

Royal Canoe Club (Est 1866) PRESS RELEASE

Royal Canoe Club's Paddling Challenge Saturday 17th October 2020 11am-3pm

The **Paddling Challenge** is the world's most historic canoe race, now in its 147th year. Sponsored by ICON Sports, the 2020 race will be one of the most notable as it offers paddlers a welcome opportunity to compete at a time in which the racing calendar has been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are also delighted to announce that in addition to this historic race, we will be incorporating British Canoeing National Championship 10k & 5k races.

We anticipate a good turn out, adhering to social distancing and current government guidance.

The Royal Canoe Club was established in 1866 but the first official canoe race launched in 1874. The club committee at the time placed great importance on this race by asking members to support the purchase of a unique, solid silver trophy at a cost of £42,176.

The original race started at Kingston Bridge and travelled a mile downstream to "one-mile tree", a marker reputed to be an oak tree on the bank opposite the island clubhouse. The race has been run every year since, except during both world wars.

Latter day paddlers still compete for the same challenge cup which is engraved with past winners such as Warrington Baden Powell (Founder of The Sea Scouts & author of Sea Scouting and Seamanship for Boys), Olympian - Tim Brabants (ROY) 3x winner, World Champions Alan Williams (ROY) 3x winner and Ivan Lawler (ELM) 2x winner. It is one of the oldest sporting trophies in the world.

Naturally the Paddling Challenge event has evolved over the years. In 1993, the Sailing Challenge Cup was purchased for the women's race. The main race distance has been increased to 10km (6.2 miles) but there are also other distances on the day to encourage competitors and classes across the board.

All races start and end at the Royal Canoe Club, Trowlock Island in Teddington and travel upstream along the River Thames promising to provide an impressive spectacle on the water.

Sign up to paddle via the link on www.royalcanoeclub.com (live from September 19) or spectate from the river bank. For further pre-race details, please email raceentries@royalcanoeclub.com or call Suki Hubbard on 07957 540864.

Prizes, alongside the glorious trophies, have been generously donated by performance sportswear manufacturer ICON Sports (www.iconsports.eu).

CLUB HISTORY: Royal Canoe Club (RCC) in Teddington, Middlesex is the oldest canoe club in the world and received royal patronage in the 19th century. Members of the club have represented Great Britain at World Championships. Royal Olympians include Ian Wynne (Bronze 2004) and Dr Tim Brabants (Gold 2008). Royal's elite athlete, Jessica Walker OLY is currently training with a view to compete in Tokyo 2021.