



The Queen's Row Barge

Review of the year
2019

A slightly later start to our 2019 season gave us an opportunity to carry on with maintenance work and some work on varnish etc. into May. She was safely back in St Katherine's Dock well before the first event of the year, which was the London on the Water Show at St Katherine's Dock. Our first event on the river was the Dulwich College 400th Anniversary celebrations and this was rapidly followed by a (much later than usual) Tudor Pull and then shortly after that Henley Royal Regatta and then the Thames Traditional Boat Festival. Gloriana was therefore busy out on the river for about a month from mid-June to mid-July. More details on these events and others are given below.

London on the Water at St Katherine's Dock

As usual Gloriana was one of the star attractions at this event and so was moved to a location where she was more visible and accessible. Visitors to St Katherine's were able to see Gloriana close up and find out much more about her by talking to the team members who were there. There was lots of interest, including the usual question "Is that real gold?"

Dulwich College 400th Anniversary

The planning for Gloriana's part in this great event started a year earlier. The College has a significant connection with the Thames and the sea. For example, in 1618 Edward Alleyn, the College's founder bought some panel paintings which had been the decoration inside the cabin of "ye quen's barge". These are now incorporated into a chimney piece at the College. Also at the College is the "James Caird", which is the lifeboat used by Ernest Shackleton to sail from Elephant Island in Antarctica in 1916 after the sinking of the Endurance.



Passing under the Millenium Bridge,
lined with Dulwich College boys.



Dulwich College boys waiting for the
guests at Putney

The plan for the 400th Anniversary event on June 24th was a little less ambitious than Ernest Shackleton's voyage and involved a crew of Dulwich College boys rowing Gloriana from Putney (where the College Boathouse is located) to Westminster where a commemorative scroll from Her Majesty the Queen was taken on board and then on to Blackfriars for all those on board to disembark to attend a special commemorative service at St Paul's Cathedral. The journey included a passage under the footbridge at St Paul's with the bridge lined by Dulwich College juniors.

The Tudor Pull

The Royal Watermen's Tudor Pull this year was held on June 29th, rather than its usual much earlier date. The original date of 30 March clashed with the annual Head of the River Race over the Boat Race course. As that event usually involves over 400 eights, the river is closed between Mortlake and Putney, hence the need to reschedule the Tudor Pull. The next date with suitable tides was June 29th, which also coincidentally was one of the hottest days of the year.

The Tudor Pull is organized by the Thames Traditional Rowing Association and as usual started at Hampton Court where HM the Queen's Bargemaster, Chris Livett, was presented with the Stela in a colourful ceremony which involves "Henry VIII" and his Queen processing out of the main gates to Hampton Court Palace complete with courtiers and musical accompaniment. After appropriate short speeches, the Stela is carried to Gloriana, escorted by the Royal Watermen and the Masters of the Companies of the Water Conservators and the Watermen & Lightermen.



Royal Watermen prepare to depart from Richmond after a well earned break

Gloriana then departed for Richmond with Chris Livett as skipper and accompanied by a flotilla of Livery Company cutters and skerries from local clubs. At Richmond the Royal Watermen had a well-earned break as by then the temperature was rising. Luckily the Gloriana team had laid on a substantial supply of water to ensure that hydration was maintained.

After Richmond, Gloriana, crew and guests, plus the accompanying flotilla continued downstream eventually reaching the Tower of London, where the Stela was passed into the safe keeping of the Deputy Governor.

Hurlingham Club

Immediately after the Tudor Pull, Gloriana went back upriver to Chelsea Pier for an overnight stop. Then the next morning she moved on to the Hurlingham Club where we had an opportunity to stop for club members and guests at a garden party to visit. It was a brief visit because with the tide turning against us, it was time to start the journey upriver to be ready for Henley Royal Regatta.



Flags flying on a beautiful day at Hurlingham

Henley Royal Regatta

Gloriana arrived at Henley on 2nd July, the day before the Regatta started. She was moored by the boat tents, which is a suitably secure location. For the first four days of the Regatta she stayed on her moorings and was visited by a large number of people. Apart from passers by and those visiting the boat tent area, we gave “Gloriana tours” to senior people from the Royal Regatta sponsors and their guests, plus a number of HRR Stewards and others. There was plenty of interest from the racing crews too, especially those from overseas. Other notable visitors included our then Prime Minister.

Sunday at Henley was of course finals day and Lord Sterling had agreed with the Regatta Stewards that Gloriana would make a ceremonial trip up the Regatta course after the last race. With the 2019 Regatta marking the centenary of the Peace Regatta in 1919, there were special events for military crews, including those from the USA, UK and France. We were very pleased to contribute to this with the rowing crew for the row over coming from the Royal Navy. They did a first-class job and it created a splendid sight to conclude the Regatta.



Thames Traditional Boat Festival

Gloriana was moored upriver until 18 July when she moved back to the Henley reach for the Thames Traditional Boat Festival. She was a star attraction at the Festival and was moored in a prime position for the three days of the Festival, including twice daily processions up the Henley Regatta course. These offered a number of crews the opportunity to row her, including one lady who travelled all the way from Scotland just to be able to join a crew.

Ready for a parade up the Henley Regatta course



The Rug Company are still rightly proud of their rug



Rowing up the course



Classic Boat Festival

Once the Thames Traditional Boat Festival was over, Gloriana made the long trip back to London and was back at St Katherine's Dock by the end of July. August was a quiet month and the plan was to do some more work on the varnish (a never-ending job). While some work was done, the weather was against us on the days that the work was scheduled. Nevertheless Gloriana was on show again at the Classic Boat Festival on the first weekend in September.

Gloriana being much admired at the Classic Boat Festival



St Katherine's Dock is filled with classic and interesting boats for the weekend, including, for example, some that went to Dunkirk in 1940. Gloriana was once again moved to a prominent position and fully dressed with all flags flying. She was one of the most popular backgrounds for photographs by visitors. Plenty of these asked about Gloriana's role and history, as well as joining in the entertainment in the dock (e.g. trying out the water bicycles).



Lord Mayor's River Progress

The last planned event of the year was the Lord Mayor's River Progress due to be held on 28th September. In this event the Lord Mayor elect and guests were due to be brought from Lambeth to the HMS President mooring just below Tower Bridge, with a "toss oars" salute at HMS Belfast, to be followed by a reception at HMS President. Gloriana was due to be rowed by the Watermen and accompanied by a flotilla of traditional boats from the various Livery Companies. Unfortunately the weather proved too challenging that weekend as there were gale force winds forecast and the event was cancelled on safety grounds.

Disappointingly for many rowing clubs and others, Regatta London the following day (another event we had hoped to participate in) also had to be cancelled because of the adverse weather, including very strong winds.