

THE WINGFIELD SCULLS

BRITISH AMATEUR SCULLING CHAMPIONSHIP AND CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE THAMES

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2013 Championships

At midday the sun was beating down as though it thought it was still summer and the tides didn't seem to know what they were up to either. The boats hadn't turned at Putney at the time set for the umpire's briefing so it was decided to switch the races around and move the men's start to 2pm with fewer entries and the women were to start at 3pm so as to fit the six abreast.

	Mile Post	Hammersmith Bridge	Chiswick Steps	Barnes Bridge	Finish
Alan Campbell (TSS)	4.36	8.00	12:57	17.32	21.15
Jonny Walton (LC)	4.44	8.11	13.04	17.45	21.32
Jamie Kirkwood (LC)	4.44	8.15	13.12	17.55	21.44

Umpire Graeme Mulcahy (1976 Champion)

Aligner Phil Bourguignon (Molesey)

It had clouded over by the start and a breeze made the water along the boats awkward. Despite not being straight Campbell on the centre station got by far the most determined and powerful start. By LRC he was three lengths up rating 40, two pips over Jonny Walton who was two pips up on Kirkwood who was holding his own a little wider on the Middlesex station. Jonny and Jamie passed the Black Buoy level with Campbell five to six lengths up. At this stage Kirkwood looked the more composed and dangerous sculler but at Fulham as the water calmed Walton settled down and he was half a length to the good at the Mile. This gap extended to clear water by Harrods where Kirkwood started to show the strain. Campbell cleared Hammersmith in eight minutes rating 30. At St Pauls they came up against a stiff headwind which stretched the field out further. By Barnes Walton was looking laboured but neither he nor Kirkwood would stop pushing. At the end Campbell gave three cheers for his challengers and Walton responded. Campbell demonstrated the smoother technique he has been working on this year it would be good to see him scull like that and with his true passion.

	Mile Post	Hammersmith Bridge	Chiswick Steps	Barnes Bridge	Finish
Imogen Walsh (LRC)	4.47	8.12	-	17.59	21.44
Vicky Thornley (LC)	4.48	8.18	-	18.07	21.53
Vicki Meyer-Laker (LC)	4.47	8.25	-	18.12	21.57
Beth Rodford (Gloucester)	4.53	8.32	-	18.17	22.01
Louisa Reeve (LC)	4.54	8.28	-	18.22	22.09
Frances Houghton (LC)	4.45	-	-	-	26.32

Umpire Graeme Mulcahy (1976 Champion)

Aligner Phil Rowley (TSS)

The scullers were keen to avoid heats so six is the maximum number abreast the river can take at the start but it is tight. The first to show out of the pack was Reeve on Surrey and Thornley on Middlesex. Houghton cut right across Rodford's bows to claim second. By the Black Buoy Thornley led Houghton by a half length with Reeve over lapping in third. By Beverley Brook it was a race of two threes Thornley, Houghton and Meyer-Laker followed by Reeve, Walsh and Rodford, that soon changed into a four and two as Walsh cut across Rodford's bows and moved up. It was difficult to call the order of the front group at the Mile Post but Houghton had the edge. The pack stayed tight with Houghton ahead and the others jostling for position but Walsh edged herself into second. The tightness of this group pushed them onto the buoy after Harrods which Houghton clipped and capsized. Thornley seemed phased by this incident whilst Walsh seized her chance and went clear. Whilst Walsh and Thornley hugged the bank in the headwind along the Eyot, Meyer-Laker stayed in the stream and gained on them. Having hugged Surrey the scullers switched their allegiance to such an extent Thornley almost hit the buoy at the Bandstand. The order didn't change again but Meyer-Laker closed up on Thornley in second. Houghton managed to get back into her boat and finish the race, otherwise it was a close packed field over the whole course. Despite all the changes and adventures all the scullers enjoyed the experience even describing the start as "the coolest thing".

Ian Wingfield represented the Wingfield Family Society and presented the silver sculls to the two champions, commenting on how proud the family was to still be associated with the race and such high quality athletes. He drew attention to the presence of CD Riches at the umpire's briefing and the links between the race and Westminster school who's boat club is celebrating its two hundredth anniversary. Henry Wingfield's father was headmaster of Westminster. The race is indebted to Paul Thompson for his continued support and promoting the event to his athletes and TSS and LRC for hosting us.

Record times

Mile post	4.44	A.Watkins 2011
Hammersmith	8.29	A.Watkins 2011
Chiswick Steps	13.30	A.Watkins 2011
Barnes Bridge	18.11	A.Watkins 2011
Finish	21.53	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	16.45	A.Freeman-Pask 2011
Finish	19.58	A.Freeman-Pask 2011