

CUTTER SEASON AGAIN!

April is the start of the cutter season and the first row is the Tudor Pull an annual ceremonial from Hampton Court to the Tower on the 21st. The Master's family commitments prevented him taking part, and it was his pleasure to offer the opportunity to Past Master Roy Harris and his lady, Sonya. The cutter Water-Forget-Me-Not was not owned by the Company when Roy was Master in 1993-1944. Roy's account of the day follows the photo.

On 17th May, the cutter took to the water again, for a race - the Thames Traditional Rowing Association Admiral of the Port Challenge. Master Peter Matthew and Lis went with Court Assistant Nick Reeves and his wife Janet.

Janet and Peter were the passengers in the cutter, Lis and Nick followed in the Cory boat. Lis and I will treasure that evening as our last with Nick and it leaves us with very fond memories.

Our ladies in our cutter, the Forget Me Not, won handsomely again. The rose bowl trophy is still missing, but a silver platter has replaced it. Trophies were presented by Sheriff Nigel Pullman.

Thanks to Johnny Dwan, our Bargemaster for training the team and organizing our entry and to Cory for supplying their boat which allowed supporters to follow the cutter.



Sheriff Nigel Pullman presenting the silver platter to our winning ladies crew and cox.

Roy's account of the Tudor Pull:

"It was with a little trepidation that I accepted the invitation by the Master of the Water Conservators to take his place on the Tudor Pull. I had heard over the years of the Master and his lady journeying downstream on the Thames in a small boat rowed by a few oarsmen or women and having to suffer whatever

the weather chose to throw at them. As the day drew closer it became clear, through various emails, that this year was going to be different.

"Our son drove us to Hampton Court for about 9 am and was able to stay for a while to see the Stela ceremony and also our departure on the boat. Our Beadle and I assembled with the senior warder and a party of Royal Watermen in the courtyard together with the Royal Barge Master and the Master Waterman and Lighterman. As 10.00 am struck a party from the Palace marched to a table in the forecourt with the Stela. After a short ceremony the Barge Master took the Stela to the river front where the boat on which we were to travel the 26 miles to the Tower of London awaited us. It was none other than the Queen's Royal Barge Gloriana. The Stela travelled in the prow of the barge in front of the eighteen oarsmen. After some clever manoeuvring of this sizeable vessel, we set off down river accompanied by a few cutters of other livery companies. The Barge is a fabulous vessel and Sonya and I were able to take full advantage of it as, besides us and the Beadle there was only the Master Waterman and Lighterman and his lady and a couple who were reporters on the Evening Standard.

"Unsurprisingly we attracted a lot of attention as we travelled downstream. Many spectators were waving to us and we felt obliged to wave back. There was at times applause as we went past. We stopped for some time at Richmond which is where the barge is normally housed and encountered numerous sightseers who, I imagine, could not believe their eyes. As we left Richmond, we picked up further livery company cutters and other vessels until the flotilla numbered more than 20. Among this number was "The Water Forget me not" the Water Conservators Cutter manned by the young lady rowers who have done so well on the river in recent years. The Gloriana is owned by Lord Stirling who joined one of the boats in the flotilla which circled the Gloriana to allow him to take numerous photos of it from all angles.

"The journey downstream continued in fabulous weather and Sonya and I managed to start the first sun tan of the year. The water was a little choppy in the lower reaches but Gloriana handled it beautifully. We completed the river trip at St Katherine's pier by the Tower of London. We disembarked, collected the Stela the Barge Master and a few Bargemen and processed to the riverside gate of the Tower. As we approached the gate it was slammed in our face and our right to entry was challenged. Having given a suitable response we were admitted and after a short ceremony the Stela was handed into the safe custody of the Tower to be collected again after a twelve month.