - £314.00, Club Friends - Suggested minimum - £15.00

Enclosed my subscription £.....

Your address: _____
Post Code: _____
Your email address: _____

From the Secretary

ACTIVE MEMBERS: DON'T FORGET TO GIVE ME YOUR EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS/NEXT OF KIN DETAILS, FOR OUR RECORDS AND YOUR SAFETY.

To streamline our communications to you, can you please take some time to fill in the following questionnaire and send it to me, or the treasurer, whichever is most convenient. We'll then ensure that the details are entered in our club database, with due consideration to keeping your personal data safe from misuse.

I'd like to receive the newsletter by post/email*

I'd like to receive the weekly club news by email yes/no*

Your address:

Post Code:

Your email address:

*Please delete as appropriate

Please send to **Marjorie Israel, 49 Oaklands Avenue, Osterley, TW7 5PY**, or email relevant details to: **marjorie_israel_hotmail.com**. You can also add this slip to your subs payment note to Dr R P du Parcq, Hon Treasurer, details overleaf.

Cygnets Annual General Meeting

We have attached the agenda for the AGM below. At the Cygnets AGM, we elect the Committee members - Chairman, Hon Secretary and Assistant Secretary, Hon Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, Social Secretary as well as five Committee Members.

If you would like to get involved in the workings of the Club, why not put your name down for one of these positions. Experience has learned that new committee members bring fresh ideas into the management of the club, which is a good thing.

An Annual General Meeting of Cygnets Rowing Club will take place at the Civil Service Boathouse on Sunday 26 February 2012 at noon.

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on 26 July 2011 and the Minutes of the Special General Meeting held on 13 December 2011 (Displayed with this notice for viewing)
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
4. Annual Report
5. Captain's Report
6. Presentation and Adoption of Examined Accounts
7. Cygnets 225th
8. Election of Officers and Committee of Management
9. Appointment of Independent Honorary Examiners
10. Any Other Business - So that it can be displayed on the Notice Board this must have been previously advised in writing to the Hon Secretary by 12 February at the very latest.

REFLECTIONS ON 122 YEARS AFLOAT

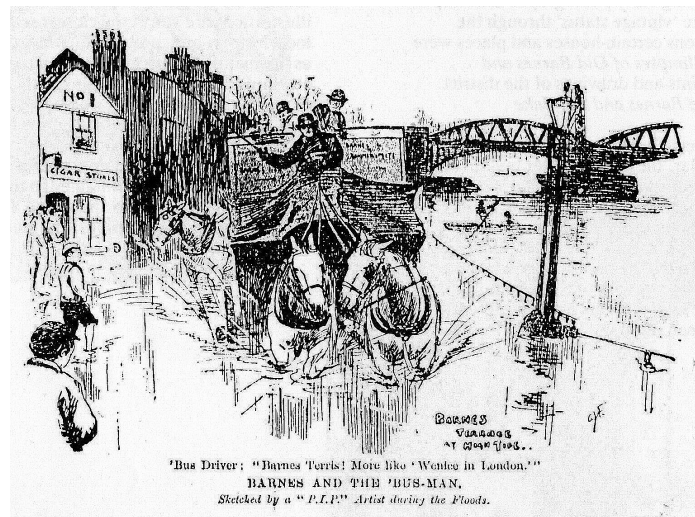
Whenever we think back to 12th February 1890, our minds focus on a gathering in the Old Duke's Head at Putney where ten men good and true – of whom none was truer than Wally Wheldal, the first Club secretary – who took it upon themselves to form a rowing club called Cygnet. Rather than regale you with the events that followed, your Club Historian thought it might be an interesting exercise to speculate on what it might have been like had Cygnet taken up residence at Chiswick rather than Putney in 1890.

Small boat clubs like Cygnet rarely had the resources to acquire their own boat houses. Renting a changing room and the use of rowing craft from established boat houses up and down the Thames was common. For a newly formed club like Cygnet, looking for a base at Chiswick, the obvious choice would have been Tom Green's Boathouse located on the present site of Thames Tradesmen, immediately adjacent to Barnes Bridge on the upriver side. In fact, Cygnet briefly contemplated this



option in 1904, but dismissed it in favour of Biffin's at Hammersmith because of poor access. In 1890, Green's Boathouse would have been a remote outpost: Duke's Meadows had yet to be laid out and the nearest link to civilization would have been a ferry from the boathouse to the pier at the White Hart.

For the likes of Wally Wheldal, contemplating an outing at our imaginary 19thC boathouse at Chiswick, the transport options would have been very similar to today. As our picture taken from the Illustrated London News in 1890 shows, a horse drawn bus service was already in existence, running from the Metropolitan Station at Hammersmith to the bus garage at Avondale Road in Mortlake. With no flood defences in place, the chances of Wally getting his feet wet long before he arrived at the boathouse were high!



Alternatively, had Wally been travelling from Waterloo, he could have taken the train, a journey of 20 minutes for the price of less than a shilling (5p). Barnes Railway Bridge, a 'light and elegant iron bridge' designed by Joseph Locke, was already a feature of the landscape. However, Barnes Bridge station would not open until 1916, so Wally would have had to walk from Barnes Station.

Once Wally had arrived on the Barnes side of the river, the fun would really have begun. Unfortunately, Joseph Locke had not thought to add a footpath when he designed his bridge; such a path would not be added until the early 1900s. Wally would therefore have had two choices: he could stand outside the White Hart and holler across the river to Tom Green's for a ferry to be sent across. If this failed, he could have walked down to Chiswick Steps, where there was a more permanent ferry arrangement, and paid twopence to be carried across to Church Wharf by St Nicholas Church. He would then have had to stride out over open country – the Duke of Devonshire's estate – to Barnes Bridge.

The facilities at Tom Green's were spartan at best – the boathouse never enjoyed electricity or running water – and Wally would have rubbed shoulders with other resident clubs many of whom would have been professional watermen. As Wally stood on the foreshore awaiting his outing in a rum tum or a heavy four, the panorama that would have greeted him on the Surrey bank would have been of a rather more tranquil world than today.



This drawing of Barnes Terrace in 1896 by S.Kay from the Paton Collection depicts a scene before the days of the motor car. The most striking difference from today is the absence of the flood defences and the accessibility of the foreshore on the Barnes side. There is, too, plentiful evidence of a working river, with barges making their way back and forth to the brewery at Mortlake and Brentford Dock. On the left hand corner, as the Terrace turns into Barnes High Street would have been the Watermen's Arms (now Strada), a favourite drinking hole for bargees and boatmen alike.

In his Dictionary of the Thames (1887), Dickens describes this scene as 'a capital terrace with good houses fronting the river, and at high water the view is pretty enough. At certain states of the tide, however, there is somewhat more mud on view than is altogether desirable.' We shall never know whether he would have approved of the concrete flood defences that obscure the view now.

As Wally headed up river for his outing he would have passed several large houses on the Surrey bank including Elm Bank (now the site of Elm Bank Mansions) and the Limes. Shortly after this would follow the malt houses, the brewery and a number of public houses, while on the right bank the open expanse of what is now Duke's Meadows would have stretched away into the distance. At the end of his outing, Wally might have stopped by the White Hart for an ale (or two) where it would not have been unusual to make the acquaintance of a famous sculler, Mr George Bubear.

By the time Cygnet took up residence at Chiswick in 1930, motor buses would be ploughing up and down the Terrace and trains would be stopping at the Sportsman's Station. Access to Chiswick would have been by the walkway across Barnes Bridge to the newly laid out playing fields and rowing facilities and the elegant municipal park called Duke's Meadows opened in 1926.

Paul Rawkins (Club Historian)