

# Leander News

Summer 2015



Leander Club



## Leander News

The official newsletter of Leander Club is published twice yearly, in late Spring and Autumn

Articles, photographs and ideas, as well as news of our Members, are always welcome and should be addressed to:

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Cover photo: Leander athletes celebrate after winning the Club pennant at the Women's Eights Head of the River Race in March

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## Captain's Report

It's been a busy winter for our athletes, on and off the water, as Olympic and World Champion Alex Gregory writes, in his first report following his appointment as Captain of Leander Club

At this time of year we all start to feel the weight of winter lift off our shoulders. For those of us who spend cold days on the river it's a huge relief to feel the warmth of the sun on our backs. Winter training is a tough necessity and an essential part of our sport, but if we get it right, and train with commitment and consistency, life will be far more simple once the summer racing begins.

Leander has been a buzzing hive of energy throughout these dark months and the athletes have been impressive in their drive to achieve. The feeling in the

boathouse and around the crew room is one of positive intensity. There's an urge to perform whilst enjoying the process at the same time. This has created a fantastic vibe on and off the water, and the positive effects can be seen in the results from the busy winter racing schedule.

To kick off the New Year a forty-strong squad - our largest group ever - headed off to the annual January training camp in Banyoles, Spain. Camps are an essential part of the training regime - it's a chance for athletes to get away from the stresses and strains of daily life, where work and



other commitments complicate the simplicity of training. Whilst away the sole focus is on physical, mental and technical improvement and, since returning, the results speak for themselves.



Our largest group ever attended January training camp in Banyoles

Then it was straight up to Lincolnshire for those seeking international selection. Boston is never one of the athletes' favourite racing venues but an important and necessary GB trial saw some very impressive results. Held over 5000 metres it's a gruelling test against the clock. In the heavyweight men's event we saw Leander members in eight of the top ten pairs, in a field containing all the nation's top rowers. In the men's single sculling event we saw seven athletes from Leander finish in the top ten, six in the top twenty for the women and nine lightweight men in the top twenty. These results are incredibly impressive, and show our depth at the very top level.

Offering support to the wider rowing world is an important part of what we do at Leander – it's all about giving something back to help promote and improve rowing in general. It allows us to hold our heads high, knowing that our support helps everyone else in the sport. Each week schools and universities are welcomed into the Club to use the facilities for training purposes. We also

provide crews that both Oxford and Cambridge can race against in their important Boat Race preparation. Fixtures are organised so this year the Ladies' Plate group first raced Oxford on our home stretch. The crew raced excellently, with Leander pressurising an already very well-drilled Oxford crew. Over a series of pieces Oxford came out on top overall, but we certainly made them work very hard for it! Our athletes showed excellent early speed which bodes very well for the coming months of racing.

Early March saw a large entry into Reading University Head. Again it's fantastic to support another local club with which we have strong ties. A large Leander entry really does boost an event and so it was pleasing to see so many boats racing on the Thames slightly further upstream. We entered two eights which finished 2nd and 11th, as well as a lightweight quad which won very impressively and a junior quad which came home 5th in its category. It was another strong start to the 2015 campaign.

Development of our athletes is something we take very seriously at Leander. We have a fantastic network of support through the rowing system, and development of young juniors is very much on the rise. This was seen at The Scullery – an event at Dorney Lake designed to support and develop junior sculling at all levels across the UK. Leander entered three junior quads – the largest entry we have ever made – and they finished 3rd, 7th and 14th. It was a really fantastic set of results in a very competitive field. We are starting to see a real strength in depth as our junior rowing programme develops.

It's an incredibly exciting time for women's sport as we all see from the huge amount of recent publicity. At Leander we are very much at the forefront of women's rowing and, as recent performances show, we are becoming ever stronger. For the first time in Leander's history we entered two eights in the Women's Eights Head and the results were impressive. A close 2nd place for Leander's first crew behind a GB international squad composite, and a 4th place finish for Leander's second crew.



Leander took the top three slots at Kingston Head



These results are very promising for the Club – never before have we had such a strong contingent of women, and for them to be performing so strongly bodes very well for the future. Many of our current squad of women are firmly embedded in the GB International programme with more vying for selection this year.

There are just a few times in the year when Leander's international athletes join with the club athletes to train and form racing crews. It's always a very important time for us all, and brings the Club together, highlighting what an incredibly strong, deep, supportive team we have. For the first time in recent years we placed an entry of four men's eights into Kingston Head. The intention was for this to be a preparation event before the men's Head of the River Race and it turned out to be an excellent decision. The first crew won the event, with 2nd and 3rd place also being taken by Leander. Our younger development crew put in a storming performance and finished 7th, not too far behind. It was great race practice,

taken seriously, but enjoyed by all, and again we showed support for a smaller event. We mixed in with the rowing community, had fun and performed very well. Soon afterwards we took two crews onto the Tideway, this time to support Cambridge in a fixture. Leander's first boat pitched in at a high level and beat the Cambridge Blue Boat in the first piece but were overhauled in the second. Leander's other crew, made up entirely of scullers, raced Goldie and won both pieces very impressively considering their lack of time in a sweep boat beforehand. What's more important than the results here is the backing and support we show to the Oxbridge clubs and the useful race preparation these fixtures give both parties.

As the Head season draws to a close it's always a target to finish on a high. It was important this year for us to try to regain the headship from Molesey at the Head of the River Race, and place as many crews as high up the ranking as possible. The Leander first crew took the win sixteen seconds ahead of the chasing field, an

impressive verdict. All five crews we entered finished within the top twenty which was an unprecedented performance and, considering the differing levels of development of each crew, this really does reflect the fantastic shape of the rowing programme at Leander.

Writing these words gives me an enormous sense of pride for the club I represent and to all the Members who put so much time and energy into achieving at such a high level. The men and women on the water sweat, bleed and cry for their sport, but none of that could be done without the support structure behind them. From the coaching team to the kitchen staff, Leander is one huge engine, heading along an incredibly positive pathway, backed by an enormous force of momentum from years past. We must all enjoy what's happening right here, right now, and celebrate every small success, but keep our minds on the future and continue to push for more.



Supporting Cambridge University in a fixture

## Regatta notes

We very much look forward to welcoming Members and their guests to this year's Regatta 2015, and would ask you to bear in mind a few points, which will be all too familiar to our regular visitors:

- **Car parking:** The 'Leander' car park is actually owned by Henley Royal Regatta and is reserved for competitors' use throughout the week. Consequently it is not available for Members' use from 29 June to 5 July inclusive.
- **Badges:** Access to Leander Club for Members and their guests is by badge only, and further badges can be obtained, as usual, from our Badge Office situated inside the main gate.
- **Dress code:** Leander Club maintains a strict dress code which applies to everyone.
- **Dining:** Demand for lunch at the Club has been brisk and we are now completely sold out virtually every day. Members and their guests who haven't pre-booked places for lunch may find seating at the bars where they may purchase a simple meal or snack, or the dining room is available for dinner in the evening.
- **TV coverage:** News that the Regatta is to be screened live on television have been warmly greeted, and we are currently exploring the options for Members to view the coverage in the Club this year.
- **Bars:** Members and their guests are invited to enjoy our Riverview Bar, particularly at the end of racing, when the bars within the Stewards' Enclosure are closed.



Fine pink fizz and the regatta – what could be more Leander? Digby Fine English is the official sparkling wine producer for Leander Club, with the centre of our new, six-year strategic relationship being Digby's LEANDER PINK Non Vintage. Our own pink fizz from 100% English-grown grapes is a blend that celebrates England's most vibrant Pinot Noir fruit. After its launch at our Meet the Athletes event on 19 February, the collaboration between Digby and Leander Club will stretch across the Olympics in 2016 and 2020 as well as our bicentennial celebrations in 2018. Sales of Leander Pink support the Leander Academy, training the rowing world champions of the future.

Digby was founded to produce the ultimate expression of English sparkling wine, capturing quintessential Englishness in a glass. Drawing inspiration from the history of English invention, the company's namesake is Kenelm Digby, the Englishman who invented the modern wine bottle in the 1630s. Not unlike Leander's approach to winning gold, Digby cultivates relationships with some of the best growers in England then seeks world-class performance by artfully blending together their complementary flavours. Digby's first vintage was recently recognised as the best sparkling in England by industry luminaries.

### DIGBY FINE ENGLISH LEANDER PINK Non Vintage

Protected Designation of Origin – English Sparkling Wine available behind the bar or via the Concessions page on the Leander website.

You can purchase to enjoy at home or for your own picnic:

[www.digby-fine-english.com](http://www.digby-fine-english.com)

Enjoy a glass or a bottle and support the Academy at the same time!





## Coaches' Development

In its pursuit of excellence Leander places coaching as its No. 1 priority, in allocation of resources, to enable our athletes to perform at the highest level and to maximise their potential. But of course the Club's coaches also need their own professional development, as Director of Rowing Mark Banks explains:

Running a high performance programme demands special qualities, including the right balance of knowledge, skills and experience. This is why coach education and development is top of Leander's priorities. It is a view shared by both UK Sport and Sport Coach UK, who are both looking to place coaching on the same professional level as other more traditional professional occupations.

Developing professionalism in rowing is not just about coaching at the water's edge. To do this successfully means that coaches must operate with the latest cutting-edge technology, as well as have a management and leadership role. Coaches must demonstrate equity and fairness in the treatment of their athletes, so that they not only gain respect and confidence from them, but also from their fellow coaches in the team. Confidence and trust have to be gained – they do not come as of right. This is no different to

any other professional person in their dealings with business clients.

At present the Leander coaching team includes several young people who have moved from one role as a high performance athlete to another coaching at the Club. Our aim is to provide all our coaches with the best possible education and programme of continuing professional development. The reason is simple – athletes joining our high performance programme should expect to receive high performance coaching. Accordingly we are committed to work with the GB rowing team (GBRT) and have agreed with them to put each of our coaches through the appropriate British Rowing coach education programme. GBRT has helped in this regard through an additional contribution to our high performance programme funding.

Preparation and coordination of the programme is managed by Brian Armstrong on my behalf, and a coach



education programme pathway is prepared for each individual. Our aim is to get all our young coaches qualified to the Level 3 Award of British Rowing.

The Club can now claim to have encouraged more than twenty young rowers on the pathway to a coaching career. All are themselves products of the high performance programme, having benefitted from working under the Club's coaching team. Having taken their first steps at Leander, they are now coaching at schools and clubs all over the country.

Here at Leander we have a unique set-up whereby the Chief Coach has also played a lead role in the GBRT as well as supervising activities at the Club. This started with my predecessors, Mike Spracklen and Juren Grobler, who coached many GB medal-winning crews over the years, both men and women. They did this at the same time as they ran the Leander high performance programme, and it's a pattern which I have been pleased to follow.

I'd like to think that the individual records of the Chief Coaches at Leander speak for themselves, but supporting us over the years have been many other gifted coaches, including Mike Genchi, Terry O'Neill, John Pilgrim-Morris, Pat Sweeney, Rob Morgan, Chris Collerton and Rob Dauncey, all of whom have made their own mark on Leander's continuing success.



Brian Armstrong has been one of the Club's most long-serving volunteer coaches

## Turkey Sculls



Almost fifty Leander internationals and club athletes competed in the 2014 Turkey Sculls – the Club's traditional pre-Christmas event.

After racing in scratch quads over a 200m upstream dash to the clubhouse the winners were presented with prize turkeys by Tom Copas, of the Copas Partnership, who have sponsored the event for many years.

The pace was fast and furious off the start, with senior athletes from the club's Rentacrew division electing not to take part.

"When your age is greater than the stroke rate, it's time to call it a day" said Club President Jeremy Randall.

The winners were Graham Lyons, Andy Joel, Yasmin Tredell and Jack Beaumont.

## Ladies' Plate 1985



Thirty years ago Leander was not enjoying anything like the level of success we see today. With the Club's financial status at a parlous level, and a vote of 'no confidence' having been passed in the existing committee, the situation was ripe for change. In the so-called Pink Revolution a new committee took over, under the chairmanship of the late Tom Boswell, and with Jeremy 'Rass' Randall as the new Hon. Secretary.

When Leander won the Ladies' Plate in 1985 it was their first eight-oared victory at Henley for more than ten years, and marked a new beginning for the Club's fortunes, which careful management has ensured are maintained to the present day.

In the 1985 final Leander beat Garda Siochana, of Ireland, by a canvas – their winning time of 6 mins 26 secs was faster than the winning time in the Grand! To mark the 30th anniversary of this historic event the crew will row over the course during the Saturday lunch interval of this year's Regatta on 4 July.





As a current Olympic, World, and European champion, as well as Henley title holder, the new Leander captain is amply qualified to lead the Club's athletes into the next Olympiad.

At a height of 6' 6" and tipping the scales at 96 kg Alex Gregory is the archetypal gentle giant. At school he was a natural for the rugby team but didn't like what he heard from the games staff.

"I was told I had to be hard, tough, and aggressive – that's not me at all! I wanted to prove people wrong, there's no need to be macho to win. I wanted to prove you can be nice as well" he said.

"I want to make friends with the opposition and still beat

them, and to do that you have to be tough inside. It's what you do in your mind that counts when you race" he added.

With four world titles and an Olympic gold medal to his credit Alex is now one of the senior members of the GB team.

"I never imagined myself being captain of such a prestigious club – I feel very proud and privileged to be in this position" said Alex.

He had first visited Leander as a 17-year old member of Evesham Rowing Club. He and another Junior had shown early promise and were invited down for the weekend.

"I was in the gym with Matthew Pinsent and James Cracknell. There was one area with carpet on the floor, and the loos were made of marble – I couldn't believe it" Alex continued.

Loyalty is an important attribute for the Reading University graduate who raced for his alma mater for two or three years after graduation.

"I wanted to support the university, because they had supported me in the early years and I wanted to give something back" he said.

Selection in the GB men's four with three Leander athletes may have played a part in his decision to move clubs, but he denied any pressure to do so.

"There's a perception that Leander puts pressure on athletes to move clubs. That may have been true once upon a time, but times have changed and it's just not

like that anymore. Athletes join because they want to, and they see the Club as the next step on their own pathway. Within the GB team we are respectful of each other and each other's clubs" he added.

Home life for Alex now means a rented house quite in the Oxfordshire countryside with partner Emily and their children Jasper, 5, and Daisy, 1½.

The countryside suits his love of the outdoor life and interest in the environment. It means that litterbugs are one of the few things in life which really irritates him.

It's not just his children who are proud of his achievements – back home in north Gloucestershire his parents Chris and Trish follow him around the globe as members of the GB Supporters' Club. Meanwhile his younger brother Alastair has also rowed, having spent the last season boating out of Molesey.

After all the training, whether at home or at camp, Alex likes to pull back into family life and simply switch off. Not for him the endless competitive drive which finds some athletes looking to win every aspect of their lives, including the latest video game or the race back to the team bus.

"We spend so long being competitive – it's physically and mentally draining. I can't be like that when I'm just playing a game – I don't understand it" he explained.

"I always wanted to be the best that I could. Rowing has allowed me to do that. I enjoy rowing. I enjoy what I do. I'm very lucky" he said.



Alex won his second successive GB trials partnered by Moe Sbihi, the Captain of Molesey BC

*Text and images by Robert Treharne Jones*

## Lest We Forget

Our feature this month includes two members of the 1908 Olympic men's eight who perished in the Great War. Frederick Septimus Kelly and Gilchrist MacLagan were both Oxford graduates who were destined to follow very different careers before the conflict cut their lives so short.



**Frederick Septimus Kelly DSC** was born in Sydney, Australia and educated at Sydney Grammar School before being sent to Eton, where he stroked the school eight to victory in the Ladies' Challenge Plate at Henley Royal Regatta in 1899.

Elected to Leander membership in 1900, he was awarded a music scholarship to Oxford. Kelly then went up to Balliol, where he took up sculling and won the Diamonds at Henley in 1902, beating Raymond Etherington-Smith in the final. He also came president of the university musical club and a leading light at the Sunday evening concerts at Balliol.

In 1903 he rowed at 4 in the Boat Race, which Oxford lost by 6 lengths, but Kelly went on to win the Diamonds at Henley again that summer, beating Jack Beresford in the final. He also won the Wingfield Sculls, the Amateur Championship of the Thames.

On leaving Oxford he moved to Leander and was in the crews which won the Grand at Henley in 1903, 1904 and 1905 and also the Stewards' in 1906. In 1905 he again won the Diamonds and his time of 8 mins 10 secs stood as the course record for more than 30 years. Kelly's last appearance in a racing boat was in the Olympic crew of 1908, when Leander beat Belgium in the final.

After leaving Oxford with a fourth in history, Kelly studied the piano at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, and on his return to London acted as an adviser to the Classical Concert Society and used his influence in favour of the recognition of modern composers. In 1911 he visited Sydney and gave some concerts, and in 1912 took part in chamber music concerts in London. He performed with Pablo Casals, and he helped organise a concert in London by Maurice Ravel.

Following the outbreak of war in 1914, Kelly was commissioned into the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve for service with the Royal Naval Division with his friends who included the poet Rupert Brooke.

Kelly was wounded twice at Gallipoli, where he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and reached the rank of lieutenant-commander. At Gallipoli he wrote his scores in his tent at base camp, including his tribute to Brooke, *Elegy for String Orchestra*: "In Memoriam Rupert Brooke" (1915), conceived in the wake of Brooke's death. Kelly was among the party who buried him on Skiros.

Kelly survived the Gallipoli slaughter, only to die at Beaucourt-sur-l'Ancre, France, when rushing a German machine gun post in the last days of the Battle of the Somme in November 1916. He lies in Martinsart's British Cemetery, not far from where he fell, at the age of 35.



Kelly's grave in the British Cemetery at Martinsart



The final of the 1908 Olympic men's eights





**Gilchrist Stanley Maclagan** was born in London in 1879, the son of Dr Thomas Maclagan, who is credited with discovering the use of aspirin in the treatment of rheumatism.

He was educated at Eton, where he coxed Victory, before going up to Magdalen, where he steered Oxford in four successive Boat Races from 1899 to 1902, although his crews only recorded one win during that time, in 1901.

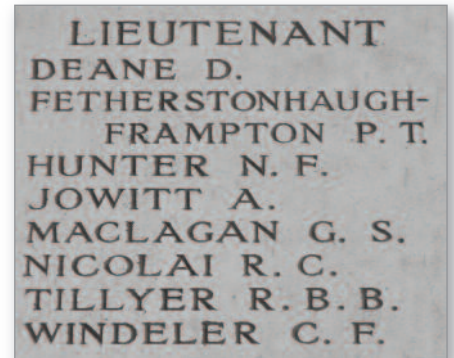
His first Boat Race having qualified him for Leander membership in 1899 he went on to cox Leander crews to victory in the Grand on six occasions, thereby setting a record which is unlikely ever to be beaten.

In 1908 he coxed the Leander eight, with Kelly in the 2 seat, at the London Olympics. In the first Olympic regatta to be held over the Henley course Leander dispatched Hungary and Canada in the heats, before a decisive win in the final against Belgium.

His sporting prowess was not confined to rowing – he was also reported to be an excellent shot and a fine fisherman.

Maclagan had become a member of the London Stock Exchange in 1904 and was later Hon. Sec. of the Amateur Rowing Association.

In August 1914 he was gazetted 2nd Lieutenant in the Reserve Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment, and four months later he was attached to the 1st Battalion and sent to France. He was killed in action on Pilkem Ridge, near Ypres, on 25 April 1915, three days after the first gas attack on the Canadians, whom his battalion had been sent to relieve.



Maclagan's name is recorded on the Menin Gate

## Pink Hippo Club

The winners of our Spring Draw are:

- 1st Prize £300 DG Stuart Esq.
- 2nd Prize £200 GR Horne Esq.
- 3rd Prize £100 JK Skuse Esq.



## Tom Heap

Following our May 2014 biography of Thomas Gillespie, the first Leander casualty in the Great War, Members may have noticed a much fuller account of Gillespie's life on BBC One 'Countryfile', broadcast on Remembrance Sunday, 9 November. It transpired that Gillespie was the great-uncle of one of the show's presenters, Tom Heap, who later told us that an erg session in the gym was the nearest he had got to any rowing prowess of his own.

It is presumptuous to look back 100 years and say we can understand a life but some attributes give the feeling of insight. Rowing is a path to illuminating my great uncle Tom Gillespie. My mother (his niece) always spoke about him as an Olympic rower. In the introduction to the Letters from Flanders his sporting prowess and physique is much praised. The book is largely made up of letters from his brother Alexander who was the more scholarly of the two. Many comparisons are made between the academic one and the physical yet without prejudice: Tom was strong and 'a good sort'. The underlying implication, I suspect, is that a glorious British Empire required both brain and brawn.

When we filmed at New College and saw the archives I was moved by the precise records of his weight, and his signature of attendance at various dining clubs – both fitness and fun were clearly important. The military records suggest he was a brave and skilled officer despite his inexperience. I am sure his fitness was an asset in combat but bullets don't avoid Olympians.

I like to propel a boat over water myself but – heresy warning – prefer the paddle to the oar. Kayaking, especially in the sea is something I truly love. I have been known to trouble the rowing machine at the gym, occasionally achieving a respectable Concept 2 2000m time – for an ageing amateur that is!

## Obituaries

### Christopher Guy Vere Davidge OBE, DL

**1929 – 2015**

**Elected to membership 1948**

**Captain 1954–55**

**Chairman 1969–77**

Christopher Davidge undoubtedly 'rowed his way' through a truly remarkable life.

In 1948 he stroked the Eton crew to victory in the Ladies' Plate, the first of nine Henley wins, which also included the Grand and the Stewards' twice, three wins in the Silver Goblets, and one in the Double Sculls.

He rowed at every Regatta from 1947 to 1963 and coached the Royal Air Force to victories in the Thames and Wyfold Challenge Cups.

His love of Henley Royal Regatta knew no limits and was practised quietly and with careful consideration. He was ever anxious that Henley should be a special happening for every rower, not only for the internationals but also for the ordinary club, student and school rowers and this was always in his mind in the work he did and the advice that he gave.

He was elected a Steward in 1967 and served on the Committee of Management for 31 years.

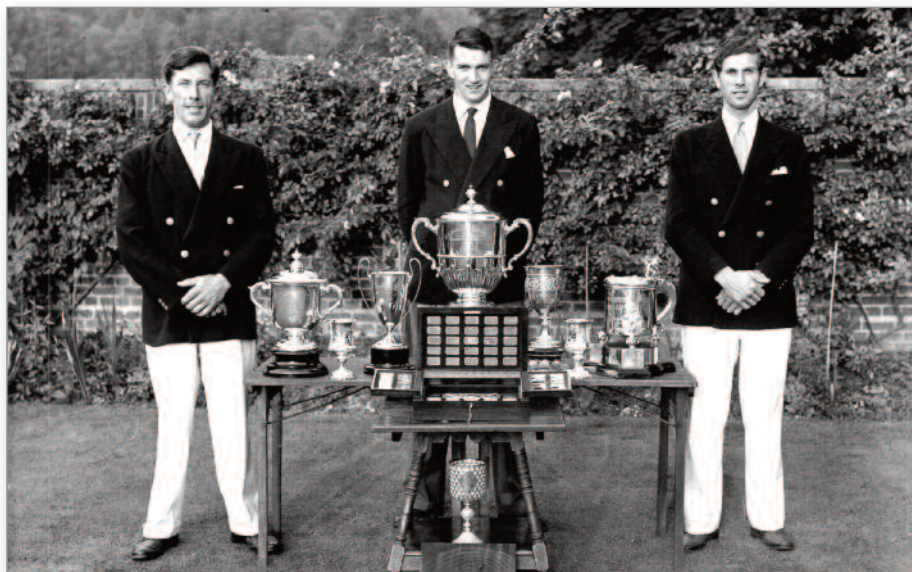
His first Boat Race in 1949 was a classic, with Cambridge, stroked by David Jennens, coming from behind to win, on the outside of the final bend, by a quarter of a length. Despite losing the race he maintained a firm friendship with David, as with many of his other adversaries on the water.

He was President of OUBC in 1950, but unable to row due to jaundice, and again in 1951, the year of the Oxford sinking, but in his final Boat Race in 1952 he won by a canvas.

Very early in his career he realised that the day of the amateur in international rowing had passed and that a new approach was necessary. He was a founder member of Barn Cottage at the start of a New Age, in which many of his contemporaries were to benefit.

He carried British Rowing into this new age and made many realise that success could only be achieved through a hitherto unknown degree of expertise and professionalism and when, after his active rowing career ended and he headed British Rowing, our sport blossomed and success duly followed.

He was greatly admired by Thomi Keller, the former president of FISA, and they became firm



**Christopher Davidge (left) with Sam Mackenzie and Tony Leadley, after another successful Regatta**

friends, the more so after the success of both the World Junior Championships in 1973 and the World Championships in 1975, both held at Nottingham, and in which both men played major roles.

In 1975 Christopher achieved the unique distinction of umpiring the final of the men's eights at the World Championships, the University Boat Race and the final of the Ladies' Plate – an achievement that is highly unlikely to be equalled.

He was immensely proud of his country and once said, at Glyndebourne, that "if you come here, watch the Trooping the Colour, and attend the Regatta, you can truly believe that Great Britain is Great". It was fitting indeed when he was appointed OBE in 1982.

His participation and service to the Olympic Games spanned 36 years, three times as a competitor, at Helsinki, Melbourne and Rome, three times as a GB official and four times as a FISA delegate.

He and his wife Jill were wonderful hosts and many of us enjoyed their generous hospitality in such wonderful surroundings at their home in Northamptonshire, including Christopher's passion for fireworks.

In addition to all this he still found time to be able to serve on the Councils of Lloyds and the British Olympic Association, as well as being a director of several companies. All of this was achieved with extraordinary modesty and efficiency and, at the same time, he somehow managed to add a 'special touch'.

He was my closest rowing friend – a friend one could confide and trust in, one who would

listen and, after careful consideration, would advise. For this I and many others here this morning will ever be thankful.

A man who truly rowed his way through life.

Well rowed, Christopher, very well rowed indeed.

*Angus Robertson*

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### Jonathan Harrison

**1931 – 2015**

**Elected to membership 1987**

Losing finalist for Trinity, Oxford in the Visitors' in 1952, and a semifinalist in the same event the following year. Stroked Leander in the Grand in 1956.

### Robin Hoskyn MC

**1922 – 2015**

**Elected to membership 1948**

Raced for 1st and 3rd Trinity in the Ladies' and the Wyfold at Henley in 1948. Based in Switzerland for many years, and regularly attended Leander dinners held to coincide with Lucerne regatta.

### Dr Aubrey Jones

**1936 – 2014**

**Elected to membership 1991**

### His Hon. Judge Jeremy McMullen QC

**1948 – 2015**

**Elected to membership 2013**

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## Ray Painter

**1931 – 2015**

**Elected to membership 1979**

Raymond Henry John Painter was born in Southall, West London, and spent his early youth during the War years. As that conflict drew to a close, he left school at the age of 14 to commence a career in commercial property agency and valuation that was to last until his mid 70s

His introduction to rowing occurred later in his life, when he watched his son training and competing at Latymer Upper School and Thames Tradesmen's.

After a brief go at sculling himself he was hooked and, indeed, was a regular in his single on the Henley stretch until a year ago.

His business acumen in the property world led to being asked to join the committee at Tradesmen's almost as soon as he had joined the club. Very soon he was made Chairman, an office he was to occupy for many years, including the club's finest hour, when it won the Grand at Henley in 1976 and provided half the silver medal Montreal Olympic eight, together with members of Leander Club. This was to spark a long and fruitful relationship between the two clubs of which he was especially proud.

Before long he was elected to Leander membership and asked to serve on the Committee, eventually becoming Divisional representative on Council of the ARA. His property skills assisted Tradesmen's, with their move to a new site by Barnes Bridge, and Leander, with their clubhouse re-development.

Probably his greatest contribution to our sport has been the legacy created by achieving pragmatic commercial rental agreements with local councils for clubs. This started with the Tradesmen's club house move and went on to include settlements for Henley and Kingston among others. The legal precedent he achieved means that clubs throughout the country can,

to this day, cite this as evidence in negotiating realistic rent reviews.

He eventually lost his battle with cancer on 11 January, and his ashes will be sprinkled on the river outside Leander where, in his own words, 'I had a lot of fun'.

He is survived by his second wife, Barbara; his daughter, Dawn; and his son, Gary, who is currently a Great Britain FISA Umpire.

*Gary Painter*



## Dan Topolski

**1945 – 2015**

**Elected to membership 1966**

Daniel Topolski was a Leander member for almost 50 years, but he will be remembered as the Oxford Blue who turned his hand to coaching, and guided the Dark Blues to ten successive Boat Race victories from 1976 to 1985.

After Westminster school, where he was Captain of Boats, he read geography at New College, Oxford, where his social life took equal precedence to rowing. He won the reserves race with Isis in 1966, and the 1967 Boat Race, only to lose the following year – a defeat which sparked his coaching career.

He became Oxford chief coach in 1973, when Cambridge was the dominant force on the river. Dan's tenacity and attention to detail soon brought dividends and three years later Oxford began their record sequence of wins.

One of his most memorable wins was the so-called Oxford Mutiny of 1987, when most of the crew fell out with Dan and his selection methods. Oxford, boating their reserves, triumphed against the odds, but it marked the end of Dan's role as chief coach.

While he was still coaching Oxford, Dan was a GB international athlete, winning silver in the lightweight fours at the World Championships in 1975, before becoming world champion in lightweight eights in Amsterdam in 1977.

In 1990 Dan joined the BBC's commentary team and also wrote for the Evening Standard and the Observer. Elected a Steward of Henley Royal Regatta in 1991, he was the British Association of Rowing Journalists' journalist of

the year in 2012, and was made an honorary fellow of New College in 2013.

One of Dan's last appearances on the rowing scene was at the 2014 World Championships, when he was invited back to Amsterdam, scene of his own world title, to help present the trophies to the winners of the men's lightweight eights.

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## Dick Pryce-Jones

**1948 – 2015**

**Elected to membership 2002**

First Executive-Secretary of Cambridge University Boat Club

## Sir Anthony Reeve KCMG

**1938 – 2014**

**Elected to membership 1960**

Raced for Merton College, Oxford in the Visitors' in 1960 and later became British diplomat and ambassador.

## Professor John Richards

**1930 – 2015**

**Elected to membership 1952**

Stoked the winning Magdalen crew in the Visitors' in 1953 having previously stoked the crew that went Head in Summer Eights.

## Denis Sugrue

**1922 – 2015**

**Elected to membership 1948**

Coxed the first Ireland crew to compete internationally – the men's eight at the 1948 London Olympics.

## Michael Thompson

**1934 – 2015**

**Elected to membership 1980**

Raced for 1st and 3rd Trinity in the Thames at Henley in 1957.

## Gurney Underwood

**1925 – 2014**

**Elected to membership 1949**

Coxed at Molesey, Cambridge University, London (where his crew included Graham Hill) and Leander. Secretary of Leander 1972-73 and President of Molesey 1991.

## David Wilson

**1945 – 2015**

**Elected to membership 2000**

## David Wynne

**1926 – 2014**

**Elected to membership 1949**

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## GB Trials

Leander athletes were once again on top form for the final leg of GB trials, held at Caversham. Single sculler Vicky Thornley beat Olympic champion Katherine Grainger to win the women's event, while Charles Cousins and Jamie Kirkwood repeated their winning ways in the heavy and lightweight men's sculls.

And in the men's pairs the Leander captain, Alex Gregory, partnered Molesey's Moe Sbihi to record first place in the men's pairs.

Vicky Thornley burst out of the start to take the lead after 100m, and was one length ahead at the halfway mark. After easing out her advantage she crossed the line four lengths clear of Grainger, with Frances Houghton of UL in third and Leander's Jess Leyden, the former junior world champion, in fourth.

"I was really pleased, that race went to plan and it was definitely my best rowing of the weekend" said Vicky afterwards.

For heavyweight sculler Charles Cousins it was business as usual, after he won for the third year in a row. World U23 medallist Angus Groom won Saturday's time trial, when Leander athletes took the top eight places, but Cousins never looked in danger come Sunday's final.

Graeme Thomas of Agecroft took second place in a tight battle ahead of Pete Lambert, with Angus Groom just 0.03 sec behind in fourth.

Leander's lightweight sculler Jamie Kirkwood completed a return to form, following a knee injury, to win the lightweight singles final. His was the most exuberant celebration of the day as he punched his boat and slapped the water in delight. In second place was Kirkwood's doubles partner and clubmate, Will Fletcher, while Olympic bronze medallist Richard Chambers was third.

Alex Gregory and Moe Sbihi came out top for the second year running in a star-studded men's pair final. The two



Jamie Kirkwood



Vicky Thornley

men, both reigning world champions in the men's four, soon took a length out of a high-quality field and never lost control of their lead.

Alex Gregory was typically unassuming after his win.

"That was possibly one of the hardest races of the year for us, against our mates, our team mates, our work colleagues. There was lots of pressure on us as the lead pair and we've been feeling it for the last three weeks. That was really important" he said.

"It was a really good weekend for Leander – our GB guys performed as usual, but our



Charles Cousins

club athletes really were way above all expectations" said chief coach Mark Banks.



Moe Sbihi (Molesey) and Alex Gregory



## NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of Leander Club will be held in the Marquee at the Clubhouse, Henley-on-Thames, on Sunday 28th June 2015 at 11.00 am

### AGENDA

1. To read the Notice convening the Meeting
2. To approve the Minutes of the General Meeting held on 27 June 2014
3. To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 27 June 2014
4. To consider any matters arising from the Minutes
5. To receive the Chairman's Report (incorporating finance report)
6. To approve the Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2014
7. To appoint Auditors for the year 2016
8. To receive the Captain's Report
9. To agree the Annual Subscription rates for the year 2016, as proposed by the Committee at £300 for UK members, £150 for Overseas Members and £90 for Members under the age of 30
10. Elections to Committee:
  - a) None of the elected Officers is due to retire this year. The Captain is a member of Committee ex officio.
  - b) The following Members have retired by rotation and, being eligible under Rule X.3, offer themselves for re-election  
**Mr Giles Cundell**, proposed by Mr Ross Hunter and seconded by Ms Jane Hall  
**Mr Peter Greenslade**, proposed by Mr Kevin O'Sullivan and seconded by Mr John Skuse
  - c) The following nominations have been received for Elected Membership of the Committee:  
**Ms Debbie Flood**, proposed by Mr Kieren Emery and seconded by Ms Francesca Rawlins  
**Mr Paul Mainds**, proposed by Mr Chris Dodd and seconded by Mr Andrew Higgs  
**Mr Chris Skuse**, proposed by Mr Robert Luke and seconded by Mr Charles Lowe  
**Mr Anthony Fiennes Trotman**, proposed by Sir Steve Redgrave CBE and seconded by Ms Debbie Flood
11. Any other business



Book £34.95

## PINK HIPPO SHOP – NEW PRODUCTS

**Coming soon:** Engraved Parker pen, braces, rower's tie, new trays and tea towel to match the new mug, new scented candles, diffusers and hand wash, new flip flops.

Purchasing items from the shop supports our rowers! <http://shop.leander.co.uk>



Regatta Mug £16



Leander Pink Jumpers £60



Full Member LC Cufflinks £25



Grey Zip Hoodie £45



Varsity Jacket £45



Silk Scarves from £22



Trackies £35



Gift Set £35



Scented Candle £23