



# Cygnet Newsletter

January 2013

## From the Captain

Happy New Year! We have a fantastic year of rowing ahead of us so time to get yourselves back down the club for those who have enjoyed a break away (enforced or otherwise!) and for those who have been putting in stellar work over the last few months' time to knuckle down for the drive towards end of Winter Head racing and the summer regattas!

### Coaching...

We are trialling a couple of prospective coaches over the coming weekends so expect to have some launch company. I'd like members' feedback on this so please relay to your cox so that he/she can coordinate feedback to me as and when necessary. Crucially however this is a position we hope to have nailed in January to help us improve over the coming months.

### Racing...

Dates for the club dairy over the coming months are:

26 Jan Quintin Eights Head  
16 Feb Henley 4s & 8s Head  
10 Mar Hammersmith Head  
23 Mar Head of the River

We expect to enter two eights into most Heads and, at present, these are undetermined as to what level they'll race at so there is everything to play for those who wish to compete for a seat. Details follow and much will be decided by the time and energy put in over the coming weeks. So keep up all the hard work!

### Subs for 2013...

Are now due. Most of you know what and where to pay so please do this as soon as possible remembering to notify the Treasurer (Dr Richard du Parcq) and Assistant Treasurer (Matt Byrne) for online payments.

### Finally...

Thoughts are beginning to turn to our April **Learn to Row** course and an Open Day ahead of this. Our club thrives due to the time and energy put into not only the rowing but also into the running of the club so please think about what time you give to supporting these. The club also benefits however from an even longer list of people who support the club through our **300 Club**. For those that are not familiar please read more here. All members are encouraged to have tickets (reminded of the fact that our annual subs are still amongst the cheapest on the Tideway). Please email me if you'd like tickets or pay online and let me know.

Nick Bates

## 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/donation for £.....

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Your address: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Your CSSC number (if you're a member of CSSC) \_\_\_\_\_

## The Club Historian Writes: Farewell to the Olympics

As we bid farewell to 2012 and the London 2012 Olympics, we recall Cygnet's connections with the 1908 and 1948 events.



In 1902 Cygnet invited Raymond Broadley Etherington Smith, an eminent surgeon and accomplished oarsman (pictured left in Vanity Fair in 1908), to take up the post of Club president. R B (Ethel) accepted and his tenure as president endured until 1913, when he contracted blood poisoning whilst conducting an operation and died.

Ethel's years at the helm of Cygnet coincided with his finest years afloat. Having won the University Boat Race on a number of occasions at the end of the previous century, he went on to win the Grand Challenge Cup at Henley on three occasions in 1901-05 (rowing as Leander, not Cygnet) and the Stewards Challenge Cup in 1905-06. However, his crowning glory came in 1908, when he rowed seven in the winning VIII at the Summer Olympic Regatta at Henley.

Accounts of the time described the field as unremarkable, apart from a Belgian VIII that had won the Grand in 1906-07. To counter this challenge, Great Britain chose a Leander VIII, packed with talent and coached by Harcourt Gold. Aged 31, Ethel was neither the baby nor the old man of the crew; Guy Nickalls, rowing at four, was ten years older, while Bucknall at stroke was younger.

In what was described as a beautiful summer's day, Leander beat Royal Club Nautique de Gand (Belgium) by two lengths in a time of 7 minutes 52 seconds to take gold. Thus, Cygnet could justly claim to have an Olympian in its midst, albeit by association.

Cygnet's association with the 1948 Olympics was rather more tenuous. In 1948 Lewis Balfour the then president contributed sufficient funds to the club to enable it purchase a new coxwainless four and a set of blades built for the Summer Olympics earlier that year. The boat was duly christened the Lewis Balfour and high hopes rested on some of the Olympic magic rubbing off on the senior crew the following season. Sadly, these hopes were misplaced, but the boat would enjoy a long, if not especially victorious life at Cygnet until 1974, when it was written off following a collision.

Club Historian

## 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.

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

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

Your name:

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'at'hotmail.com**. You can also add this slip to your subs payment note to

Dr R P du Parcq, Hon Treasurer, details overleaf.

## 300 Club

Many of you will be aware of what the 300 Club is and its significance to Cygnet and importance in making sure we have top notch boats and kit in general. But if you're not, read all about it here <http://cygnet-rc.org.uk/drupal/node/2680>.

The 300 Club is basically the club's fundraising lottery. Club members, friends and family buy tickets at £10.00 a go and we hold 10 draws annually where owners of the tickets have the chance to win cash prizes. Part of the money raised in ticket sales funds the prizes and the rest comes to the club to make sure we retain one of the best fleets on the tideway.

We aim to bring new life to the 300 Club after a couple of quieter years and we will have a team of 3 people to remind people each year why the club is a good thing and to push ticket sales. I'll be doing this for the Senior squad, Geordie for the Vets and I am looking for a newer member to do this for the Novice squad. Our novice intake continues to grow so if you're looking for the chance to contribute a bit more to the club (and it's not much as you'll learn, just the odd reminder round the bar periodically) then this is a great chance.

Please give me a shout ([nickrbates@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nickrbates@yahoo.co.uk)) if you're interested so I can fill you in with more detail.

Nick Bates

## 'Cygnet's' Bungalow

The bungalow is now in winter mode and our eyes go towards the spring and summer when the evenings are long, and there is nothing better than spend a week in Shepperton.

The bookings are filling up fast, although there are still some weeks available for the 2013 spring/summer season. Our bungalow Manager Phil Brown is still working to get in touch with those who have booked the Bungalow in previous years. If anyone has been missed, please contact him by e-mail on [phil@gableend.me.uk](mailto:phil@gableend.me.uk). June is available.

Active members who would like to extend their stay for the sculling camps by a few days are invited to get in touch. We plan to have new benches in place on the verandah by the time the season opens and we're about to purchase a new TV and music centre ready for the new season.

As a date for your diary, the sculling camps are planned for the weekends of 13-14 April and 14-15 September 2013.



## OBITUARY William (Bill) Williams

I should imagine that very few junior members of Cygnet will have known Bill Williams who died recently.

Bill Williams sadly passed away at the age of 84 at Charlotte House Nursing Home, Isleworth in the early hours of Tuesday 11th September. Although he had health problems for a number of years, he passed away peacefully and both I and one of my brothers were with him.

My father always spoke very fondly of his time as a member of Cygnet throughout the 1960s, 70s and for some time beyond. In fact I remember as a young boy being taken by him into a very smokey Cygnet bar for a lemonade and packet of crisps in what must have been about 1980! He had nothing but kind words for all his friends at Cygnet and had some very happy memories of both the sporting and social sides of the club. I know that he was a regular volunteering behind the bar in the Boathouse and was fully involved in the construction of the bungalow – there are a couple of photos of him working on it in the official club history! He always told me that his time at Cygnet was very special to him.

David Williams

## OBITUARY MIKE ROCHE

Mike Roche will be best remembered by the early 1970s intake of aspirant oarsmen who fell under the spell of John Bull's coaching and cajoling. Then an Executive Officer in the Department of Energy, during the Winter of Discontent, Mike had to balance his rowing commitments with manning the DoE's emergency call centre, dispensing advice on what to do during the nightly power cuts and some of the freezing weather conditions that followed.

Initially, Mike rowed in a clinker-built novice IV at bow, with Martin Cain (2), Richard Sowerby (3) and John Walton (Str) and victory was finally theirs at the Worcester Centenary Regatta in 1974. Later, Mike would graduate to stroking Vllls. Norman Cowling, Club Captain at the time, recalls "I remember Mike Roche as being a gritty, spirited oarsman, very much part of that Henley (Town & Visitors) VIII that "gelled" as a crew, and had an admirable no nonsense "do or die" attitude. Very sad to hear about his illness and early death; at least we can preserve the memory of him as a young man, strong and competitive in the stroke seat, leading by example".

As Norman remarks, Mike was never one to do anything by halves: either he committed to six days a week or not at all. Following a short absence from the club, due to marriage and parenthood, he returned to 'active service' in 1977-78, stepping into the stroke seat of the (George) Plumtree VIII. This crew went on to become one of the most successful Cygnet Vllls in recent times, winning the Business Houses Head and coming 32nd in the Tideway Head.

Mike is pictured here in the front row, second from right, on the occasion of the christening of Cygnet's first carbocraft VIII in late 1977. By the close of the 1978 season, this crew could point to Senior A/Elite B wins at Huntingdon, Maidenhead and St Neots and a spirited row in a heat of the Thames Cup at Henley Royal against Brentwood College, Canada.

Shortly after this, Mike left Cygnet to devote more time to bringing up his young family and we lost touch with him. However, we are grateful to Richard Sowerby, who rowed in the 1974 novice four, for notifying us of his untimely demise (from cancer) earlier this year. Mike Roche died on Sunday 10th April 2012. He is survived by two daughters, Alyson and Samantha; his wife, Heather, suffered with MS for many years and predeceased him.



Paul Rawkins