

The Tudor Pull 23 April 2017



The Tudor Pull is a ceremonial event that celebrates the use of the River Thames as an ancient highway. The "Stela", a slice of ancient wooden water pipe donated by the Worshipful Company of Water Conservators, is transported in the charge of the Queen's Barge Master from Hampton Court Palace (where the "Stela" is stored) under oars via the River Thames to the Tower of London where it is presented to the Duty Governor watched over by the Yeoman Warders.



We joined the Master, Thames Warden, their Consorts, The Beadle, Master of the Watermen & Lightermen and various other guests early on a very sunny Sunday morning. Already assembled were the excited, bright red clad crew from the Watermen & Lightermen Company, who would be rowing the Queen's Rowbarge 'Gloriana' the 25 miles.



At 1000am, the Master and Thames Warden processed from the Gloriana to collect the Stela (*more details of the ceremony in 'The Master's Blog'*). They returned – accompanied by drummer and Henry VIII - with the Stela!



With Stela and passengers aboard, the Gloriana set off, escorted by cutters decked out with ceremonial canopies and rowed by their liveried crews.



Gloriana left through Teddington Lock with oars aloft and headed on for Richmond, where we met with more cutters, including the Water Forget-me-not, the Company's Cutter that would be transporting Thames Warden, Mike Williamson and wife Sandra for the remaining part of the journey. With Johnny Dwan at the helm and our winning ladies crew from Poplar Rowing Club on the oars, the passengers were safely transported.



Nearing the Pool of London we slowed a little as a boat with Lord Sterling drew alongside to allow him to join us. He had funded the building of the Gloriana – and was very involved in ensuring the boat was built in 18 weeks.

Gloriana's rowers kept a steady pace in order to reach the Tower of London at the allotted hour and our competitive spirit rose as we gradually passed all accompanying cutters. We understood that some of time Gloriana may have been motor-assisted - although nobody seemed to begrudge the rowers the help!!

Unsurprisingly, the flotilla received much attention from the moment we set off - and we waved back enthusiastically! Under the many bridges, the Beadle roused both passengers and spectators above into an increasingly rowdy chorus of 'Three Cheers'.





Arriving safely at the Tower of London we joined the crowds cheering on the marathon tail-enders and the left the Master to deliver the Stela to the Governor of Her Majesty's Tower of London in the final part of the ceremony (*further details in the Masters Blog*).



Thanks especially to the rowers and to all others who made this a fantastic experience for us.

We would thoroughly recommend it if you get the chance!



And we made The Times

Sue Paterson , Court Assistant