

THE WINGFIELD SCULLS

BRITISH AMATEUR SCULLING CHAMPIONSHIP AND CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE THAMES

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2002 Championship

	Mile Post	Hammersmith Bridge	Chiswick Steps	Barnes Bridge	Finish
Ian Lawson (LC)	5.58	10.18	16.11		26.13
Mark Hunter (LC)	6.02	10.24	16.16		26.19
Richard Ockendon (N&U)	5.55	10.16	16.22		26.32
Alan Campbell (TSS)	6.06				27.39
Richard Wilder (TSS)	6.19				NSO

The sunshine belied some ferocious conditions gathering. A lot of landwater, a very high tide and a strong headwind along the boats, the Eyot and from Barnes had all the makings of a rough race. However following the previous day's floods the PLA closed the Barrage. So before the start the danger was not the conditions but the boats swinging on their moorings without the stream to hold them in place.

Former champions were present with Chris Baillieu (81-84) unable to follow but Graeme Mulcahy (76) caught us up on his bicycle, Guy Pooley (91-92) managed start and finish before dashing off to support his house football team, Doug Melvin (55,58) and the secretary followed in the launch while Bill Barry (63-66) umpired.

The scullers got away cleanly at modest rates with the Champion at 31 by the start of the boats. The race split immediately with Campbell going straight to the Fulham wall and Lawson following suit, whilst Ockendon and Hunter steered a more conventional line. Wilder struggled to get to grips with his new boat and the race. The umpire warned Lawson who had caught a wave and allowed Campbell back to within a half length, while Ockendon led Hunter by a length. By the Black Buoy Ockendon had 4 lengths on Hunter and Lawson and Campbell appeared to have made a poor tactical choice. All the scullers were at 30-31. Ockendon and Lawson's courses converged towards the Mile post, which Ockendon reached in 5.55, Lawson 5.58, Hunter 6.02, Campbell 6.06 and Wilder 6.19. The three lead scullers hugged the Surrey shore so much so they had to steer out sharply to go through the centre arch of Hammersmith bridge. They all returned to the Surrey shore and the umpire had to warn Lawson he must challenge Ockendon on the outside. After St Pauls Lawson, rating a pip higher, did challenge drawing level with Ockendon at the bottom of the Eyot. The water was flat calm as the Champion took control of the race and drew away reaching Chiswick Steps in 16.11, Ockendon 16.16 and Hunter 16.22. Hunter took his chance and crossed over sharply from Surrey to Middlesex taking the two leading scullers across to cover his move. Tight under the Bandstand Hunter started to close on Ockendon. Again all the scullers had to steer out sharply to take the centre of Barnes Bridge. Hunter clipped the bridge and Ockendon rallied but not for long. As Lawson eased up passing the Brewery Hunter overtook Ockendon to finish second.

An epic race where all prior planning was thrown to the wind and the title was retained by the man who wanted to win the most. Lawson's time 26.13 was the slowest winning time since Jumps Gardner beat Guy Nickalls in 1890. Jurgen Groebler was met the scullers as they finished and presented the Champion with the 2002 date bar to add to the medal he won last year.