

F A C T S H E E T

Autumn 2009



**Eton College
Rowing Centre
Dorney Lake**

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BACKGROUND/OVERVIEW

- The Eton College Rowing Centre, Dorney Lake is a world-class sporting facility in a 400-acre parkland site with 90 acres set to water
- Privately owned by Eton College it offers whole-community access through registered charity Dorney Lake Trust, set up by the College to operate the Lake site
- It offers the combination of a top sporting venue, a gymnasium, its own in-house hospitality and events team, 'green' credentials and leisure opportunities
- The main Lake is a 2,200-metre rowing course which will be the venue for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games rowing and flat-water canoeing regattas
- Surrounding the main Lake are: a Return/Warm-Up Channel, the stylish Boathouse and Finish Tower/Eton Suite, an Arboretum and Park, a Nature Conservation Area and plentiful parking
- Eton College financed the main development at a cost of £17 million, offset by royalties of some £8 million for aggregates extracted
- Construction of the Lake began in 1996 under a 10-year contract and targeted completion in 2006 was achieved with the rounding-off of the Return/Warm-Up Channel
- A previous significant element to be completed was the Finish Tower/Eton Suite - grants of £500,000 to assist with funding were provided by Sport England, UK Sport, the Department for Culture, Media & Sport and the South-East England Development Agency

TECHNICAL AND 'GREEN' DETAILS

- Fertiliser use in the former arable fields was restricted for many years before construction began, to ensure high-quality water and low ground-chemical content
- Some 4,500,000 tonnes of sand and gravel, 1,970,000 cubic metres of topsoil and subsoil and 585,000 cubic metres of basal clay were extracted during construction
- Local disturbance was minimised by using a two-mile-long conveyor belt from a corner of the site to take material extracted to a remote collection point
- The main Lake is 2,200 metres long, has eight lanes, each 13.5 metres wide, and is a minimum of 3.5 metres deep – the depth and therefore body of water needed to permit racing boats to perform to their optimum efficiency
- It holds some 350,000,000 gallons of water = approximately 1,600,000 cubic metres
- The parallel Return Channel, in part five lanes wide, has a minimum water depth of 2.5 metres
- The Lake water is fed from underground aquifers, percolating through a natural gravel filter, with weeds being discouraged by natural methods, including a particular breed of carp, and algae growth by using barley bales
- For 'green' and hygiene reasons barbecues are not permitted, to avoid chemical run-off, (picnics are fine) and dog mess must please be removed by owners and placed in the relevant bins or taken away
- As a safety and security measure CCTV covers the Lake and a large portion of the grounds

MAJOR EVENTS

- The first major event was the October 2000 SuperSprint Regatta attended by 10,000 people - it was hailed as Sir Steve Redgrave's last race after the 2000 Sydney Olympics, at which he won his fifth Gold Medal
- In May 2005 Dorney Lake hosted the first of three BearingPoint 2005 Rowing World Cup Regattas
- It hosted the 11-nation Coupe de la Jeunesse for young rowers in July 2005
- In July 2006 the British Canoe Union held its annual Bellboat Championships and Youthfest at Dorney Lake for the first time
- In August 2006 the Lake hosted the World Rowing Championships, the second largest rowing event after the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the first WRC in the UK for 20 years
- The Championships also featured adaptive rowing for disabled athletes for the first time and provided an ideal opportunity for them in the run-up to the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008
- In September 2008 we hosted one of the nation-wide Cultural Olympiad launch events, with pupils from several schools, mainstream and special, enjoying a mix of rowing and arts activities
- There were some 40 major events at Dorney Lake during 2008
- In addition to the three major UK Regattas formerly held on the River Thames but now taking place at Dorney Lake - Wallingford, the Metropolitan (founded by Charles Dickens and his son) and Marlow - several other regattas are held here
- Triathlons and road races, including some for charity, take place each year
- Dorney Lake will be the venue for rowing and flat-water canoeing in the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and plans for access, security and facilities are well in hand

COMMUNITY ACCESS

- **The site is private property and may be partially or fully closed from time to time if events are taking place. Otherwise the site is usually open except for short periods at Christmas and New Year.**
- Over 100 schools and clubs, top-class rowers and canoeists, including Olympians, train here
- The GB Women's Squad were the first to row, in April 2000, when the first 1,000 metres were ready
- The Junior Rowing Initiative, for 9- to 18-year-olds, at Dorney Lake, launched by Sir Steve Redgrave in 2002, introduced rowing to schools not previously offering it as a sport
- Pupils from primary and secondary, State and independent schools, including Eton College, row or canoe at the Lake
- Over 1,500 children and young people have taken rowing tuition under our Junior Rowing Initiative
- Since canoeing also became available, the Initiative was styled 'Junior Aquatics Initiative'
- The Initiative provides all boats, equipment and tuition of the highest quality at nominal cost
- Young rowers are eligible to join our Dorney Boat Club
- They are doing well, sometimes exceptionally, in competitive events at the Lake and elsewhere

- Programmes are offered for over-weight and disaffected young people and for the over-50s, for whom, as a non-impact fitness activity, it is ideal
- The grounds are open to the public and many local people enjoy walking, some with their dogs, running or cycling whilst observing common-sense safety and courtesy principles
- Commercial activities such as professional dog-walking (as opposed to corporate events), cycle training and driving tuition are not allowed
- All or part of the facilities may be hired – see Hospitality below
- All health, safety and child protection requirements are applied

Cycle race training is prohibited anywhere on the site.

THE BOATHOUSE

- The Boathouse was opened on June 10th 2000 by Kate Hoey, then Minister for Sport & the Arts
- The gymnasium contains Concept II ergometers (rowing machines), with computer interface for use in races, and other equipment
- There are boat storage and repair facilities
- The Boathouse also houses: Reception; our administrative offices; our hospitality arm, Dorney Lake Services, and function rooms; and circa 300 of Eton College Boat Club's boats, some of which are made available free to the Junior Aquatic Initiative
- Nearby exterior racking can be used by visiting crews
- Clubs may rent boat space if available for longer periods at Andrews Boathouse nearby

THE START AND FINISH TOWERS AND VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

- The Start Tower is located at the far end of the Lake
- The Finish Tower/Eton Suite, set near the Boathouse, is the nerve-centre in major competitions and contains the judges' viewing area, timing and media facilities
- It can be hired for hospitality purposes at other times
- The mobile Visitor Information Centre, manned by our Volunteers, is in the Arboretum Car Park near the site entrance from April/May to September

HOSPITALITY

- Dorney Lake Services, our in-house hospitality and events team, offers first-class catering and tailor-made functions all year round, with revenues enabling fees for rowing on the Lake to be kept reasonable, particularly for young people
- Events can be land- and/or water-based in any combination
- They include leadership training, management development and team-building; conferences, launches and photoshoots; breakfast meetings, lunches and dinners; corporate days; family fun days; barbecues; dragon boating; and all special occasions including wedding receptions
- Available are The Lake View Room and The Club Room on the first floor of the Boathouse, both with large outside balcony, and The Eton Suite, which has a roof terrace
- All have spectacular and beautiful views of the Lake and grounds

THE PARK AND ARBORETUM

- Over 30,000 trees - mostly native species but with a growing collection of 'specimen' trees - have been planted in the Park and Arboretum in groups, avenues and shelter belts, with resultant vistas including one of Windsor Castle from 'The Millennium Avenue' of lime trees
- Some open areas between the tree groups are left uncut in the Summer to encourage wild flowers and wild life, which includes many bird species
- Donations of trees or cash for specific trees are welcomed and a donations register is kept – please contact Reception if you would like to donate
- An intriguing 'armillary sphere' containing a sundial was presented to Dorney Lake in 2006 by the gravel-extracting consortium to mark their 10 years of Lake construction
- The sphere's Latin inscription, devised by Eton College scholars, is 'Homines contra homines hic inter harenam acquamque saxumque sed omnes contra tempus contendunt' which means 'Men against men here amongst the sand and water and rock but all struggle against time'.

THE NATURE CONSERVATION AREA AND WILDLIFE

- A 100-acre Nature Conservation Area, harmonised with the Buckinghamshire Biodiversity Plan, provides open wetland for breeding birds with 'ephemeral' ponds, i.e. water that comes and goes depending on rainfall, and is grazed by sheep to keep the grass to the right level for particular birds
- Since 1994 some 140 bird species have been sighted
- The NCA is being allowed to evolve naturally and we regret access is not possible

VOLUNTEERS

- Our Volunteer Scheme was launched in February 2007 and has had two excellent seasons
- Volunteers welcome visitors to the Park and Arboretum and ensure they get the most out of their visits, whilst encouraging them to observe the site rules for everyone's safety and comfort
- Volunteer sessions are three hours on weekend mornings or afternoons from April/May to September
- A regular commitment is ideal but with frequency to suit you
- All relevant information is provided and updated as necessary
- We have friendly group meetings every few months, sometimes with talks
- Please contact Patricia Powell on tel 01753 832756 or at p.powell@dorneylake.co.uk if you would like to join our Scheme

DIRECTIONS AND ACCOMMODATION

- Dorney Lake is within very easy reach of the M4, Heathrow Airport, several railway stations and Green Line buses and has ample parking for visitors coming by car
- By car exit the M4 motorway at Junction 7, turn left onto the A4 towards Maidenhead, turn left at next roundabout by a superstore, approach Dorney village, turn right into Court Lane and straight into the Lake site as signposted, through large white gates; then follow the perimeter road to the left of the main Lake to the car park and Boathouse
- The following stations are all within 10-15 minutes' taxi ride: Slough, Burnham, Taplow and Maidenhead (all on the Paddington line), Windsor & Eton Riverside (from Waterloo) and Windsor & Eton Central (branch of the Paddington line)

- There is a wide variety of accommodation nearby, from 'B & B' to Five Star hotels, particularly in Windsor, and a printed list is available from Reception at the Boathouse

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU