

Dates for your diary

Marjorie Israël

July 4th – 8th **Henley Royal Regatta**

Friday July 6th Club members, partners and friends are once again kindly invited by Mrs Pat Sly to join her on the lawn at Old Blades for Henley Friday.

Tuesday July 17th Ordinary General Meeting (20.15)
Captaincy elections

2018 Fixtures *for the one hundred and twenty ninth season*

May	5 th	Chiswick Amateur WIN Tier 1 4+
	12 th	Borne at Chiswick Bridge WIN Open 4+
June	29 th	HRR Qualifiers
	30 th	Richmond Amateur
July	4 th – 8 th	Henley Royal Regatta
	13 th – 14 th	Henley Masters
	14 th – 15 th	Kingston Amateur
	28 th – 29 th	St. Neots
August	4 th	Henley Town & Visitors
	11 th – 12 th	Peterborough Summer ^{ML}
	18 th – 19 th	Oxford City
October	6 th	Pairs Head, Rhine Marathon <i>Düsseldorf</i>
	20 th	Weybridge Silver Sculls
	20 th – 21 st	Head of the Charles <i>Boston, USA</i>
November	3 rd	Fullers Fours Head of the River (12.00)
	4 th	Veterans Fours Head
	10 th	Kingston Small Boats Head
December	1 st	Vesta Scullers Head

2018 Club Events

July	4 th – 8 th	Henley Royal Regatta
	17 th	O.G.M. & Election of Captaincy (20.15)
August	TBC	Squad End of Season Dinner
September	15 th – 16 th	Autumn Sculling Camp, Hamhaugh Island
November	10 th	Henley Lunch, Leander Club
February 2019	24 th	Annual General Meeting (12.00)

Contacts

www.cygnet-rc.org.uk

Chairman	07753 863430	chairman[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk
Captain	07711 058717	captain[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk
Hon. Secretary	07530 747816	secretary[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk

Cygnets Bungalow *38 Hamhaugh Island, Shepperton*

The bungalow is ideal for a riverside holiday and is available for booking by members and friends between May and the end of October. **There are currently still plenty of free weeks available over the summer.**

Other periods and winter bookings may be available, please enquire. **Contact: Derek Bush on 07880 548804**
[bungalow\[at\]cygnet-rc.org.uk](mailto:bungalow[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk)

Cygnets 300 Club



This is our principal fund raiser which keeps our fleet maintained and up-to-date. Tickets are just £10 each and there are ten annual draws with a top prize of £100 and a bumper £250 Christmas top prize. All members and friends are encouraged to participate and active oarsmen especially are expected to have a 'few' tickets. **Contact:**
Guy du Parc Braham [dupb01\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:dupb01[at]gmail.com)

Subscriptions and Donations

Active members: CSSC £290.00*, non-CSSC £360.00
Club friends: suggested minimum £15.00

For **electronic payment** please email the treasurer for bank details – [treasurer\[at\]cygnet-rc.org.uk](mailto:treasurer[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk)

By **cheque**, along with the tear-off slip below to:
Mr M. Byrne, Flat 102 Westfields, Railway Side, Barnes,
London SW13 0PL

✂.....

Enclosed my subscription/donation for £ _____

Your name: _____

Your address: _____

Post Code: _____ Your CSSC no.*: _____

*CSSC members are now required to show their current CSSC membership card to a member of the Management Committee



CYGNET ROWING CLUB

June 2018 Newsletter

From the Club Secretary

Marjorie Israël

Apologies for the silence from us - the hassle of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) got the better of me and although those of you receiving email updates have seen all there is to know about this, hard-copy recipients have been spared the flurry - up till now. As every other club, institution, company in the UK, I am writing to you to advise you on how we will be handling your data to comply with the new EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which came into effect on 25th May.

We hold and process personal data for the purpose of managing the club's business and financial affairs, to arrange coaching and training sessions and liaise with members; as well as to provide information to British Rowing and, most importantly, to keep you up to date on what's going on at the Club. We are required to get your permission to be able to continue communicating with you by email in the future, and would appreciate it if you could confirm your consent.

This is important so please do respond. However, if I do not hear from you either way then I will assume consent and you will continue to receive email and newsletters from Cygnet RC unless we're informed otherwise. Our group email lists also have an unsubscribe option.

We will never sell your data, nor allow it to be used for other reasons than club administration and communication. In the very unlikely event that your data is ever lost or stolen then we will inform you immediately.

If you are in any way concerned about our use of your personal data, you only need to send me a note to request your details to be deleted off our records and it will be done – you will miss out on these exciting newsletters forever, though!

For further information, and to see our GDPR Policy, please visit our website: www.cygnet-rc.org.uk. My phone and email details are also overleaf or you can write to my postal address: 304 London Road, Isleworth TW7 5AJ

From the Captain

Matthew Byrne

The head season is now behind us, and we were pleased that there were no cancellations this year. Despite a forecast of wall to wall rain, a dry breezy HERR on Sunday 11th March saw Cygnet finish with a time of 21:16, 238th overall. Going off second in division 5, Cambridge 99s came past early on, but nothing else threatened our serene progress towards the finish. The consensus view from the crew was of a good row, not bad for a scratch crew with only one outing under their belt.

The veterans crew reported a good race at the VHoRR, this year held on the same weekend as the Oxbridge Boat Races, finishing 101st in a time of 21:22, and we again welcomed our friends from RG Benrath and AZS AWF Warszawa for the event.

Since then, we've hit regatta season with a vengeance, and I am very pleased to report the continuation of wins from a slightly modified version of last year's successful coxed four. Gareth Furby, Ian Schofield, Nick Rae, Sam Sears and Hannah Steedman started off well by winning T1 Coxed Fours at Chiswick Regatta against a couple of crews from the Lea.

Next up was Borne @ Chiswick Bridge Regatta, where the squad entered a large variety of events, including a veterans eight who were drawn in a heat of the Open event against a Thames novice crew. Due to administrative errors in the Thames entry, the Cygnet eight was advanced to race in the final, but unfortunately the notification of this came through while the Chairman and his crew mates were already raising a glass (or two) at the boat naming ceremony. The coxed four of Scott Livingstone, Ian Schofield, Nick Rae, Sam Sears and Gigi Hensher recorded another win in Open Coxed Fours, after a hard-fought semi against IC Medics, followed by a more straight forward final against Twickenham's development squad four.

After two Tideway wins, the four decided a sterner test was required so Scott, Ian, Nick, Sam, and Gigi headed off to Eton Dorney to race in T3 and T4 4+ at the Metropolitan Regatta. Some tough racing against crews that would have registered as Senior and IM1 status under the old points system; Cygnet came 4th in their T3 heat, just missing out on a final place. Due to the vagaries of the new points system, the T4 race was a stronger field, and a small mistake on the start line left a little too much to do to catch back up to the pack and also finish the race strongly.



From a squad of ten or so, the novices are improving week on week in their various 4+ combinations at all the local Tideway regattas, and I am looking forward to some wins before the season is out.

Similarly, the quad squad (Cris, Niall, Alex, Vasil, Bjørne) have showed creditably in Open 4x, competing regularly but just missing that elusive first win. The local regatta circuit also sees a lot of the trainee umpiring squad of Charles Pretzlik and Stuart Gibbons, and we wish them all the best for their exams later in the season.

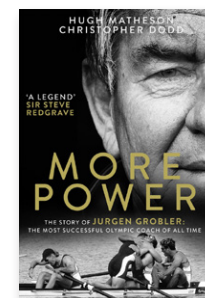
It was wonderful to see so many Cygnets down to celebrate the naming of our newest four/quad, Neil Jackson, after the various racing duties at Borne were concluded. Many thanks to Neil and Tim Jackson for the Chateau Jacquesson champagne which was very favourably received by those present. And thanks too to the quad squad for manning the BBQ all afternoon.

After a rainy Easter saw the spring sculling camp cancelled with red boards on the Shepperton stretch, a late camp was held over the weekend of Walton and Weybridge Regatta in early June. The novice squad had their first off-Tideway race of the season in the morning and then the afternoon was free for sculling practice from the club's upriver training facility. A good time was had by all, and a repeat visit may be on the cards for next year's racing.

Bedtime Reading

Not to be outdone by Paul Rawkins' excellent "*A History of Cygnet Rowing Club*", former captain Nick Bates has been hard at it editing "*More Power – the story of Jurgen Grobler*". Written by Hugh Matheson & Christopher Dodd it is published on 5th July (by Harper Collins). It will be available from Amazon (inevitably) and Waterstones (naturally) but we recommend keeping it in the rowing family and pre-ordering it from our friends at Rock-the-Boat, where you'll also find "*A History of Cygnet Rowing Club*".

The history is also available directly from [prawkins\[at\]googlemail.com](mailto:prawkins[at]googlemail.com) or by post to 30 Bracken Gardens, Barnes, SW13 9HW



Stop Press: 'Oily Rags' row at Henley *Paul Rawkins*

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the first occasion that a crew from Cygnet rowed at Henley Royal Regatta (HRR). That said, though, Cygnet's name does not actually grace the pages of the regatta programmes because the club raced under the colours of the Civil Service Rowing Association (CSRA). Nonetheless, it was the first time that any Cygnet member had raced at HRR.

Our club chairman, Nick Wylie, is fond of referring to himself as an 'oily rag' in his industry. He would have been in good company on the day that Cygnet RC was formed on 12th February 1890. Post Office employees may not have been the lowest of the low, but nor were they gentlemen and in the eyes of the Amateur Rowing Association (forerunner of British Rowing) any form of remunerated manual labour warranted the bizarre label 'professional'. This label would besmirch Cygnet, among other clubs, for almost half a century, barring them from competing in ARA-run Tideway regattas and HRR.

By the 1920s, Cygnet had worn down officialdom, invoking the assistance of the Civil Service Sports Council and the Duke of York (future George VI) along the way, and the club was begrudgingly granted affiliation to the ARA in 1923. While this was a major milestone in the club's evolution, HRR continued to abide by its own rules and the 'manual labour bar' remained firmly in place. But the times they were a-changing and at a juncture that could hardly have been more auspicious for the 'oily rags' at Cygnet.

In 1936 the Stewards of HRR stunned the rowing community when they invoked the 'manual labour bar' and rejected an entry for the Grand Challenge Cup from an Australian Olympic VIII bound for Berlin, on the grounds that they were all policemen. The decision was widely viewed as indefensible and sounded the death knell of the distinction between amateur and professional.

Thus, in April 1937, the ARA resolved to review the Association's amateur definitions and at a special meeting in June all references to manual labourers and artisans were deleted. The ARA had never sought to assume jurisdiction over its older counterpart, the Stewards of HRR. Nonetheless, the Stewards could hardly demur from this ground-breaking development and Henley followed suit the next day thereby opening the way for clubs like Cygnet to enter the regatta for the first time in 1938.

continued

Civil Service Rowing Association

Henley Royal Regatta, 27th June ~ 2nd July, 1938

Training Regimen*

Rise at 7.00am; grapefruit

3 mile walk broken by short spells of running and skipping

Cold bath followed by breakfast (no bacon or tea, milk preferred) at 9.00am

Rowing over the course at 11.00am

Cold lunch (no potatoes) at 1.00pm; one pint of beer

At rest 2.00~4.00pm, sleep if possible

Rowing over the course at 5.00pm

Dinner at 7.30pm (no potatoes or starchy stuff); one pint of beer

Comfortable stroll, bed by 10.30pm

Crew

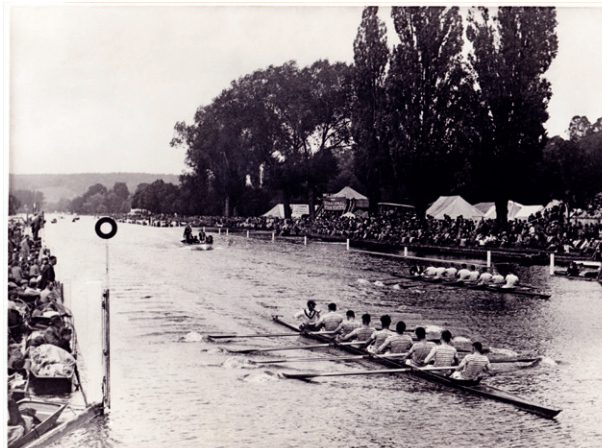
Bow, E.T.J.Lee (10st 5lb)
2, W.R.Lamb (10st 4lb)
3, R.N.Gurteen (11st)
4, O.J.Welham (12st 7lb)
5, W.A.Horton (13st)
6, G.W.Overman (13st)
7, B.W.Down (10st 6lb)
Str, G.P.Jefferies (10st 7lb)

Cox, A.Henry.

F.E.Bull (First Reserve)

Coach H.W.T.Sheppard

Boatmen Messrs Collins & Dowson



Back on the Tideway at Chiswick, the stars were in alignment at Cygnet. Following a successful season in 1937, the first VIII were ready to step up a gear to Thames Cup standard, the premier Vills event of the day at Class A regattas. Months of training were rewarded with a strong performance in the Head of the River in March 1938: Cygnet I finished in the top ten, putting it among some of the fastest crews in the country. Early silverware followed with two 'Thames Cup' wins at Walton and Chiswick, laying the foundation for an entry at HRR.

Today, it is hard to appreciate the euphoria that surrounded this achievement, but the message at the time was clear – the 'oily rags' at Cygnet needed to be taken seriously. Still, before taking the plunge and entering a crew for HRR, the Captaincy sought a reality check and consulted rowing heavy weights like Jack Beresford for reassurance. Beresford averred that the time was right and an entry was duly submitted for Thames Cup.

Much to the consternation of older hands at Cygnet, this was made under the name of the CSRA, although the crew was composed entirely of Cygnet members. However, few could dispute the fact that Cygnet's success throughout the 1930s owed more than a little to the backing and financial resources of the Civil Service Sports Council. This coupled with the lure of special leave and expenses carried the day and allowed those 'oily rags' on night duties to rearrange these to suit training outings.

Cygnet made its first formal appearance under CSRA colours at Marlow Regatta on 18th June. Some idea of the intensity of the competition can be gained from the fact that there were 28 entries in the Marlow Eights (Thames Cup Class). The CSRA's performance was reportedly unremarkable and the coxswain, A Henry, offered his resignation, but this was rebuffed.

The crew moved to Henley on Sunday, 26th June and lodged with Mrs Forman at the Old White Hart, Hart Street, long since converted into shops and galleries, at a cost of three and a half guineas per person per week. Evidently, some members of the crew were more taken than others with the atmosphere: 'the Henley course is unique, but the atmosphere of the town is so relaxing that it takes some time to get acclimatised', bewailed the coach. Several members apparently had difficulty adhering to the training regimen* that had been devised for the week.

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The CSRA had drawn Eton Excelsior and on the day of the race they took up their station on the Berks side. The London Times takes up the story: "Eton Excelsior rowed 41 (strokes) and Civil Service 38 in the first minute, Eton taking the lead and being clear at the top of the island. Eton Excelsior were a length and a half ahead at the Barrier in 2 min. 3 sec. and two lengths at Fawley in 3 min 33 sec. Civil Service were outpaced, but stuck to their task well and went up after passing the Mile Post". The final verdict was a win of one and a quarter lengths for Eton Excelsior in a time of 7 minutes 32 seconds, the second fastest time of the day.

The ensuing days brought with them the inevitable post mortem about how much better the crew should have been prepared, not to mention the observation that experts believed the Bucks station (drawn by Eton) to be worth an advantage of three quarters of a length. G P Jefferies' diary entry was rather scathing: "Our crew was the last to arrive at Henley. The time available was insufficient to become acclimatised or to get to know how to row the course or to settle down to serious training".

Nonetheless, it was a momentous occasion for Civil Service rowing and Cygnet had not disgraced itself. Yet the stigma of amateur versus professional refused to be silenced, as an indignant contributor to the Postal Telegraph recorded: "A considerable amount of nonsense was published in the press about the Metropolitan Police rowing under the new A.R.A, amateur definition which now permits 'wage earners and artisans' to compete. A really objectionable comment appeared about W.E.C. Horwood, the N.A.R.A. sculling champion, who was described as a coach builder earning £4/10/- per week. The term 'Civil Servant' is conveniently vague. Perhaps we should have been more in the news as a crew of Post Office Sorters with our respective wages quoted. It is as well we were not."

By the time Nick Wylie and I joined the club in the early 1970s, of the original HRR crew only 'Joe' Lee and 'John' Bull (first reserve) were in evidence, along with the boatman 'Bob' Dowson. The first time Cygnet rowed under its own name at HRR was in 1973. Remarkably, Dowson coached a Cygnet Thames Cup entry at HRR in 1978 and Bull stepped up to the plate in 1992. The first time Cygnet won a heat(s) at HRR was in 1996 when a Wyfold IV won through two days to the quarter finals – times change and there were no 'oily rags' among them.

Lest we forget

Paul Rawkins

This year marks the culmination of the centennial commemorations of the First World War. Among the events being staged over the summer to commemorate the rowers who died in this conflict will be an exhibition in Henley-on-Thames during regatta week.

Located in The Old Fire Station behind Henley Town Hall at the top of the High Street (directly up from the bridge), the exhibition is entitled:

'Rowers of Henley and the Thames who died during World War 1'.

There will be Memorial Books on display with a page devoted to each of the 474 rowers who died, including eleven members of Cygnet.

There will also be a large memorial plaque with four lines devoted to each man who died.

Mike Willoughby has been the driving force behind this project and Cygnet has been proud to be involved with it. Please drop in and introduce yourself if you have time between races and social fixtures.

Henley Lunch

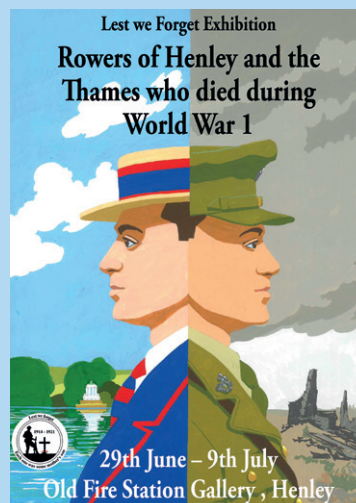
Stuart Gibbons

On the subject of First World War commemorations, this year's Henley Lunch date at Leander Club has been arranged to coincide with Remembrance Weekend.

So for this year only, the annual lunch will take place on Saturday 10th November, rather than the last weekend of October.

The lunch will be £49 per head and the four course meal will be to the usual exceptional standard – I know, I've seen the menu! Further details, menu and a booking form will be published in due course but please note the change of date.

Contact: [leanderlunch\[at\]cygnet-rc.org.uk](mailto:leanderlunch[at]cygnet-rc.org.uk)



Reunited after sixty years

Paul Rawkins

Earlier this year, we had an inquiry through the website from Lynne Hill who was trying to track down the rowing club where her father, Les Togwell, had rowed in the late 1940s/early 1950s. Judging from the descriptions that Les had given her, Lynne thought that the club must have been Cygnet.

Combing through the minute books for that era disclosed no such name. However, further sleuthing revealed that Les had in fact rowed for Crescent, Cygnet's sister club based on the River Lee in London's East End. As luck would have it, Pete Bailey, one of our longstanding 'Friends of Cygnet' recalled rowing with 'Toggers' at Crescent throughout the late 1940s and early 50s and had many tales to relate.

Crescent had limited access to rowing craft on the Lee and often visited Cygnet to experience the rare treat of rowing in an VIII on the Tideway. The Head of the River and the Civil Service Regatta were regular fixtures and both clubs went head-to-head annually for the President's Cup, the premier Vllls event of the day at the CS regatta. By a further stroke of luck, we were able to turn up the crew list for one of the civil service regattas that Les had rowed in. Among his crew mates on that occasion were Len Huggett, Bailey and John Ellis, all subsequent friends and Cygnet members.

On 26th May, we hosted a surprise reception at Cygnet to mark 'Toggers' 90th birthday. Les spent a 'magic' morning being reunited with the President's Cup after sixty years and rediscovering the boathouse (and bar). While the equipment may have moved on from the heavy clinkers of that era, his memories were as sharp as ever and, had the opportunity presented itself, he would almost certainly have been game for a row. His day concluded with a glass of bubbly and a slap-up birthday lunch at Ye White Hart – where else!

