



**1948-2009 - Celebrating 61 Years of Personal Endeavour**

16 April 2009

**Great Event as Record Numbers finish  
2009 Devizes Westminster Canoe Marathon**

Over 290 boats completed the Devizes Westminster International Canoe Marathon over the Easter Weekend – a record for the 61 year old competition. Over 650 people in 350 boats started the race.

The Senior Doubles straight through race was won by Owen Peake and Daniel Seaford from Reading Canoe Club with a time of 17 hours, 16 minutes and 51 seconds. The Senior Singles race over four days was won by Steffen Burkhardt from Bruchsal, Germany. Cokethorpe School in Witney took first and second place in the Junior Doubles with Tim Muller and Frederick Reif crossing the line in 16:34:02 beating Edward Brooks and Callum Staff by almost 90 minutes.

Among this year's competitors was double Olympic medallist rower James Cracknell who moved from rowing boats to kayak with partner Bernie Shrosbree to finish in an impressive time of 20 hours 36 minutes and 50 seconds.

Clearly exhausted, Shrosbree said the event was "incredible". Super competitive Cracknell was speculating over the impact of arriving at Teddington ahead of the tide, a tactical issue that could have taken minutes off their race.

Conditions over race weekend were close to perfect, with warm temperatures, overcast skies and almost no wind. Course Chairman and Chief DW Pundit Paul Ralph said, "It was a great event. Atmospherically the conditions were perfectly. There were some good solid times out there, slower than you'd hope – but there was almost no flow on the river."

Drop out rates were relatively low. Brian Greenham and Tim Cornish, holders of the thirty year course record of 15:34:12 and both in their fifties, were one of the doubles that had to retire at Altermaston, 7 hours into the race. According to Ralph "Brian and Tim were going well, but were beaten by Brian's back."

The event takes canoeists to the limit of mental and physical endurance – battling the steady and inevitable onset of physical depletion. The Blue Riband event is the non-stop race. A four-day staged race, allowing juniors to take part, is equally demanding, starting on Good Friday (10 April), completing the course over four gruelling stages to finish on 13 April, Easter Monday.

Over £60,000 has been raised for charities, with one paddler trying to interrupt her Easter Sunday morning church service to raise more funds.

For more information about Devizes Westminster International Canoe Marathon or to follow the race online over the Easter weekend visit [www.dwrace.org.uk](http://www.dwrace.org.uk)

For more information, interviews or photographs contact Peter Hutchison on [peter.hutchison@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:peter.hutchison@ukonline.co.uk) or 07736 424200.

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