



*Singles winner Dan Palmer portages on the road to avoid the towpath mud at Oakhill Down.*

non school crews, who capsized on relaunching and had to empty out. While they were doing this the Dutch crew got away but were capsized by the strong bywash flow coming back in diagonally below the lock and flowing towards and under one of the moored boats, towards which they were swept with the potential of a nasty incident. All were able to recover themselves. The water level dropped about 100mm in the lock by the Saturday, following a day of sunny intervals and showers, some of them heavy, pushed along by a moderate southwesterly wind.

Despite their swim, Prins-Mills/Teeuwen had a 16 minute lead at Newbury over Davies/Davies of Wey, the other non schools crew, who were just 6 seconds up on Summerfield/Cheng of Kimbolton school. Head/Phippard of Kelly College were 9th, the leading mixed crew, with Kiggell/Diggle from Marlborough College the first girls' crew. In the under 17 school class Attwell/Reedman of Dauntseys were just 9 seconds up on Barrett/Brown of Kimbolton.

The three veteran/junior crews saw Balla/Pavylshyn of Barking & Dagenham over an hour clear of the Camilleris of Wey.

Dan Palmer of Truro had a 13 minute singles lead over veteran Richard Winstanley and Joe Fitzpatrick, both of Bishop's Stortford, just 14 seconds apart. Damon White of Reading was 12th and last of the singles, the only C1, 2 hours 42 minutes off the pace. At Oak Hill Palmer had come off the muddy towpath and run down the road, helpfully free of moving vehicles.

Saturday was more sunny with lighter winds but these did back to become southeasterly, more of a headwind. All of the Dauntseys crews pulled out and paddled the first part of the course again instead of going on to Reading. Prins-Mills/Teeuwen barely increased their lead over the Wey pair but Summerfield/Cheng dropped back to be passed by Watt/Umbers of Lord Wandsworth College. Heal/Phippard retired, handing the mixed win to Green/Corfield of Lord Wandsworth College, an hour clear of Davies/Sumpton of Kimbolton. Kiggell/Diggle retained their girls' lead by 5 minutes from Jardine/Matthews of Kimbolton. Absence of Dauntseys paddlers left the win here to Barratt/Brown by 7 minutes from Ockenden/Godfrey.

Balla/Pavylshyn opened up their lead over the Wey crew to exactly 2 hours.

Palmer increased his lead to 21 minutes at Reading, 2nd place going to Fitzpatrick, 6 minutes up on his veteran team mate.

The change of senior double finish came at 2am GMT on Easter Sunday, by which time all crews were on the water and start times would then not have had to consider the tidal gate. As it was, some had chosen to use the 4.30 - 5am start option on Saturday.

All crews were supposed to start from Devizes by 1700. Three went

even later. At 1714 Tom Sharpe, who had taken the 44 year old record the previous year, set out with Anoushka Freeman to challenge the mixed doubles record. All went well and they were onto the Thames in 7 hours 32 minutes. Tom Simmons and Andrew Birkett followed at 1739, their time 7 hours 47 minutes to the Thames. Last away, at 1801, anticipating a very fast time to the Tideway, were Billy Butler and Jon O'Grady but they took 7 hours 50 minutes to the Thames. Simmons/Birkett gave up the fight at Marsh Lock, half an hour after the course had been shortened.

Sharpe/Freeman were through 55 minutes before Butler/O'Grady at Reading, 54 minutes at Marsh, 55 minutes at Marlow, 58 minutes at Bray, 1 hour 4 minutes at Old Windsor, 1 hour 11 minutes at Shepperton and 1 hour 12 minutes at the finish, the gap gradually widening for an over time of 13:43:46 to win by 25 minutes, not the first time a mixed crew has won but a rare occurrence.

Third place went to Rees-Clark/Dobson of Devizes. Treadgold/Hayes, the leading veteran crew, were in 4th place with Herwanger/Hagen and Witteveen/Zegers in the next two slots. Burbeck/Drummond, the winning ladies, were 8th overall. C2 winners were Peter and Abigail Jones. Among those not making it were mixed crew Brehin/Grimsey and open canoe pair Hughes/Bowen pulling out at Reading and ladies Vernau/Fox and veterans Bush/Ball at Marsh.

It was not the ideal DW but the organizers did well to pull off even this good a race this year.



*Overseas winners Witteveen/Zegers refuel at Pewsey.*