



*James Walkinton, 2nd in K1.*



*Cameron/Balogh of Hereford.*



*Hadberg from Roskilde portages Kintbury.*



*Services pair Bandrowski/Joseph at Pewsey.*



*Dobson/Rees-Clark at Horton, second C2.*



*Services winners Al-Sheikhly/Evans.*



*Ingpen/Bell going well at this stage.*

Colman/Bullion of Lord Wandsworth College. They extended this by 43 minutes during the second day to Longridge and by 57 minutes on the third day. The final day on the Tideway added 7 minutes more to give an aggregate win of 2 hours 6 minutes at the finish at Barn Elms.

I heard the junior doubles class referred to as the schools class, almost correct as the public schools are a central pillar of this race. There was just one other crew, Lovell/Cramer of Worcester and Southampton, who took a first day lead of an hour and five minutes over Barrett/Brown of Kimbolton School, the previous year's under 17 winners. They were followed a couple of minutes later by Phippard/Francis of Kelly College. The lead was opened by 59 minutes on the second day with the space between the next two crews unchanged. Lovell/Cramer were way out ahead again on the third day but the second best performance of the day was by Green/Corfield, who had been the mixed class winners the previous year. The final day's second best performance was by Slocock/Smith of Lord Wandsworth College. Overall, Lovell/Cramer won by an unassailable 3 hours and 6 minutes from Barrett/Brown and then the next four crews came in at about 5 minute intervals.

Green/Corfield were mixed winners again by two and a half hours.

George Durden put down his marker in singles on the first day for Elmbridge with a half hour lead over James Walkinton of Chelmsford,

a further minute ahead of Radek Zielski of Reading, who had won the event in 2014. Irish paddler Russell was two minutes back with James Williams of Runcorn two more. Chelmsford's Sienna Payne was the leading lady with Mark Louw of Richmond the first veteran.

Durden increased his lead over Walkinton by 24 minutes on the second day. Russell pulled up three minutes on Williams and Zielski.

Durden improved by another 5 minutes on the third day.

Walkinton's 20 second lead on the final day did not change anything, Durden taking the title by 40 minutes with Zielski in 3rd place as the winning veteran and Payne in 8th place as the leading lady.

Saturday began with drizzle which did clear up later although the cold headwind remained and there were many retirements. Several years ago competitors had Halley's comet for company. If the race had been a few days earlier this time they might have had the aurora but it had gone by now, just cold. Is that what caused Andrew Ingpen and Olympic skier Graham Bell to retire after Teddington, the head of the Tideway?

Kat Burbeck was paddling with Olympic slalomist Fiona Pennie-Douglas while quadrathletes Simon and Keiran Hammond and polo and white water paddlers Alison Cooper and Katie Farley added variety. Devises pair Edd Dobson and Mike Rees-Clark, third in K2 last year, were back this year in C2.

Last year's runners up, Billy Butler and Jon O'Grady, were back again, as were winners Anoushka Freeman and Tom Sharpe, who had taken the course record the previous year. Dutch racer Jouke Wittereen has probably done the race with various partners more times than anyone else. Andrew Birkett/Tom Simmons, John Cameron/Robert Balogh, Luke and Tim Escott, David Horkan/Dan Palmer and Ben Webb/Paul Baker, not forgetting mixed crew Joe Petersen/Brynde Kreft, suggested an interesting and close race.

Others might remember it for different reason. Most encountered the Pewsey swan that was known for attacking anyone in his territory. With less excuse, William Morland of Mississauga had an angler cast a line at him near Hungerford and, having embedded his hook in his hand, proceeded to reel in the line. (I recall racing in a marathon on the Severn at Bridgnorth some years ago against Mike Crossman, who finished the race with a hook through his ear lobe and a maggot