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FIVE members of the Tonbridge Canoe Club [racing](#) team took place in the Devizes to Westminster 125 mile international canoe race on Easter weekend, in extreme temperatures with sleet and snow.

This gruelling [event](#) saw canoeists start at Devizes in Wiltshire, paddle along the Kennet and Avon Canal to the River Thames, and finish 125 miles later at Westminster Bridge in the heart of London.



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Second place for Tonbridge Canoe [Club](#) in 125 mile race. Photo credit: Phil Caisley

Peter Ford and Chris Hopkinson won second place for Tonbridge Canoe Club in the Veteran/Junior doubles class with a time of 20 hours 41 minutes.

Nick Johnson and Luke Fisher took part in the non-racing Endeavor class in a 2 person canoe, finishing first in their class with a time of 18 hours 51 minutes.



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Lenny Clark completed the 125 mile four day [race](#) alone in his canoe, camping each night in freezing conditions.

He was placed 13th out of 39 [racers](#) in the senior single class - completing the race in 20 hours 24 minutes.

Lenny said on day two: "When I get out of the boat, I can't believe how good it feels to not be paddling. When I get in the boat, I can't believe how good it feels to not be running."

The Devizes to Westminster canoe race is in its 65th year and is one of the most demanding open-to-all endurance events worldwide.

The race took place over four days with the first leg beginning on Bank Holiday Friday from Devizes to Newbury, a distance of 34.5 miles.

Day two was slightly longer from Newbury to Marlow at 35.5 miles.

Day three (Easter Sunday) was the longest leg of the race from Marlow to Teddington, at 37.5 miles.

The final day of the race on Bank Holiday Monday was 17.5 miles, less distance but arguably the most challenging day as racers navigated the tidal Thames feeling exhausted in freezing, windy conditions.

In some places where the canal was frozen over the racers were forced to run along next to it carrying their canoes on their shoulders for some distance.

Peter Ford, from Tonbridge Canoe Club said "The Devizes to Westminster canoe race is one of the key races in the Tonbridge Canoe Club calendar. Members train for this race all winter, and look forward to seeing the finish at Westminster Bridge in London."

Tonbridge Canoe Club welcomes new members interested in the sport and more information can be found on their website tonbridgecanoeclub.org.uk

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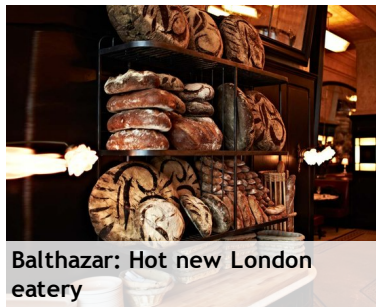
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