



Newsletter

December 2013

Now follow 2012... well here goes!

Yes, 2012 will go down in history as a great year for the whole country and in particular for all of us who love messing about in boats on the River Thames now we must keep that fantastic momentum going, something you at the TTRA are very good at.

Our AGM started the year with discussions on how we performed the previous year and what you would like to see in the future – “more of the same” was the message I got loud and clear! Thank you to the Company of Watermen & Lightermen for their hospitality.

With that in mind we started the year with our outing before the BNY Mellon Boat Race for the Oxbridge Watermen’s Challenge racing for the Tallow Chandler’s Cup. Once again tides dictated that this would fall on Easter week-end, not the best time to get crews so well done to those that turned out.



The crews on their way downstream to the start – a hard pull against the incoming tide!

The London Youth Rowing crews in the Oxbridge cutters ‘Goldie’ & ‘Isis’ – how it used to be done!



A well raced event with a mass start of seven cutters abreast followed by the two Oxbridge cutters. The overall winner by a canvas was the Port Health crew in ‘Lady Gillet’ from the Scientific Instrument Makers in ‘Gordon Hall’. The ladies of the SIM’s and the mixed crew from the PLA were all in the close finish being chased down by the Oxbridge cutters – a great event which we will continue to try and promote with the main event.

After a very wet spring the day of the Tudor Pull dawned bright and warm – ideal conditions for a five hour row! The event took another leap forward with the Watermen now rowing in the Queen’s Row Barge ‘Gloriana’.

At exactly 10:00 the main gate of Hampton Court Palace swung open and the Stela was paraded out led by a musicians and flag bearers to meet HM Barge Master, the Watermen and crews.

The ceremony followed when the Barge Master is charged to carry the Stela under oars to HM Tower of London and completed with the taking of wine with the Barge Master of the Water Conservators.



HM Barge Master, Paul Ludwig, led the parade to QRB where another new ceremony took place – the W.Company of Tallow Chandlers presented a carved tallow pot of tallow to the Watermen ‘to aid their rowing in the traditional manner’.

QRB pushed away and followed by a flotilla of shallops and cutters began the journey downriver to cheers from the crowds at HCP. As usual there was a short stop in Richmond for much needed victuals supplied this year by the newly formed Richmond Bridge Boat Club – thank you!



The full flotilla of twenty two boats now proceeded down river – the Royal barge being escorted by the Shallops, cutters and gigs resplendent in full livery, now thankfully becoming a regular sight on the river.

The flotilla passed under Tower Bridge and moored at St. Katherine’s Pier where the Watermen paraded to the East Gate to be met by the Yeoman Warder.

In the time honoured fashion he slammed the gate and demanded HM Barge Master to identify himself, satisfied that they were on lawful business the gates were opened and the Stela was paraded through the East gate to be presented to the Governor who informed HM Barge Master and the crews their duty was discharged for another year.

A splendid day which really set the season off in style – well done everyone!

The TTRA's 'blue ribbon' event was next in the calendar – the Admiral of the Port Challenge.

Fifteen crews gathered on Westminster Pier on the 17th June along with their Company Masters, supporters and friends. After the usual safety briefing and instruction regarding the start of the two divisions the crews boarded and rowed up to above Westminster Bridge.



The first division of Ladies and Mixed crews was sent off by the official starter Sherriff Pullman closely followed by the nine Men's crews.

There was as usual some *very* keen racing with the Watermen winning by a narrow margin of 7 seconds from the SIM's. The Water Conservators took the honours in the Ladies and the PLA in the mixed events.

As usual the reception at the Westminster Boating Base was well attended and enjoyed by all the crews and supporters alike.

The Port of London Challenge followed in mid July. The battle between the Watermen and the men of the SIMs would continue...

Twelve crews arrived with their boats at Temple Pier to the first challenge of the day – boarding the boats! I think a new boarding site is called for. After clambering across the neighbouring café boat and 'The Yacht' all the crews made it to the start line which as usual entailed jostling for position across the river whilst the PLA Harbour Master tried to allow normal traffic the flow.

The six Ladies and Mixed crews got away with the six Men's crews in pursuit. The tail wind and flood tide made for a fast row upstream with enthusiastic coxing from some of the crews.

The following spectator boat, the 'Salient', with the timers aboard made it to Chelsea Harbour in time to record the finish times and after a little discussion the finish order was agreed – the clear numbering of the crews continues to be an issue...

First across the line was the 'Jim Holt' from the Watermen closely followed once again by the men of the SIM's – more winter training is called for?? The Ladies of the Water Conservators narrowly beat the Ladies of the SIM's and the Mixed division was won by the PLA. Well done to all the crews!

The boats all disappeared back to their moorings – thank you to all at NER (for safety cover) and those who tow our boats, without you we couldn't hold our events.

As usual we all enjoyed the prize giving cruise back downstream to Blackfriars Pier, another successful TTRA event.

You all entered the Great River Race – an amazing sight at Ham as you crossed the line with 100's of other craft from all around the UK and Europe.

The 'Ahoy Buoys' recorded the fastest time (2hrs 24mins) closely followed by the SIM's and Trinity House. A fantastic day on the river, long may it continue.

The final event of the year was soon upon us – the Lord Mayor's Flotilla. Once again the Lord Mayor Alderman Fiona Woolf CBE had asked to be carried to the City of London by boat and once again QRB 'Gloriana' was available for the duty.

Many of your boats arrived the previous day and moored overnight at Westminster Boating Base where once again the crews for the twenty boats congregated at 7am, the timings are decided by the main event, something even your Secretary can't change!

The flotilla went afloat and QRB moored ready to collect the Lord Mayor and her party who boarded to rousing cheers from the crews.

On schedule QRB left WBB and the flotilla set off downstream on the ebb tide. There were a few spectators on the bridges who appreciated the effort being made by you all on a lovely autumnal morning.



After a controlled drift under Millenium Bridge (the tide and your fine rowing were just too fast!) the flotilla approached Tower Bridge that opened in salute to the Admiral of the Port – the Lord Mayor.

The Lord Mayor went ashore at RNR HMS President to a full salute from the flotilla where she enjoyed the Rum Ceremony supplied by the Worshipful Company of Coopers.

The flotilla moored up and the Company Masters dashed off to their other duties of the day whilst you all enjoyed a well earned bacon buttie. A splendid start to the day which the Lord Mayor thoroughly enjoyed *and* we had the best weather of the day!

A suitable finale to the year, well done everyone!

My personal thanks to all the crews for turning out in all weathers, the NER safety boats for keeping you all in order, the towers who move your boats up and down river, the officials who manage to work out which crew is which and of course to all the Barge Masters who look after your boats and organise you – a splendid effort!

As I've said before - look after your boats, give them the TLC they deserve after a busy season, keep up the training (when river levels allow) and plan for next years events.

Have a well earned rest over the festive season and we look forward to seeing you at the AGM at Trinity House on the 20th January.

Malcolm

Secretary TTRA

*******STOP PRESS*******

Please note the date of the Oxbridge Challenge is now Sunday 6th April