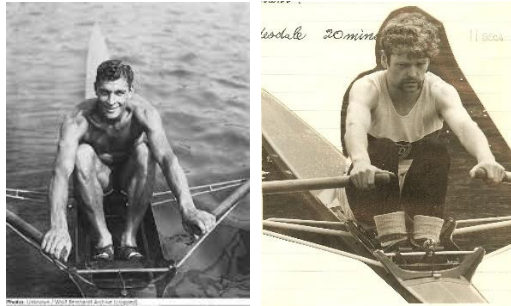


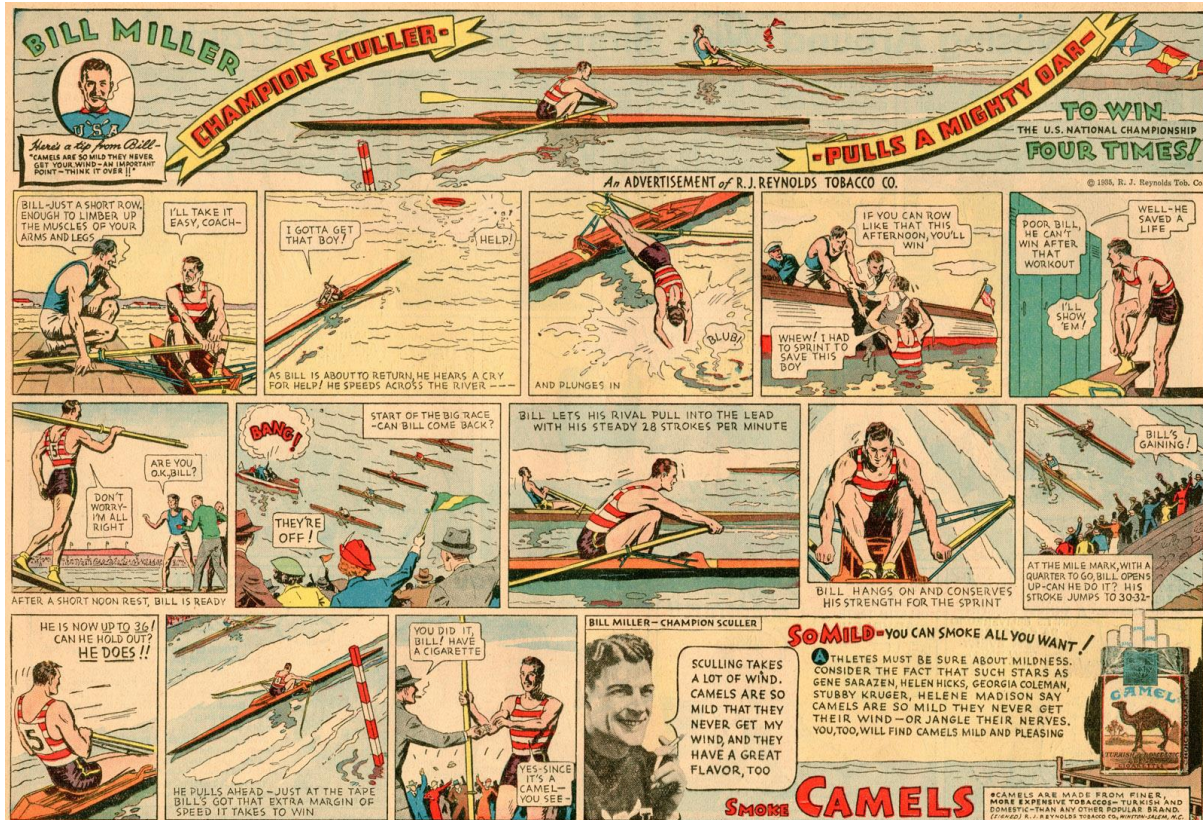
TALES OF THE RIVERMAN 143



In Tales of the Riverman no 7 I related the following. One day in 1971 a small boy was playing by the river and he crawled out along a pipe which was protruding out above the river surface (used by a factory for cooling) and fell off into the water. The river is fairly deep at this point with a straight drop of over 20ft off the banking (between our Sewage Works and Rutherglen Bridge). As the boy sunk his mother rushed out onto the pipe and threw herself into the water in an attempt to save her son. At this moment I was out sculling coming upriver approaching Rutherglen Bridge. Looking over my shoulder I saw the splashing in the water and realised something was wrong. I raced as fast as I could about 400metres to the spot and dived off my boat into the river. I caught hold of the woman who was screaming her head off and I managed to make out that her son had sunk. I pushed her aside and surface dived down into the very dark water. Down and down until I felt my lungs were bursting then suddenly, I found my arms around something and the next thing I knew I was on the surface with this little bundle in my left hand and I was leaning over giving mouth to mouth/nose resuscitation. With my right hand I caught hold of the mother who was still splashing about but managing to stay afloat. Keeping going with the resuscitation blows into the boy's mouth/nose, I swam with both to the bank where helping hands lifted the mother and child from me then helped me out. One of these helpers was a local School Janitor who took us into his house to get dried and await the Ambulance which arrived in minutes. The boy made a good recovery. For this rescue I was awarded the Glasgow Corporation Medal for Bravery and the Royal Humane Society Honorary Testament on Parchment. The boy was aged 5yrs.

A few days ago, I received an e mail with illustrations of adverts promoting smoking, some even giving Doctors preferred cigarettes. What gave me a shiver down my spine was the following cartoon.

In 1935, Bill Miller the four-time US Sculling Champion and two-time Olympic silver medallist, was just one of the sportsmen that Camel used to promote their brand by having him say, “Camels are so mild that they never get my wind.”



I had always found it hard to believe that I had stood up in my scull and dived overboard, though that was what the witnesses said I did. Of course, there were no photographs, but the drawings in the cartoon could have been made in 1971 rather than 1935.



Was history repeating itself? Did Bill really rescue a child or was it just a story made up for the advert? I have tried to research without success, but the story of the smoking sculler rescuing a child is uncanny. For the record, I have never smoked.

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