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Devizes to Westminster canoe race

3:59pm Tuesday 2nd April 2013 in [News](#)



The first boat to break the ice sets sail on Good Friday

It was the weather that broke records rather than the canoeists in the 2013 Devizes to Westminster canoe race over the Easter weekend.

The coldest Easter on record at the event led to the retirement or disqualification of 59 out of 178 entries in the senior doubles class, who paddle non-stop from Devizes Wharf to Westminster Bridge.

It was the highest number of withdrawals in the history of the race.

But breaking the course record, which has stood for 34 years, did not transpire.

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The winning crew, Dan Seaford and Stuart West, of Reading Canoe Club and Worcester Canoe Club, finished in 16 hours 44 minutes and 23 seconds against Greenham and Cornish's time of 15:34:01 set in 1979.

Second were the much-fancied crew of Richard

Hendron and James King, of Richmond Canoe Club, who crossed the line at 17:15:05.

In third place came Matt Enoch and Adam Norfolk, of Nottingham Kayak Club, in 17:28:11.

Local crews did well. Three crews from Devizes Canoe Club finished within a few minutes of each other.

Mark Ball and Polly Sinnott-Jones finished in 27th place in 22:39:57, while Stuart Bell and Dan Waters were close behind, in 28th place, in 22:42:26.

Bromham engineer Chris Todd and Trowbridge firefighter James Mahoney came 31st in 22:46:55.

Mr Todd, who attempted to walk across the Irish Sea in a home-made giant hamster wheel last

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October, said the conditions were very challenging.

He said: "The weather played a major part. When night fell, so did the temperature and sheets of ice formed on top of the kayak. It must have added a few kilos to the weight we were carrying.

"But it was pretty much what we had experienced during training.

"It was the last 1,000 yards or so that were horrendous. The waves on the Thames as we got close to Westminster were so high we nearly went over. But we managed to achieve our three goals: to finish, to stay dry and to beat our time last year."

It was not such a happy ending for Devizes vets Ian and Jacky Macqueen, who had to withdraw from the race after 13:51:18. Mr Macqueen said: "We were just short of halfway when I began to suffer nausea and cramps. We started out in the best weather and we were going well, so it is a great shame we had to pull out."

Ann Slator, secretary of Devizes Canoe Club, said they were delighted with the results of their crews.

She said: "Tereza Thackray and Sue New won the ladies C2 class, completing the 125 miles straight through in a time of 31:20:11.

"They did the race together in 1987 and were inspired to give it another go 26 years later after Sue's son had completed it with the club in 2011 and 2012.

"In the junior doubles our highest finishers were Conor Henley and Ali Little, who came fourth overall in a time of 17:35:40. Harriet and Charlotte Colquhoun were second in the junior ladies in a time of 21:23:46. All 14 of the club's junior paddlers completed the race."

Club chairman Kevin Dobson said: "I am extremely proud that we had the largest club entry in the race. I'm not only proud of the paddlers, but also their support crews who are a vital part of the paddler's journey."

Devizes Mayor and Mayoress Kelvin and Pam Nash were at the Wharf on both Good Friday and Saturday to see the crews off. They travelled to Westminster Bridge on Monday morning to welcome junior crews at the finish.

Westminster results



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Updated 8:32pm Sunday 14th April 2013

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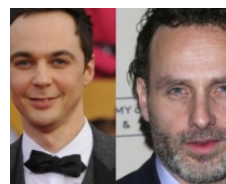
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