

March-20



Dear Club Members,

This year will be the 5th anniversary of the combining of the mens and women's Boat Race. Now if you're in the UK you'll know exactly which Boat Race I mean, but for those outside the UK here's a little background information.

The Boat Race is an annual rowing race between Oxford and Cambridge Universities. The mens race first took place in 1829 in Henley on Thames, and then in 1836 moved to its current course in London on the Thames. Excluding the time periods of the World Wars the mens race has been held every year since. The women's race first began in 1927, though it took until 1925 for it to be a true race instead of judged competition based on rowing style. In the early years Cambridge didn't have a University Women's Boat Club, as only Newnham College (an all girls college) offered rowing. In 1941 the Cambridge University Boat Club was established when Girton College also offered rowing. The race was then held annually until 1952, when a lack of funding for the Women's Boat Clubs meant that neither team was able to compete. The race began again in 1964, boosted by the number of women who were now admitted to many of the colleges of both universities.

For much of its history the race had been held separate from the mens with the venue alternating between the River Cam in Cambridge and the Isis (the name for the stretch of the River Thames by Oxford). In 1977 the race moved to Henley on Thames, as part of the Henley Boat Race, where the mens lightweight teams also compete. Finally in 2015 the women's race was moved to the same 4.2 mile (6.8km) course as the mens race. That year the television audience for the women's race reached 4.8 million viewers.

The race is held around Easter every year, though has no set date in the calendar as the River Thames is tidal, and at certain points in the month the tides don't allow the boats to race. This year it's scheduled for 29th March.

The boats themselves are rowed by 8 competitors with a cox who can be of either sex. It's a gruelling year of work to get ready for the race as all the rowers are current students of both universities. The team members are traditionally known as blues, and both team colours are blue. Oxford row in dark blue, and Cambridge in light blue (with a hefty hint of green if you look at it with a colourists eyes!).

We've therefore got an extravaganza of blue in your fibre this month. The merino has been naturally dyed in Italy using Indigo and Weld. It's softer than the usual merino at just 19microns, and the sheep are non-mulsed. The Viscose is processed in Germany before being dyed in Italy.

Happy Spinning

Katie

Further Reading-

The Boat Race

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Boat_Race

<https://www.theboatrace.org/the-basics>

Newnham College Cambridge

<https://www.newn.cam.ac.uk/about/>

<https://www.newn.cam.ac.uk/about/history/>

The mythology of the river Thames, and it's tributaries are fascinating, the rivers themselves show up as characters in The Rovers of London book series, which I've really enjoyed reading over the past few years-

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/9317452-rivers-of-london>

Fibre Content- In case your parcel is missing the label

70% 19 micron Merino

30% Viscose