



Secretary's Report

First of all, a big thank you to all those that made the event happen on the day, especially those that started the event for your enjoyment the previous day at both ends of the river preparing your boats for towing up and down river.

Crews from both ends must get together and help each other to get the boats ready and in the water the day before an event. This is especially so at the downstream end where there seems to be an assumption that the boats will be launched and moored on buoys by the Ahoy Team.

We have been reminded that although they enjoy helping and will do all they can to facilitate us, they simply do not have enough people to get our boats ready as they have many other tasks to perform. They only had two people to wrangle our boats in the morning. One of them tested his life jacket by falling in while trying to get the boats onto the moorings! Starting the day that early and getting soaked through isn't anyone's idea of fun. He continued and towed several boats up to Coin Street before returning to the Ahoy to warm up before towing the remainder up to Coin Street. He has now recovered from his ordeal, but his dedication must be recognised. Without them, we'd be scuppered before the start. Having been in contact with their present co-ordinator, I understand that he himself did not get back home until 03:00 this morning! That is because he also helped out returning boats to Richmond before going home on the river - at the other end of town. A little sympathy and understanding on our part would go a long way while we are enjoying our post event celebrations.

Aside from this, it was good to see our Vice Chair taking charge of the starting line this year and thanks are due both to himself and John Adams assisted by his brother in law, guided by Malcom Knight compiling the times at the finishing line.

The race in the Mens Division was again over subscribed by three additional crews. Some of you were aggrieved with the thought they had less of an advantage than others from the tide as they started before it came into full flood.

By way of explanation, we are blessed with all that nature can throw at us, along with the fact that we are already encroaching on a very busy commercial waterway. The river is always open to traffic during our events and our time on the water is of a premium. The tide did not turn last night until at least 45 minutes later than expected. Our event was scheduled to start at 18:30, at 18:20, the PLA Harbour Master contacted us to ask / advise we delay by at least 20 minutes to allow the tide (then slowing up at Tower ridge), to begin to flood. This was agreed and everyone taking part was told accordingly by the Safety / Support Crew covering each Division. (The ones that had already towed the boats for us throughout the day).

As there were too many boats in the Mens Division (we are restricted to a 6 abreast race) we took the view that sending 3 off with the one Mixed crew first would be best, unfortunately this also meant those crews may have had a little less assistance from the incoming tide. However, unless you can get the Entry Forms back in time before the closing date, and either close the event to those that are too late responding OR perhaps come up with a cunning plan to have a draw for those extra crews to determine which Division they will be placed in, the only alternative I can see is to make any late application set off first so they do not have an advantage of a fuller tide to assist them. That could be considered their penalty.

After confirming with PLA Traffic Control that each Division could cross the river and set off, the event seemed to go very well. On the Events Page www.traditionalrowing.com/events is a list of the timings for all the Divisions.

Once off the water and safely ashore at Westminster Boating Base, the business of sorting out the times for each Division was set about. After much deliberation, it was calculated that the winners were:

Watermen in Jim Holt had won the Mens Division.
Tallow Chandlers in Dove won the Mixed Division and
The Master Glaziers in Master Glazier won the Women's Division.

There were also two other crews that took part in a ceremonial row up. They were The Information Technologists and The Goldsmiths, both completed the course in good form.

Finally, Sheriff Emeritus Neil Redcliffe returned to award the certificates to the winning crews. It would have been better had everyone returned the trophies that had been won last year, but nobody did. There was one trophy on the table, alas for the forthcoming Port Of London Challenge.

Thanks are also due to the staff at Westminster Boating Base for their excellent service of food and drinks that just kept coming throughout the evening.

For our next race - The Port of London Challenge to be held on Monday 29th July it would be great if everyone that won awards last year could bring them along. There will be the fallback of certificates again, but they don't look so good in the photographs, do they?

Well done to everyone and thank you for getting in touch with your votes of confidence and thanks for organising the event.

Roger Gould
Secretary and Treasurer for the Thames Traditional Rowing Association.

