

Port of London Challenge, 9th July, 2018



Secretary's Report

This year saw fifteen crews comprising Three Women's, Two Mixed, and Ten Men's crews competing over the 4.7 mile course from Coin Street Shaol to Chelsea Pier.

They were started after a full and thorough briefing in three Divisions of five crews. On the briefing, it was again stressed that all crews MUST stay to the right hand side of the river and only use the northern most navigable arches of the river and, that the river is still open to commercial traffic. Any transgressions would be met with only one reminder / warning, and any repeat would lead to disqualification. This had been voted for at the AGM by an overwhelming majority of the members present.

With the kind assistance of the PLA Harbour Master (Recreation) and PLA Lambeth acting as Thames Traffic Control, our three divisions got going in good order. Soon after the Men's Divisions got underway, it was pointed out by Thames Lambeth, that their own cutter Centurion, was straying onto the south side of the river and action needed to be taken to avoid danger to oncoming traffic. The attending RIB from ['The Ahoy Centre'](#) immediately took action and gave the cox the warning to stay on the right side of the river. Unfortunately, they did not heed the warning and Centurion was seen again on the wrong side of the river. After a discussion of the TTRA members finalising results and viewing available photographic evidence of the incidents, it was decided to disqualify that boat from this particular event.

['The Ahoy Centre'](#) kindly provided three RIB's to act as Safety / Support craft. They also helped by towing several of the cutters up from their moorings and then took them back again at the end of the day.

The other vessel helping by volunteering to make ready the boats attending from Richmond was Our Lad. This was crewed by Ben Gould and Pierre. Pierre lives at Eel Pie Island and is no stranger to the river as he often helps Mark Montgomery-Smith from [Eel Pie Boat Yard](#) with odd jobs on the river. Our thanks go out to both for giving up their time to organise the boats to be towed, towing them downstream to the start line and back again, arriving back at Richmond around mid-night.

The racing was fast and furious and in the heat of the day, some of the Men's third Division caught up the second Division.

Finally as the results show, the Women's Division was won by The Master Glaziers
The Mixed Division by Richmond Bridge Boat Club and
The Men's was won by The Water Conservators who had kept their entry into this Division a secret until they arrived on the foreshore. Their Entry Form declared them

as a Women's crew, so imagine our surprise when a team of strapping Olympian looking oarsmen turned up instead!

We may have to have a discussion about entry into different Divisions from now on. With so many Men's crews entering our races now, we are rapidly losing the ability to manage the numbers out on the water. For many years the Oxford & Cambridge processional (races) row, has been limited to six crews per Division. This was because the river is not wide enough to allow any more. As we now row on the river after it is closed to all traffic, it is wide enough to accommodate more than six per Division. Maybe we have to think about reducing our numbers to six per Division for the Admiral of the Port and the Port of London Challenge as the river is not closed and has a lot more commercial traffic than was ever present at Putney and Hammersmith. Food for thought.

Once we arrived at Chelsea Pier, kindly organised with the kind help of Colin Bullock of Chelsea Harbour, the rowers made their boats ready for the long tow home before boating [Salient](#) for the prize giving. As the tired and hot rowers boarded, they were met by tables of food provided by [Richmond Catering](#) and once they had discovered the upstairs bar, quenched their thirst with drinks again provided by [Crown River Cruises](#). Our thanks go out to Clare and the rest of the team for their help before, during and after this event. Their help on board the Salient was invaluable and helps to make this event the success that it is.

The onerous task of Timekeeping fell once again to our Chairman Guy Brocklebank. This year he was assisted by John Adams, a volunteer pressed into action and we feel certain that he will help us out again in the future. Two pairs of ears and eyes are always better than one!

The PLA's Josh Rylah, Deputy Harbour Master (Upper) was present to hand out the prizes and individual certificates to the winning crews in each Division.

The only Division that does not yet have a trophy to present, is the Mixed. We would welcome any Worshipful Company, Club or Associate member that may wish to donate one for future years. It can be named as The (Name of Company / Club) presentation for the Mixed Division of the Port of London Challenge. Any suggestions or offers, please let the Secretary know before going ahead with a purchase as we would not like anyone to be disappointed to find out another has already been donated.

Well done to everyone that helped organise, take part and provide Safety / Support / Towing for this event.

Looking forward to seeing you all again soon - Our Annual General Meeting will be held on **Monday 14th January, 2019** to be held at Worshipful Company of Mercers Hall, 6 Frederick's Place, City of London, EC2R 8AB

Roger Gould.

Secretary for The Thames Traditional Rowing Association