



Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race 2019

PRESS RELEASE

Hundreds defy Easter heat to complete 125 mile canoe race epic

London, 21 April 2019 – More than 300 hardened paddlers reached Westminster on Easter Sunday at the conclusion of a race described as ‘the canoeist’s Everest’, a 125 mile marathon from Devizes in Wiltshire to Westminster Bridge in Central London.

Unexpectedly warm temperatures combined with low levels of flow on the Thames to make the 2019 “DW” race one of the hardest in recent years.

The competition was won in a sensational upset by a mixed civilian crew, Alexandra Lane and Dan Seagrove of Reading Canoe Club, who saw off a challenge from all-male international pairings and military canoeists from the Royal Marines and numerous Army regiments. It’s the second time in four years that a mixed crew has won overall.

Race director James Treadgold said conditions had again defeated almost one third of the nearly 200 non-stop crews who started from Devizes on Easter Saturday.

“It has been a spectacularly tough year on the weather front,” Treadgold said. “The lack of rain means there is very little flow on the Thames and it makes for slow times. Crews find themselves on the course for an hour or two longer, and it often makes the difference between success and failure.”

Among the successful crews were Jonathan White and Lee White, two former Royal Marines injured in Afghanistan who beat many able bodied crews to reach London in just 26 hours 27 minutes 03 seconds.

Another successful finisher was Ciara Lee from Longridge Canoe Club in Marlow. She paddled in honour of her husband Eddy, a keen canoeist and motorcyclist, who was killed in a road accident in 2018. Lee took up the sport just seven months ago but finished with clubmate Ollie Harding in 24 hours, 40 minutes, 11 seconds, raising almost £20,000 for Brake, the Road Safety Charity.

The full race results can be found on the event website at:

<http://results.dwrace.co.uk/results/2019/Results/OverallClassResults.html>

First three boats:

1. Alexandra Lane and Dan Seaford, Reading Canoe Club 18:01:58
2. Richard Hendron and Aaron Jordan, Richmond and Maidstone Canoe Clubs 18:19:06
3. Alex Burt and Paul Hayes, Newbury Canoe Club 18:38:07

19. (Fastest all-women's crew) Jo Bates and Elena Golder, Falcon Canoe Club
21:29:27

About the Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race

The annual Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race is the world's longest non-stop canoe race. Frequently referred to simply as DW, the race starts in Devizes, Wiltshire, and follows the Kennet & Avon Canal to join the Thames at Reading. The finish is in the heart of London at Westminster Bridge. Covering the 125-mile distance in kayaks or canoes, DW is one of the toughest endurance events in the world and is open to anyone with the necessary determination and commitment to train for it.

DW takes place over the Easter Weekend every year. More than 500 volunteers and organisations, including the Canal and Rivers Trust, the Environment Agency and the Port of London Authority, give their support to DW either directly or indirectly.

The non-stop Senior Doubles event starts at 7am on Easter Saturday, 20 April. Completing the non-stop race is a colossal achievement. Most paddlers will take about 24 hours to complete the course, not stopping to eat, sleep or rest.

Alternatively, the race can be tackled in 4 stages starting on Easter Friday and finishing on Easter Monday. Competitors in the stages races (Junior Doubles, Senior Singles, Veteran/Junior, and Endeavour) leave Devizes on Good Friday, 19 April, from 7am.

The race started as a wager in a pub in 1948. Seventy years on, it has grown into a firm fixture in the world's canoeing calendar that is open to all comers. Previous competitors include Olympic rowing medalists James Cracknell, Ben Hunt-Davis, and Guin Batten, the explorer and adventurer Sir Ranulph Fiennes, TV presenter Steve Backshall and his wife, Olympic rower Helen Glover, and the first British woman to summit Everest, Rebecca Stephens. All rate this as one of the toughest events for mind and body.

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