

U3A Bikers The Boat Race Friday 15th March 2024

A group of fifteen of us assembled at Brockwell Lido for this ride, researched by Mary (who was unable to join today) and led by Andrew.

With the assistance of a passing park visitor we captured the moment that the group was ready to ride.

Out of the park and up Brixton Water Lane, we set out in two groups, across Clapham and Wandsworth Commons and along busy Garrett Lane and Ram Street.

We joined the Thames Path at the point where the River Wandle meets the Thames.

At Putney Bridge we stopped for coffee at St Mary's Church, busy with mothers, babies and prams.

Despite recent rain and some high Spring tides, the Thames Path past Putney and Mortlake was in fair condition. A line of flotsam on the path showed the high water mark in places.

The path past Mortlake Brewery was quite muddy, but it was passable with care.

The final stretch, along Thames Bank, provided a good surface as we approached Chiswick Bridge. We noted the two marker posts, one each side of the river, for the start / finish line for the Boat Race.



Once across the river on Chiswick Bridge the groups set off downstream, past Dukes Meadow, a very pleasant stretch of the river path, as the sun appeared.

Bishop's Park was the lunch stop. The café was busy but there was a covered area to the rear for us to use.

The return route was past Fulham Palace, inland around Hurlingham Park, beneath Wandsworth Bridge, and on past Battersea Bridge.

The shared path of Chelsea Embankment is quite narrow but brought us to the Albert Bridge and so into Battersea Park where the ride ended.

The Boat Race is on Saturday 30th March and (from a look at the tide tables) it will be raced on a flood tide from Putney up-river to Mortlake.

Distance: 23 miles cycled.

Riders: *Andrew Burke. Caroline Strallen.. Daniela Walther. David Rosenfeld. Denise Davies. Jane Antos. Jane Evans. Joe Antos. John Clements. John Davies.. Judy Coutinho. Julia Carter.. Martin Dale.. Patrick Mulhern.. Valerie Greenfield,*

Ride leader: Andrew

Report by John, 17 March 2024

The Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race is raced over the Championship Course, the stretch of the River Thames between Mortlake and Putney. The river is tidal here and is commonly referred to as the Tideway.

The first race was held in 1829 on a course near Henley and it was not until 1845 that the race was held on the course used today. The course was later marked by two stones on the southern bank of the river, inscribed "U.B.R." (University Boat Race). The Mortlake end was marked by a stone a few yards downstream from Chiswick Bridge, near The Ship Inn, and the other one is just upstream of Putney Bridge, a distance of 4 miles and 374 yards.

The races are always rowed with the tidal current; Putney to Mortlake on a flood tide and Mortlake to Putney on an ebb tide. Currently Cambridge (the light blues) lead Oxford (the dark blues) by 86 to 81.

In 1859 the Cambridge boat sank; in 1912 both boats sank and a re-row was held. In 1877 the result was declared as a dead heat.

The boats ("shells") used in the races are coxed eights, 62 feet long; each rower has a single oar.

The first women's boat race was held in 1927. It has been held each year since 1964. From 2015, the women's race has been held on the same day and course. "The Boat Race" refers to the combined event of the two races.

Acknowledgement: source material from Wikipedia

