

# The Great River Race 2019 - A Novice's Tale

by Dawn Smith

Team:- Angie Laing, Mike Laing, Marion Wintringham, Trevor Rowan, Dawn Smith and Kevin Sheen (*who stepped in at the last minute to replace Gill Mortlock who sadly had to pull out*).

08.00 Fri 13 Sept and we were ready to leave Plas Menai. After some brief training, Dawn is happy to tow the boat! We set off in tandem and reach Ham, London, mid afternoon. The weather was just superb, sunny and light winds.



We launched the boat at Ham, so that it could be towed to the startline. This saves having to tow it across London. There was an amazing atmosphere, with lots of different style boats getting into the water. We were able to do this ourselves, but some were big and heavy and had to be craned in.

We pitched our tents and then had a lovely walk along the river to Teddington Lock, where we enjoyed a few drinks and a meal. After a quick boogie to the Oomph band, who were playing at the campsite, it was time for bed.

07.30 Sat 14 Sept. Time to board the bus, which itself was great as we got to see lots of central London. We arrived at Millwall at 09.00 and after bacon butties we headed to the boats, which were waiting on the muddy shoreline. We got on the water at 11.15 and hung around with all the other 304 boats waiting to start. Mike (*our main cox*) did really well keeping us in a good position to enable a good start. There was so much jostling and manoeuvring going on.



12.12 and we were off! It was so exciting to be rowing on the River Thames through the heart of London. Tower Bridge was soon overhead. When you are rowing you don't really 'see' much because you are concentrating on the rowing so much, but we obviously got great glimpses of the Shard, Tower of London, Houses of Parliament, St. Pauls, and many other amazing buildings. There were lots of people on the bridges cheering us on.



We did a couple of rotation swaps at the bow and the stern, so that we could have a 30 minute rest. We didn't stop once and had a very smooth journey, we had the odd bashing of oars but that was it. Well done to our coxes - Mike, Angie and Trevor.

