

Thames Traditional Rowing Association Autumn 2009 Newsletter.

I think we can safely say 2009 will be a year to remember ~ the first cutter race on Boat Race day, the Tudor Pageant and very successful Port of London Challenge & Admiral of the Port races.

The negotiations with The Boat Race and the PLA finally bore fruit and saw us gathering at University of London boathouse, Chiswick for the pre race briefing.

Six crews were to battle it out for the honour of being the first to lift the Tallow Chandler Trophy for the Oxbridge Waterman's Challenge ~



'Arthur Alcock' (Scientific Instrument Makers), 'Class Leader' (Lloyds Register), 'Paul Satow' (Wandsworth Council), 'Penelope' (PLA), 'Tallow Chandler' (Tallow Chandlers) & 'Trinity Tide' (Trinity House).



On schedule the crews boated and together with the safety/umpire boats from Northern Exposure Rescue made their way down to the start line at the Band Stand ~ a PLA launch did ask what we were doing but was quickly made aware of our event.

The Umpire, Jeremy 'Ras' Randall (Waterman and Leander Club), brought the crews in line and they were off!

A marvellous race of two halves was had by all with the Scientific Instrument Makers crossing

the line first with one second between the PLA and Lloyds in 2nd & 3rd places. The second group of three was led in by Trinity House, then the Tallow Chandlers with Wandsworth bringing up the rear. Thanks go to Edgar (from Trinity House) and his wife who stood under the BBC's finish line camera taking times, shame the camera wasn't turned and looking the same way!

The prize giving followed back at UL Boathouse (presented by Irene Randall) and then the crews dashed off to see the main event cross the line finally retiring to the aptly named 'City Barge' for some light refreshment.

I can confirm that following a very satisfying debrief with the Boat Race organisers we will be holding a **two** division race over a **longer** course (Chiswick Pier to the finish line) next year.

Well done to everyone and THANK YOU to you all for making it run so smoothly.

The Port of London Challenge was the next time we all met on the river ~ back down in the pool of London. Once again a wonderful entry saw twelve crews gathering on the pontoon at Temple Pier for the pre race briefing.

The first division of Ladies & Mixed crews were safely sent on their way by Umpire Ras Randall and the seven men's crews lined up for their start. They got away and then there was a little 'coming together' of MV 'Salient' and 'Chasnee'.



Both skippers turned from their respective positions on the river and ended up being in the same place at the same time. After making speedy repairs 'Chasnee' set off to catch up and complete the timing as 'Salient' was held behind the racing flotilla.

Once again there was some keen racing seeing 'Water Forget me Knot' first across the line closely followed by 'Penelope' and 'Arthur Alcock'. The crews then, having sorted out their boats and seen them towed safely away, boarded 'Salient' for the return cruise and prize giving by my wife Ruth. Once again a successful event from the rowing perspective but Ras and I now know how the iceberg felt when the 'Titanic' struck!

The next event could really justify a whole newsletter of its own ~ The Tudor Pageant.

This was born out of the request from Hampton Court Palace to Thames Alive of "Can you do a little pageant to celebrate Henry VIII's 500th anniversary?" The decision was taken to adapt the Tudor Pull and build on our previous successes by adding 'a few more boats'.

Six months of planning resulted in crews gathered at HMS President for a briefing and to be issued with T shirts, flags and the *must have* fashion item of the year ~ red Tudor hats. Meanwhile the normal ceremony of the Stela was being held in HM Tower of London and with an escort provided by the crew of 'Royal Thamesia' was processed out on to the East drawbridge.

Henry VIII, his Queen, Anne of Cleves, and his entourage then appeared (from the Yeomen's Bar!) and the Pageant was underway. The escort of canopy carriers from the Tallow Chandlers with the Royal Watermen and Yeomen of the Guard joined the Stela and much to the amazement of the 100's of tourists processed down to the main gate where following a rousing speech and cheers of 'God Save the King, God Save England!' they boarded the waiting 'Jubilant', 'Lady Mayoress' and attendant shallops and cutters.



A magnificent sight not seen for over a 100 years ~ the Royal Shallop escorted by full livery shallops and cutters rowed off upstream passing the many landmarks of central London. Henry VIII stayed on deck acknowledging his loyal subjects to rousing cheers and waving from other boats on the river and those on both banks and all the bridges.

The rising tide assisted the crews up to Chiswick where it started to run out, 'Put your backs in to it!' was the order of the day, the cheering crowds encouraging the rowers ever onward.

The flotilla was joined by more craft at Richmond and progressed to Teddington Lock where the flotilla entered the barge lock, the scene was marvellous ~ dozens of colourful boats, 100's of crew and 1000's of spectators ~ reminiscent of the Boulton's Lock picture.

The crews were joined by their Company Masters and other officials as they rose in the lock, the gates opened and they could see the waiting escort of over 30 skiffs, gondola and rowing boats.

An advance party IV sculled skiff set off with a herald and trumpeter to warn Kingston and Hampton Court Palace that their King was fast approaching (only an hour late!).

The scene now was one to remember ~ over 300 oarsmen and women in regalia and Tudor dress rowing, Henry's flag on all the boats as the flotilla progressed up the last four miles.

There were crowds along both banks, boats of all shapes and sizes joined enjoying a sight not seen here for nearly 500 years ~ the river was a mass of colourful traditional boats.



Thames Sailing Club stopped their regatta; the Thames Motor Yacht Club sail past dipped their ensigns as Henry VIII progressed to his favourite palace.

The skiffs went ahead and formed a guard of honour on the water as the Royal flotilla led by HMS Victory's cutter arrived at Hampton Court Palace.

More crowds had gathered here to witness the arrival of the King and Queen and their entourage.

"Three cheers for King Henry!" and "Three cheers for the Royal highway, the River Thames!" as the Tudor Pageant ended and Henry VIII stepped ashore to be joined by Cardinal Wolsey for the evening festivities.

The traditional ceremony of the Stella followed, being presented by the Master of the Water Conservators safely into the hands of the CEO of Hampton Court Palace thus enabling the TTRA to celebrate the importance of the Thames again next year.

The shallop & cutter crews then gathered for refreshments at the Palace and the skiff crews at Dittons Skiff Club ~ a wonderful evening being had by all.

On the Sunday there was more Tudor river borne festivities with a ducking stool, battle of the rivers, canon firing whilst cutter, skiff and punt racing took place all watched over by Henry and his Queen. The day was completed when Henry boarded 'Jubilant' to return to London...

A memorable weekend for us all ~ well done to *everyone* who participated, in particular those who rowed all the way and a big thank you to everyone who helped make it happen, a fantastic effort all round.

Many of the pictures taken can be viewed and purchased from www.thamesalive.jalbum.net and needless to say I will get a select few up on our own site ~ soon!

Follow that!

Well....there is a proposal to organise a small pageant (Richmond to Hampton Court) on the day of Hampton Court & Dittons Regatta (a skiffing & punting event) on 24th July 2010 ~ I'll keep you posted as discussions progress next month.

In our calendar we followed that by holding the Admiral of the Port Challenge ~ from Westminster Bridge to Pimlico ~ a 'sprint' in comparison to the Tudor Pull!

Once again the popularity of the event meant we had two divisions, Mixed & Ladies crews followed by the Men's crews.

The racing pedigree of some of the crews now began to show, the flotilla being led in by 'Class Leader' closely followed by 'Penelope'.

The Water Conservators Ladies crew took their division with the PLA mixed



crew in the 'Arthur Tisdall' completing the honours. Once again the wonderful facilities of the Westminster Boating Base were the finish line and venue for the post race gathering greatly enjoyed by all the crews and their supporters with the Prime Warden of the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers, Andrew Martin-Smith, presenting the prizes.

There were no entries for the Sunbury Regatta ~ something I feel we should address at the AGM as we should support these few remaining fixed seat regattas ~ put the date in your diary for 2010.

The next 'first' was the Great River Race in reverse.

Months of negotiations, wrangling and discussions finally culminated in the crews gathering at the Millwall slipway for the start of what was to prove a memorable event for everyone.

Overall the consensus of opinion I've heard is "It was great, can we do it that way every year!" More space at the start and a fantastic finish coming up through Richmond to a great party at Ham.

Well done to all that competed in the marathon of the River Thames.

I'm sorry to report this year the Frost Fair Head Race is not happening. This is due to various reasons not least of all The Globe no longer supporting the event. Never fear the Guildable Manor of Southwark and the TTRA team are working to find another venue for the post event festivities and will succeed for next year ~ promise!

News has come in recently of another collision involving a cutter out training for the London 2 Paris Challenge and one of the passenger catamaran boats. This is still under investigation but serves to remind us all that safety is paramount while out on the tideway.

The fleet continues to grow (collisions apart!) with the building of two new cutters for the partnership of Richmond Sea Scouts and the Scientific Instrument Makers & NPL ~ a fine example to us all of just how well it can work.

The Boat Race gigs that have been languishing on Dorney Lake are coming to new moorings on the lower Thames where it is hoped they will be available for training and racing for more crews ~ more news as it this develops.

Stop Press! ~ there may be another event being organised by Hampton Court Palace on the 31st May 2010 ~ water borne jousting (in provided boats), tug of war in punts and other such festivities all to be held on the Long Water. Sounds like fun all round, as usual I'll keep you posted.

To conclude ~ Ladies & Gentlemen we have had a great year and I can assure you that next year will be just as memorable.

Keep up the training; take care of your boat (a little winter TLC will pay dividends next season). See you at the AGM in January (details to follow).

May you always pull hard!

Malcolm Knight

Secretary TTRA