

THE WINGFIELD SCULLS

BRITISH AMATEUR SCULLING CHAMPIONSHIP AND CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE THAMES

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2015 Championships

	Mile Post	Hammersmith Bridge	Chiswick Steps	Barnes Bridge	Finish
Mathilda Hodgkins Byrne (Reading)	4:49	8:23.5	13:19	18:10	21:54
Georgia Francis (Imperial)	4:50	8:25	13:25	18:19	22:09
Umpire Sir Steve Redgrave (1985-89 Champion)					
Aligner Phil Bourguignon (Molesey)					

The umpire had all the scullers on their best behaviour by reserving the right to disqualify anyone at the finish of the race not necessarily during. Mel Wilson's withdrawal gave these two young scullers the Tideway stage to themselves and they took the opportunity to shine. Stuart Whitelaw steered Francis while Phil Gray of UL steered MHB with Dan Moore her coach in the launch, all of them had their work cut out as the scullers swapped stations. It was a close fought battle, whenever MHB's higher rate looked like increasing her advantage Francis seemed to find a response to stay in contact. After the Mile post with overlap they were heading in different directions meaning Francis bored MHB' stern pointing her off to Middlesex, a direction MHB continued in for a while allowing Francis to hug the Surrey bank and stay in contact to Hammersmith. MHB's more dynamic rhythm just began to tell off St Pauls and she managed to get clear water, but Francis hung on in the stiff headwind up the Eyot. Francis did well to keep MHB under pressure the whole way both scullers showed character in how they tackled the races' challenges.

	Mile Post	Hammersmith Bridge	Chiswick Steps	Barnes Bridge	Finish
Tim Richards (IC)	4:34	7:58	NTT	18:07	21:40
John Hale (IC)	4:37	8:04	NTT	18:16	21:55
Niall Kenny (TSS)	4:44	8:12	13:22	18:36	22:11
Sean Blake (LRC)	4:48	8:17	13:32	NTT	22:54
Laurence Wells (Army)	4:40	8:06	13:15	NTT	23:46
Mike Lawrence (Quintin)	4:52	8:24	13:43	NTT	25:24
Umpire Sir Steve Redgrave (1985-89 Champion)					
Aligner Graeme Mulcahy (Champion 1976)					

Closer to the top of the tide the stream was faster and the water bumpier. The scullers aligned three through the centre arch and three through the Middlesex arch meaning the reigning champion had plenty of space in his central station. Richards got into a lead at over 40. Kenny had a clear run on Middlesex with Wells in pursuit looking steadier and ominous but it was Hale who kept Richards under pressure. Along the boats Richards had established the calm rhythm that made him Champion and had a length on Hale. Lawrence had dropped a blade off the start and never got himself into the race. Hale and Wells were having a real tussle while Richards eased away after the Mile. The wind seemed less than for the women until the scullers got to the Eyot and it blew up badly. All scullers sort calmer water and tucked under the bank after Chiswick Pier just missing a sculler coming down past Cygnet. Steering and conditions proved challenging around Barnes Bridge and as he endeavoured to avoid the buttress Wells crabbed and fell in. Before his launch could get to him he had righted his boat and was getting back in. The scullers came back out into the centre for the last part but by then they were well spread out by incidents and conditions. Richards deserved to win a tough race.

Two very different races, but both demonstrated the scullers true resilience, the first a head to head duel the second a Tideway test. We were able to call on two Olympic Champions to present the silver sculls. Greg Searle presented Mathilda with her silver medal and said what a special place the race had in his career. Steve Redgrave presented Tim with a date bar to add to his medal from last year and referred to the "scullers' craft" the competitors had demonstrated today. All applauded Laurence Wells for his rapid recovery and finishing the race. The event is indebted to TSS and LRC for hosting us and Peter Laverick and Elise Sherwell for providing and driving their launch Verity.

The committee of former Champions was out in force with Sir Steve (1985-89) umpiring, Graeme Mulcahy (1976) aligning, Elise Sherwell (2007) driving the launch, Guy Pooley (1991-2) treasurer, Greg Searle (1998-99,2000), Chris Baillieu (1981-84) at the briefing and the secretary. At the presentation Sir Steve reminded the winners of one of the event's quirks; they were now on the organising committee and liable to be called up to umpire.

Record times		
Mile post	4:28	M.Wilson 2014
Hammersmith	7:58	M.Wilson 2014
Chiswick Steps	12:48	A.Watkins 2011
Barnes Bridge	17:28	A.Watkins 2011
Finish	20:55	A.Watkins 2011

Record times		
Mile post	4:12	M.W.Wells 2005
Hammersmith	7:32	M.W.Wells 2005
Chiswick Steps	12:06	A.Freeman-Pask 2011
Barnes Bridge	16:27	A.Freeman-Pask 2011
Finish	19:41	A.Freeman-Pask 2011