



## **1948-2013 - Celebrating 65 Years of Personal Endeavour**

28 March 2013

Event Dates - 29/30 March in Devizes. 31 March / 1 April in Westminster

### **Top Teams Compete to Win Record Breaking DW 2013 The Real Boat Race this Easter**

Over 600 boats are entered to paddle the 125-miles Devizes Westminster International Canoe Marathon over the Easter weekend.

Having won for the last three years, the pairing of Richard Hendron and James King are competing to be the first team to win the Senior Doubles event four years in a row in the 65<sup>th</sup> running of the annual competition.

Setting out on Easter Saturday, a handful of quality teams are vying to spoil the party in a year that could also see the 34-year course record of 15 hours and 34 minutes set in 1979 broken. They'll cross the finish line just downstream of Westminster Bridge shortly after 0700 GMT (0800 BST) on Easter Sunday.

Beyond the Hendon/King boat (#431), Seaford and West (#303) have shown strength and consistency over the Waterside build up races. Laenen and Verduyckt (374) from Belgium have the experience to win with both having won the K1 race in the past. Steve Baker and Lizzie Broughton (#433) combine great experience and one of the UK's top female distance paddlers which could result in the first mixed team DW victory. Enoch and Norfolk (#358) get the vote of veteran DW commentator Paul Ralph. The young crew of Purcell and Van Tuyl (#442) has speed and the confidence of youth, but experience tends to help in DW. Last on the list of our Facebook tipsters is East and Bullock (#368) with East showing speed in 2012 and Bullock tipped to be an even faster partner.

Heavy rain over recent weeks and months have led to a good flow on the river. While the additional speed on the river will help competitors, forecast strong winds and freezing conditions will test competitors to the limit.

Devizes Westminster is an event that rewards elite paddlers that combine physical and technical ability with mental strength and course knowledge and an error-free run.

For those not competing for podium positions, DW presents an incredible challenge, whether competing in the non-stop Senior Doubles event or one of the four-day stages race. The race is the UK's toughest, open to all endurance event. Up to one third of entries fail to finish. Retirees in 2012 included Sir Steve Redgrave and fellow Olympians Ben Hart-Davis, Sarah Winckless and Kate MacKenzie.

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The non-stop race over 125-miles starts on Saturday 30 March. Non-stop means non-stop. No sleep and no rest. Eating and drink entirely on the move. The fastest complete the course in around 17 hours, others will take around 24-hours, happy to have completed one of the toughest, open-to-all endurance races on the planet.

Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Marathon sets out from Devizes, heading along the Kennet & Avon Canal to Reading, then down the Thames to Teddington ending just downstream of Westminster Bridge.

The event takes canoeists to the limit of mental and physical endurance, battling against the steady and inevitable onset of physical depletion. It is the longest non-stop kayaking marathon in the world.

The four-day race, for juniors, is equally demanding, starting on the Friday 29 March, completing the course over four stages to finish on 25 April, Easter Monday. Open to anyone over 15 years of age – many schools take part – you'll need to train for at least six months if you're new to paddling.

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For more information about Devizes to 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, details about crews, an interview or photographs contact Peter Hutchison on at [peterhutchison24@gmail.com](mailto:peterhutchison24@gmail.com) or on 07736 424200.

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