

Lord Mayor of the City of London's Flotilla report: Saturday 11 November 2017

Thanks are due for all those people that made this event possible before it even began. [Lord Mayor of the City of London](#). Without their help the event would have not run as smoothly as it did.

Mark Edwards of [Richmond Bridge Boat Houses](#) for preparing the boats with their regalia, baling them out and making them up into three strings to be towed downstream to the start line.

Then of course, Mark Montgomery Smith of [Eel Pie Boat Yard](#) and his boat wrangler Pierre. They had started out on Friday afternoon by towing our upstream boats down stream closer to the start line. The weather was terrible overnight and they spent a restless night interspersed with checking the rowing boats to make sure they were not getting swamped with rain water, or pulled around too much by the passing clippers and other assorted boats. After the row was completed, they had to wait until the tide turned again to tow all the way back to Richmond again, arriving there late in the evening and tying up the boats ready for closer attention on Sunday morning.

The young people from the [Ahoy Centre](#) also towed up several cutters from their end of the river in horrible conditions arriving in good time to get everyone afloat. The experience these good natured, young people gain with every event cannot be undervalued. They provide a first class example for, and of our youth today.

Tony Mason of [Thames Active](#) provided excellent Support cover by co-ordinating the Safety RIB's provided by the Ahoy Centre. His vessel Molly Brown acted as the Committee Boat co-ordinating the entire operation. Tony had travelled up the previous evening and stayed aboard his boat overnight in order to be at the start on time. During that night while his boat was alongside in Chelsea, it was hit by excessive wash that snapped mooring lines and ripped out a cleat from his boat. He and his crew awoke to find the stern section deep in water too. Fortunately, being well prepared, they were able to replace the mooring lines immediately, and pump out the water so they could continue on their way in the morning.

Dawn Collins also provided her own RIB (Wind) as additional Safety Cover. It is as well Dawn came along as we needed that extra cover on the day with such a large flotilla.

Thanks to all of you!

It was a very wet start to the day. With spirits high and full of hope, the teams arrived at [Westminster Boating Base](#) (WBB) and were treated to a much appreciated very early morning cup of tea or coffee to warm their cockles. Thanks are given to the team of WBB that helped us all on our way.

After a full briefing on the proceedings to follow, they set out to escort the Lord Mayor of the City of London, the Admiral of the Port of London who was on board [The Queens Row Barge \(QRB\) Gloriana](#).

The flotilla passed without incident through the Pool of London with the assistance and good offices of the Port of London Authority ensuring our free passage with the [Port Health vessel Londinium III](#) leading the way past London Bridge, HMS Belfast, under Tower Bridge and finally going ashore at HMS President, where the rowing flotilla stood up, tossed their oars in salute and gave three rousing cheers!

The London Fire Brigade Launch was in attendance too and made a splash by creating a wonderful spectacle just downstream of HMS President.

Some of the rowers had answered the call to continue their efforts on the water and immediately on arrival at HMS President, cross decked onto the QRB and rowed her back upstream (against the out going tide) in order to commemorate the fallen personnel of all conflicts. This was particularly pertinent to one rowing crew that had travelled all the way to London from Whitby to take part in this auspicious day of celebration and then commemoration, as one of their crew had lost a much loved son, and was also a well respected friend to the rest of the crew in the recent conflict in Afghanistan.

"They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old.

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them".

After the Lord Mayor of the City of London had gone ashore at HMS President, the rowers took part in the consumption of well earned bacon and sausage butties, plus hot drinks to restore their personal comforts.

Thanks are due to the staff of HMS President that provided this much needed sustenance. We look forward to seeing you all again next year.

Next year the Lord Mayor's Flotilla will take place on Saturday 10th November and will be the 100th anniversary of the 1914-18 War. Plan ahead now and get your crews together. It is sure to be a very popular event.