

Port of London Challenge, 2019



Event Report - Roger Gould (Secretary).

Another eventful evening on the river was enjoyed by many last night.

Thank you to the PLA for your invaluable assistance in Traffic Management on the night.

Boats were delivered in good time by the Safety / Support boats and were taken ashore before the coxes briefing on the South Bank at Coin Street.

At the conclusion of the briefing 'any questions' were invited. The often thorny topic of where to be on the river was asked, and after a brief discussion, it was reiterated that we MUST all abide by the 'rules of the road' and keep to the right hand side of the river avoiding the centre of the river, and central arches of bridges on the route.

On the subject of overtaking slower boats, it was pointed out that overtaking between bridges was allowed BUT while going through bridges and following a slower boat, the faster should hold off until the bridge had been shot by BOTH the slow, and the faster boat. This basic rule of the water being that every vessel masters duty is to avoid a collision at all costs by taking all actions available to do so.

Although this was discussed, it was clearly pointed out to be the case.

The start and finish procedures were discussed also, and it was pointed out clearly that the start line was between HQS Wellington on the North Bank and for Division 1 (WOMENS) event, the MV Salient. For the other Divisions (Mixed and Men's) 'Salient' would be replaced by 'Our Lad'.

At the very last minute, 'Our Lad' suffered an overheating problem and had to be replaced by 'Molly Brown'. All boats in Division 2 (5 in total) managed to find enough space between 'Molly Brown' and HQS Wellington and started off accordingly.

However, having been given instructions on safety by the PLA who managed our safe exit from South to North side of the river, the remaining Men's Division boats began to cross the river to the North Bank. Three boats despite repeated warnings from both the Safety / Support skipper and the start boat, stayed in midstream and passed the start boat on the wrong side. All three were therefor disqualified.

Once aboard the escorting boat 'Salient' our guest of honour, Chair of the PLA Christopher Rodriguez, was pleased to award the prizes and certificates to the crews of the winning boats.

All aboard enjoyed the food and drinks provided during the trip back downstream.

The Women's Division being won by the PLA crew in Penelope.

The Mixed Division winners were Richmond Bridge Boat Club in Sara Lisa, and

The Men's Division by the PLA in Centurion.

FULL details and timings of all crews are displayed in the Results Report.