



THE QUEEN'S ROWBARGE

**Review of the
2012 & 2013
Seasons**



THE QUEEN'S ROWBARGE

~2012~

The year was to be memorable for many reasons with the River Thames and boats playing a major part in London.

The plans by Lord Sterling to build an 18 oared Royal Row Barge, the first since the early 19th century, as a lasting legacy of HM Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee took shape in late 2011 with the keel being laid in November. With the build team, led by project manager Damian Byrne MVO and Master boat builder Mark Edwards MBE, working seven days a week the barge rapidly took shape.

The full story of the extraordinary build programme required to incorporate traditional methods and modern technology and pictures of how she came in to being are detailed on our web site – www.glorianaqrb.org.uk . The attention to detail was impressive and only five months later the barge was ready to be moved from the warehouse in Brentford to the riverbank in Isleworth.



Launch day in April will be remembered for the sleet and rain as the Queen's Row Barge (QRB) 'Gloriana' was lowered on to the grey waters of the River Thames to rousing cheers from the builders, supporters and friends.

Moored at Richmond the build continued working towards the 25th April when she was officially presented by Lord Sterling to HM Queen Elizabeth II at Greenland Pier, Deptford.



Following the short ceremony, held in pouring rain, The Royal Watermen under the helm of HM Barge Master Paul Ludwig rowed the barge down to Greenwich to salute the newly refurbished 'Cutty Sark' which was being reopened by HM The Queen.

The Queen's Row Barge then returned to Richmond for more attention before being seen in her full splendour on 3rd of June at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Pageant where she led the flotilla of 1000 boats in celebration of Her Majesty the Queen's sixty year reign, the largest flotilla seen on the river for over 200 years.

The Manpowered Squadron followed 'Gloriana' downstream from Wandsworth passing under Chelsea Bridge where the Olympian and Mobility crew aboard led the traditional salute to their monarch of "Toss Oars!"



'The Spirit of Chartwell', with the Royal party aboard, joined the flotilla astern of the Commonwealth Squadron thereby creating the greatest sight seen on the River Thames for centuries. The flotilla progressed downstream creating a 'Canaletto moment' in Central London before passing under the fully raised bascules of Tower Bridge.

Millions of spectators lined the banks and many millions more around the world marvelled at the spectacle. An amazing day to be on the river and to be a part of such a spectacular celebration was an honour for all those involved.

The next outing was at Henley Royal Regatta with 'Gloriana' moored outside the boat tents where for the first time a limited number of the public (badge holders only) were able to have a close look at the barge. The over whelming reaction and comment was amazement at the quality of workmanship and beauty of the craft, everyone wanted to be photographed standing beside her and she became the unofficial meeting point - "Meet you by 'Gloriana'" could be heard all week.

Permission had been granted by the Stewards of HRR for 'Gloriana' to row over the course after the last race of the regatta. A crew of past and present Olympic oarsmen and women was recruited and they rowed up the course after the final race – a practice row for the next event.



Carrying the Olympic flame on the final day of the 70 day Torch Relay had been planned for many months since members of LOCOG were shown the barge during the build and they asked that she carry the Olympic flame, cauldron and Torch Bearers from Hampton Court Palace to City Hall.

This was not widely publicised however thousands came out to see QRB with a crew of Olympian oarsmen and women from the 1940's to the present day with Sir Matthew Pinsent carrying the flame aboard.



Three flotillas consisting of traditional river rowing craft, junior crews from London Youth Rowing in modern rowing boats and finally Watermen's cutters from the City of London livery companies and organisations totalling 90 boats provided the escort during the five hour televised row.

The crowds were almost as spectacular as those for the QDJP – both banks and all the bridges lined with crowds cheering the rowers and the Olympic flame on their way downstream.

The QRB and escort arrived at City Hall and the barge carrying the Olympic rings where the final torch bearer stepped aboard to cheers from the spectators on both banks. The flame then went to City Hall from where later in the day it was whisked to the Olympic Stadium for the memorable opening ceremony.

With assistance from British Waterways 'Gloriana' made her way to the Olympic Village where she was moored for the duration of the 'greatest show on earth' ~ the 2012 Olympics.

Following the closing ceremony of the Paralympics QRB travelled back to St. Katherine Docks where she remained on show allowing members of the public and visitors to London to see the superb craftsmanship.

The final outing of 2012 was to carry the new Lord Mayor of the City of London, Alderman Roger Gifford, to the City of London on the morning of the Lord Mayor's Show, a sight not seen on the River Thames for over 150 years, once again an 18 oared Royal barge with escort of twenty cutters from the City Livery Companies and organisations would carry the Lord Mayor to the City of London.

The crew were winners of the Doggett Coat & Badge Wager from the Watermen & Lightermen Company and oarsmen from the Lord Mayor's alumni Trinity College, Oxford.



During the winter QRB was laid up at the Port of London yard at Denton, Gravesend after being craned out and stored in a marquee. The winter works completed many outstanding tasks from the build and provided the opportunity to add layers of varnish to enhance the finish on all the woodwork.

~2013~

April 2013 saw the re-launch and consequential mooring of the barge back in St. Katherine Docks which has become her summer season home moorings provided courtesy of the dock owners and management team.

The first event was the Tudor Pull when HM Barge Master and the Royal Watermen celebrate the importance of the Royal highway, the River Thames, by transporting a Stella from Hampton Court Palace to HM Tower of London.

At a short ceremony in front of Hampton Court the Stella was presented to HM Barge Master and he was charged to carry it under oars on the next tide to the Tower of London. They then processed to QRB moored in front of the Tudor Palace where it was carried on board and secured on the bows, as is tradition.

'Gloriana' with an escort of the Queen's Shallop 'Jubilant' and eight boats commenced the 22 mile row downstream passing through Teddington Lock the flotilla reached Richmond where they moored for a brief stop and victuals for the crews. Here the flotilla was joined by a further twelve Shallops, cutters and gigs from the City Livery Companies, City organisations and clubs.



The spectacular site of the Queen's Row Barge with an escort of fully dressed Watermen's cutters and Shallops delighted the spectators who had come on to the bridges during the five hour row or were they there to support the London Marathon - to see the boats I'm sure.

On schedule the flotilla arrived at St. Katherine's Pier where the Barge Master carried the Stella ashore and escorted by the Royal Watermen processed to the East Gate, here the Yeoman Warder challenged them closing the gates. After permitting entry they processed across the East drawbridge to be met by the Governor of HM Tower who accepted the Stella in to his custody and discharges the Barge Master having completed his duties.

QRB then returned to her mooring in SKD.

In mid May we arranged to carry out two days of trial events in Thames Ditton the reason being to decide on terminology for orders to the rowers and what style of events we could realistically hold on board.

On the delivery cruise up stream QRB was met at Teddington Lock by a crew from Ditton's Skiff & Punting Club who then rowed up to their clubhouse.

The next morning another crew of mixed ability oarsmen crewed the barge for a row when the following was trialled and process agreed –

- Raising of oars (at commencement of rowing)
- Preparation for tossing of oars
- Tossing of oars (from seated position)
- Lowering of oars
- Length of stroke and stroke rate
- 'Hold Water' (assisting by the powered helm)
- Turning about under oars (NO bow thruster)
- Lowering of oars (at completion of rowing)

After lunch and debrief of the crew 'Gloriana' was prepared for a tea cruise. A table was laid in the house and the necessary catering brought on board.

The rowers were supplemented by fresh oarsmen and women and twenty guests arrived.

The hour long event went well with many lessons being learnt as to what level of service could be provided with the limited facilities on board whilst under oars. The passengers were all in agreement – the experience was truly memorable.

The following day a mixed crew of juniors from Kingston Grammar School took QRB for a row – this was the most successful crew to have rowed the barge thus far.



They settled in to the required stroke with ease and enjoyed a 45 minute row aboard being photographed by enthusiastic parents afloat and on shore.

The event was reported in the British Rowing magazine 'Rowing & Regatta' and has, as a consequence, resulted in a number of other schools asking for the opportunity to put a crew aboard QRB.

On returning to the moorings at the skiff club 'Gloriana' was prepared for a luncheon to be served on board to 16 guests. Tables were laid and additional seating brought on board.

The food preparation had been completed in the club facilities and luncheon was served on board by staff. Once more the layout required, the numbers and method of serving was all confirmed in a controlled environment – many lessons were learnt.

Again the guests all agreeing the whole event was memorable and a great success waving 'Gloriana' off as she returned downstream to SKD.

The trials were a great success; the operations team learnt many lessons for the future.

On the 1st June 'Gloriana' locked out of SKD and moored at RNR HMS President ~ the event was the start of 'the toughest rowing race in the world', the Round Britain Rowing Race (www.gbrowchallenge.com).

RNR HMS 'President' who were providing the start facilities to the organisers has been invited to lead the six boats over the start line in their Waterman's cutter but when Lord Sterling, a Rear Admiral of the RNR, offered 'Gloriana' they had to find a crew of 18 not 6!

The RNR crew in full whites boarded and rowed upstream followed by the competitors in their Atlantic rowing boats. The flotilla turned above HMS Belfast and rowed back downstream towards Tower Bridge and at exactly 08.15 'Gloriana' led the boats under the bridge and the race was on.

The RNR crew tossed oars and gave a rousing cheer to the crews as they rowed off downstream at the start of the greatest challenge which only a few would complete weeks later.

QRB once again returned to her secure moorings in St. Katherine Docks.

Plans had been underway for many weeks for 'Gloriana' to attend the Coronation Regatta at Windsor, the first for over 40 years, and the Rowing World Cup at Dorney Lake, held in the UK by rotation with other countries around the world, and consequently she left St. Katherine Docks on the 13th June en route up stream.

An issue developed with the battery system resulting in loss of power from one bank, following a short stop at Kew Pier during which the supply was changed over and checked to be operating QRB left to proceed upstream. The control system however once again shut down the power supply resulting in a total loss of power below Kew Bridge.

The barge came in to contact with the bridge causing slight damage to the hand rail on the house roof on the port side. The RNLI were called to assist with manoeuvring to a safe mooring.

On their arrival 'Gloriana' came clear of the bridge pier and drifted across to the other side of the arch causing damage to the starboard lute board and stern crown fittings.

A line was eventually taken by the RNLI who then towed the barge to Kew Pier where she was made safe. Further examination revealed additional damage to the hull caused by a fitting on the RNLI launch.

The following morning QRB was towed to secure private moorings in Thames Ditton where the physical damage was repaired in a matter of days. The recalibration of the power system and the recertification by the MCA took a little longer.

The result of this incident was that 'Gloriana's attendance at both the Coronation Regatta and the Rowing World Cup had to be cancelled.

On completion of the repairs QRB continued her planned event programme by arriving at Henley on 29th June.

En route the local club of Upper Thames RC provided a mixed crew joining the barge at Hambledon Lock and rowing her up the Henley reach passing their clubhouse – an event enjoyed by all the oarsmen and women.

On the following Monday a crew of Olympian oarsmen and women, many who had rowed in the 2012 Torch Relay and including Anne-Marie Phelps (Chairman of British Rowing), boarded 'Gloriana' at the HRR Boat Tents and rowed upstream to the River Rowing Museum where they were met by Sir Matthew Pinsent.

The reason for this event – the presentation to the museum of the cauldron 'Gloriana' had carried last year on Day 70 of the Olympic Torch Relay.

'Gloriana' was met by the senior management of the museum and dignitaries from Henley on Thames who then joined the crew in the upper gallery where the cauldron had been mounted on its original base as a centre piece to an exhibition of the events on the River Thames in 2012 – the Diamond Jubilee Pageant and the Olympic Relay with pictures of QRB 'Gloriana' playing a central role. (www.rrm.co.uk/events/glorious-thames)

Following a reception during which QRB remained on the moorings being enjoyed by locals and other boaters an invited crew of juniors arrived from Henley RC and took their place on board for the row back to the HRR boat

tents. The route took QRB up past their clubhouse to rousing cheers from fellow club members and parents on shore and afloat – once again a memorable event for all involved.

Henley Royal Regatta was another great success with small impromptu gatherings being held on board such as the reunion of the 1973 Cambridge University RC VIII, members of which have been very supportive of the project.

Local television presentations also utilised QRB for interviews by Catherine Granger of members of the GB Rowing Squad – all very positive publicity.

On the Sunday after the final race a crew of juniors from the three local rowing clubs - Henley RC, Leander Club and Upper Thames RC, rowed QRB up the course to rousing cheers from the spectators.



The crew tossed oars in salute to Dame Di Ellis CBE (Chairman of British Rowing emeritus) as she arrived at the main grandstand to present the prizes to the winning crews of Regatta.

Once again a very successful week at Henley with many contacts made with clubs and schools who are very enthusiastic to put crews aboard for the experience of rowing such an iconic craft.

On Monday 8th July 'Gloriana' cruised downstream to private moorings in Wraysbury in preparation for the most important event thus far – the Coronation Row, a private event for HM the Queen and members of the Royal family.

On 9th July 'Gloriana' moored above Albert Bridge on the banks of Windsor Home Park where she was joined by four invited cruisers, for the required control and security personnel, and an Environment Agency launch to act as escort for the row.

HM Barge Master and nineteen Royal Watermen attended and following a short practice row in the morning prepared for the row. The on board catering was provided by The Waterside Inn at Bray with the General Manager Diego Masciaga and Frédéric Poulette attending the Royal party.

HM Queen Elizabeth II arrived being met by Lord Sterling who introduced Malcolm Knight and Simon Davies as those responsible for planning the event.

HM Barge Master Paul Ludwig welcomed HM Queen, Prince Andrew, Prince Edward, the Countess of Wessex, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester and the Duke of Kent aboard 'Gloriana'.

The Queen's Row Barge pushed away and proceeded under oars upstream under Victoria Bridge and up the weir stream to Eton College where tea was taken on board.



Members of Eton College staff and their families cheered Her Majesty as the 'Gloriana' turned and returned downstream under Victoria Bridge where she moored up.

Lord Sterling, Sir Steve Redgrave and members of the 'Gloriana' team met the Royal party as they disembarked.

The Queen expressed her enjoyment of the event as did all the others who stayed for a short time to meet and thank the Royal Watermen.



A small piece of history was created this day with the reigning Monarch being rowed once again by eighteen of her Royal Watermen in a Royal Barge – a wonderful site not seen for nearly 200 years, an honour and enjoyed by all those involved.

'Gloriana' then went to moorings up stream at Bray Marina provided courtesy of MDL Marinas.

On 14th July QRB motored up to The Waterside Inn, Bray and moored on their finger pontoon where a small number of invited guests boarded for a short champagne reception. Once again the event was a success being thoroughly enjoyed by all those on board.

The 'Gloriana' then motored downstream to Eton Excelsior RC who had been due to provide a crew on the weekend of the Coronation Regatta but had been cancelled following the Kew incident.

The barge moored at the club and the mixed crew boarded with senior members of the club as passengers. They all enjoyed an hour long row on their home reach of the river receiving a rousing cheer from a corporate event occurring at the Oakley Court Hotel, another very successful outing.

'Gloriana' returned to the moorings at Bray Marina overnight then moved downstream to moorings at Shepperton Marina, again generously provided pro bono.

Saturday 20th July was a busy day on the river locally with Molesey Amateur Rowing Regatta and the Hampton Court & Dittons 125th Regatta.

A mixed crew from Molesey RC, Dittons Skiff & Punting Club and Thames Valley Skiff Club joined the barge at Shepperton Marina and for the first time wearing the maroon 'uniform' crew shirt rowed downstream.

Senior members of the MBC Committee joined 'Gloriana' at Sunbury Lock and enjoyed the row past with toss of oars at the finish line of the Molesey Regatta.

They left 'Gloriana' at Molesey Lock and she continued downstream to row over the course of the skiffing & punting regatta celebrating its 125th year. Once again a rousing cheer was received by the crew as they tossed oars (now carried out standing) on crossing the finish line.



'Gloriana' returned upstream to Shepperton Marina passing both regattas again. Once again a successful event with oarsmen and women and public alike enjoying the splendid sight of the Royal barge under oars on the River Thames.

A week later on Sunday 28th July an impromptu crew from local skiff clubs, the PLA RC, the Metropolitan Police RC and Kingston RC joined 'Gloriana' at Molesey Lock on her return trip to St. Katherine's Dock. They enjoyed true fellowship through rowing as they rowed down to central London on a sunny afternoon.

On the morning of 31st members of Prince Phillips' Royal Household visited QRB on her moorings in SKD. The purpose was to see the craft they had heard so much about and only seen from afar. The outcome is that we understand that Prince Phillip is hopeful of coming on board at some time in 2014, something we support as he was unable to attend the Coronation Row.

'Gloriana' is normally moored inside the lock gates at St. Katherine Docks however this area was soon to be taken up with the yachts competing in the Round the World Sailing Race so she was moved to the inner pool, here she was enjoyed by all the crews for these super fast craft of the oceans.

In early September QRB moved upstream to her mooring in Shepperton Marina once again where the MCA mid term inspection was completed – she passed with flying colours!

On the morning of 7th September 'Gloriana' motored downstream to Twickenham mooring at Hammerton's Ferry on the finish line for the Great River Race which was due to start later in the morning.

A crew from the local Twickenham RC including a disabled member joined the barge with invited guests from the GRR who supplied refreshments.

The crew, wearing specially printed shirts, then rowed QRB upstream past their clubhouse where they tossed oars in salute, round Eel Pie Island and down to Richmond upon Thames where they again tossed oars in salute to Mark Edwards MBE, the boat builder, at Richmond Bridge Boathouses.

The barge returned to the moorings at Hammerton's where the crew and guests spectated the finish of the Great River Race – over 200 rowed and paddled boats from all over the UK and Europe.

As the last boats crossed the finish line QRB slipped her moorings and motored upstream to private moorings in Thames Ditton.

The following day the plan was to attend the Teddington Festival at Teddington Lock however due to a technical issue the rowing crew from The Skiff Club joined 'Gloriana' in Kingston upon Thames and went for an hour's row from there.

Once again they and the locals enjoyed the experience and spectacle of 'Gloriana' being rowed through this historic riverside town after which she returned to Thames Ditton.

On 10th September QRB returned to SKD. On previous trips the timings had been to motor down against the flood tide reaching SKD at the end of their 4 hour window of access to the marina. On this occasion the timing was changed to utilise the end of the ebb tide and beginning of the flood tide so arriving just as SKD became accessible.

This option was found to be more favourable than the timetable previously followed – the lessons learnt continued.

It was proposed that QRB 'Gloriana' would play a part in the Thames Festival Classic Boat Festival in St. Katherine Docks in being the final recipient of the bottle of Thames Water that had been carried in relay from source to sea over the previous two weeks.

The original plan was that small groups of 10 visitors who had booked tours of the numerous historic craft in the marina would be welcomed aboard however the popularity of QRB 'Gloriana' soon dictated a change to those plans.

On the Saturday what transpired was groups of 10-12 were allowed on to the floating pontoon who then came aboard where they received a short introduction to the barge from Simon.

On the Sunday Malcolm took over the duties of welcoming the public aboard and giving the short talks. In excess of 800 people visited the barge over the week end, all of whom expressed excitement and gratitude at being permitted access to the barge.

The lesson learnt – QRB ‘Gloriana’ is a crowd puller with people enthusiastic to be allowed close to the Royal barge and to be permitted to board was totally unexpected by many.

Earlier in the year Lord Sterling had offered to The Princes’ Trust and Save the Children Trust as a prize at fund raising auction dinners – ‘a cruise aboard QRB ‘Gloriana’ with HM Barge Master and the Royal Watermen’.

At other meetings Lord Sterling had met and discussed the use of QRB and youth rowing with the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, himself an oarsman when at University.

Over the months we had tried to arrange suitable dates for both auction winners however only one was successfully arranged for this year and consequently QRB once again motored upstream on 18th September to Shepperton Marina.

The opportunity therefore presented itself for the Commissioner to visit ‘Gloriana’ and a crew of Met. officers to row the barge at the British Police Regatta being hosted this year by the Met. at Walton RC on Friday 20th September.

‘Gloriana’ moored in Walton for lunchtime attracting a crowd and was then joined by the Met. Police crew who rowed her down the course saluting the other competitors from around the UK, she then moored up and the Commissioner came aboard for a short visit.

Once again a very well received event with oarsmen and women from around the UK expressing the desire to have the opportunity to row her at some time in the future.

After an overnight in Shepperton ‘Gloriana’ motored down to Hampton Court Palace mooring outside the Banqueting House which had been made available to us for the day with the generous assistance of the staff of Historic Royal Palaces and the pier by Westminster Passenger Boats.

The Princes' Trust auction cruise was to be an afternoon canapé cruise with 18 guests aboard. A crew of 'Gloriana Watermen' was recruited from local clubs and livery Companies to supplement the Royal Watermen available; they were joined by HM Barge Master to helm the barge.



Catering was brought aboard and QRB 'Gloriana' prepared, the crew in their new red shirts and hats waited whilst visitors to HCP enjoyed this very traditional sight.

After a short delay the guests arrived and following a welcome from Lord Sterling boarded and the barge pushed away.

The 'Gloriana Watermen' crew rowed with style whilst the guests enjoyed the refreshments being served, all in aid of raising a substantial sum for the Princes' Trust - lessons were learnt but overall a successful first event of its type with hopefully many more to follow.

Over the months there had been various meetings and discussions with members of Richmond Borough Council about a long term home moorings for 'Gloriana'.

On 23rd September Lord True, leader of RBC, invited the Mayor of Richmond, members of the Council and other influential local residents to a meeting aboard 'Gloriana' in Twickenham to discuss the plans for a new River Park for London.

'Gloriana' motored down to the moorings at Hammerton's Ferry where a volunteer crew from Twickenham RC, Met. Police RC and others boarded and wearing the maroon QRB crew shirts prepared to row.

The guests arrived, boarded and after a welcome from Lord Sterling and Lord True, with light refreshments being served, QRB slipped her moorings and was rowed up round Eel Pie Island, down to Richmond and back over the next hour.

During the row the Mayor, Councilor Meena Bond, asked if she could row having had some previous experience at a local club. She took an oar and joined the crew for a short experience which she greatly enjoyed.

Once again a very successful event with those on board enjoying the experience and passers by on both the river and the bank waving and cheering as QRB rowed past.

Overnight moorings were provided beside MV 'Lillian', owned by Dr. Pereira of the National Maritime Museum and supporter of QRB.

The following morning again QRB utilised the end of the ebb tide and returned to the safe moorings of SKD where she would remain for the next few weeks.

On Friday 8th November QRB came out of SKD and motored up to overnight at Chelsea Harbour in preparation for the next day.

On the morning of 9th twenty cutters, Shallops and gigs from the City of London livery companies, clubs and organizations gathered at Westminster Boating Base to provide an escort to the new Lord Mayor, Alderman Fiona Woolf CBE who was to travel to the City on board QRB 'Gloriana'.

At 0830 the Lord Mayor and her party boarded QRB and proceeded downstream followed by the escort flotilla to cheers from spectators on the bridges.



As the flotilla approached Tower Bridge the bascules opened in salute to the Admiral of the Port of London – the Lord Mayor, 'Gloriana' turned and moored at RNR HMS President where the Lord Mayor disembarked to a full salute (tossed oars) and three cheers from the flotilla crews.

The band of the Royal Marines played as the CO Cmdr. Eugene Morgan welcomed the Lord Mayor ashore for the Rum Ceremony following which the Lord Mayor's party left to commence the main Lord Mayor's Show.

The flotilla crews came ashore and enjoyed refreshments whilst their boats were prepared for towing back to their home moorings. QRB stayed moored for a few hours prior to locking back in to SKD where she remained until her winterisation programme commenced.

QRB has now been craned out at the Port of London Authority yard at Denton, Gravesend where she will once again, whilst undercover, receive all necessary attention to ensure she is maintained to the highest standard.

In summary - a very successful first full summer season with many lessons being learnt as to how we can operate the barge safely on the tidal and non-tidal River Thames.

One fact we have witnessed *every* time 'Gloriana' is out on the river is that every camera, mobile phone and iPad will be pointed at her to take pictures and video, even when we are in delivery mode with fenders out and no flags flying.

People want to see the barge, to have the opportunity to get a close look at the craftsmanship and every rower wants the opportunity of rowing her.

To achieve this we are developing the programme of events for the 2014 season building on the successes of 2013 and look forward to another wonderful season on the River Thames.

Malcolm KNIGHT
Events Manager
Queen's Row Barge

January 2014