

Cygnets Newsletter

February 2014

It has been a while since you've received a newsletter from us, and a lot has happened since then... not the least of which is the horrible picture of our bungalow being flooded by the river Thames.

From the Captain

Coaching...

During the 2013 winter and regatta season, Andy Hale, coached both the senior and development squads together with Jenny Hatton during weekends. Nick Rowett returned from his winter hide-out in South Africa and he has been coaching both the senior and novice crews during weekday outings. At the end of the regatta season, Andy Hale was replaced by Sue Grobler, who is a qualified rowing coach, rowing and coxing for BBLRC. She has been setting a firm training programme.

The past few months have been spent building winter fitness ahead of forthcoming Eights Head races, where we are aiming to get two solid crews representing the club, as well as integrating some of our newest members from the Learn-to-Row course into the Development squad.

Membership...

Congratulations to Danny Cartridge for being awarded Cygnets' JP Jeffries Cup (Most Improved Oarsman) for 2013, and to Bart de Groot the recipient of the Wally Whedal Cup (Clubman of the year).

Racing...

The second half the regatta season kicked off with Henley Royal Regatta. The Cygnets coxless four of Bart de Groot, Gavin Hunter, David French and Nick Bates was entered into the Wyfold Challenge Cup and had to race in the qualifiers. Unfortunately they did not make it through to the event proper.

Fours Head at the end of November saw four Cygnets crews across the two races. Our IM1 4- put in a respectable showing in the Saturday race, and at Sunday's Masters & Novices event we had three boats representing the "Quad Squad", the Chairman's Invitational 4-, and a Novice 4+. All reported enjoyable rows, with the Novice crew in particular showing real potential.

Plum Puddings at the end of Dec was enjoyable as ever, and at the same time served as an introduction to some of the newer members to a Tideway 'race'.

We had one and a half crews in the Quintin Head: an (almost) Novice 8+, who narrowly beat a Cygnets/Tideway Scullers composite Masters crew.

David French

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: Cygnet Submerged

In this era of climate change, hurricanes and flooding, we recall a Sunday morning a little over sixty years ago, 1953 to be precise, when a wall of water surged up the Tideway, submerging the Boathouse and all around it to a depth of some five feet.

In the absence of today's unsightly concrete defence walls (erected in the early 1970s), river water poured into the void between Barnes Bridge and Duke's Meadows and the Civil Service Boathouse was isolated in the middle of a small lake, Emanuel School Boathouse having not yet been built. As the Club History laments "the surge of water burst through the dressing room doors and, on the men's side, tossed full barrels of best from one end of the room to the other, causing considerable damage to walls and fittings and, alas, to the beer."



As our photograph shows, members turning up for Sunday morning rowing were presented with a dismal scene and some doubtless reflected on the dubious wisdom of having the bar below sea level and the boats above! There being no way for the entrapped flood water to escape, the assistance of the London Fire Brigade was sought to pump the water back into the river. Once the water had finally drained away, members were left to contemplate a thick layer of Thames mud which had enveloped the changing rooms and the lawn. To add insult to injury, the lawn had only recently been created using turfs salvaged from the Civil Service Sports Ground grass tennis courts. Weeks of painstaking scrubbing and scraping followed.

Today, the lawn looks none the worse for the experience, but some would argue that the all-pervading atmosphere in the men's changing room never really dissipated!

Swim For It

Just before Christmas, an e-mail from John Yeates dropped into the Club Historian's electronic postbag. John had recently come into possession of a family heirloom of sorts: a Cygnet Swimming Club trophy with the inscription 'Plunging Handicap' 26 September 1893, presented by one G H Dewey to James Akers.

James Akers was John's great grandfather: James lived in Battersea and, together with his son, Henry James, and daughter Winifred, appears to have participated in swimming contests at Cygnet. Naturally, John was keen to find out more, not least what a plunging handicap was. He was also kind enough to send us a photograph of the trophy.



Not Just A Rowing Club

The first challenge was to dig through the archives in the hope that there would be a record of this event and where it was held. This led to the discovery that the minute books for 1892-88 have long since been lost – Dusty Miller, the first club historian, noted this back in the 1950s. However, we do know that the swimming section of Cygnet had been established in 1892 and had quickly become an established fixture in the annual club fixture card.

The swimming handicap – we cannot confirm whether it was a 'plunging handicap' – was held at the same time as the Club Regatta and the 1895 version of the event attracted 35 entrants. This event took place in the Thames at Putney with the first and second places being won by St Martin's Swimming Club. The following year, in 1896, the Club staged a Half Mile Amateur Swimming Championship open to all branches of the General Post Office. However, efforts to raise funds for a Challenge Cup for Postal Swimming fell on deaf ears and by the late 1890s interest in swimming appears to have waned. Unfortunately, we were able to offer little more insight than this.

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 have a team of people to remind people each year why the club is a good thing and to push ticket sales – after many years, Alan Cox will stand down as administrator and I will be in charge of the 300 Club admin together with Guy du Parc Braham.

Please give me a shout (nickrbates@yahoo.co.uk) if you'd like so I can fill you in with more detail.

Nick Bates

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 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.

'Cygnets' Bungalow

This year has seen a continuation of the refurbishment begun last year. One of the great pleasures of staying at the Bungalow is sitting on the verandah, watching the boats go past - maybe unkindly making derisory comments about the efforts of the beginners from Weybridge BC. This year you will notice the new decking and be sitting more comfortably on one of the 2 new cushioned benches - one was donated by Peggy Sjoberg in memory of her husband Eric, who used to scull down to Sunbury for a week's paddling on the smooth water of the non-tidal Thames.



Once inside, it will be noted that there is now a blind on the kitchen window - no more worries about being overlooked by passing residents on their way to work when one emerges from slumber to make that desperately needed first cup of coffee. After a day relaxing on the verandah, or messing about in the dinghy kept at the Bungalow, one can relax in the lounge and take in the new digital flat screen TV.

These improvements have been done by a number of people, but most of all by Derek Bush, laying the decking and doing innumerable minor repairs around place. Derek is an old hand on Bungalow matters, having assisted with erecting the current building many moons ago. Another long term supporter of the Bungalow, Nina Padwick, has worked wonders on the interior of the Bungalow.

The Bungalow is supported by a number of regulars who come back year after year. However, their numbers are dwindling so it was good to see some newcomers, especially some from BBLRC. The problem has been that everyone wants to come for school holidays. This year, those weeks went very early, but there were a number of weeks in June when the Bungalow was unoccupied. This is a missed opportunity and for next year there will be a substantial reduction in rent for the months of May and June. Derek Bush is taking over the booking arrangements and will be pleased to take bookings on 01634 252323 or derek75@post.com.

Finally, in handing over to role of Bungalow Secretary to Derek, I can see the Bungalow taking on a new life, but it is up to all members to make good use of this unique facility amongst the Tideway Clubs if it is to remain viable.

Phil Brown

Dates for your diary:

23 February 2014	12:00 noon	Annual General Meeting
29 March 2014	14:15	Head of the River Race
4 - 6 April 2014		Spring Sculling Camp
06 April 2014	18:00	University Boatrace