



Going with the flow . . . rowers on the Stour at Sudbury. The river snakes gracefully around the south Suffolk town

A rowing alternative to the Olympics



Can't get tickets to one of London's key water-based events? Pippa Kerry says there's another rowing contest at Sudbury that's worth a look

On Saturday 4 August, the attention of sports fans around the world will be focussed on the Olympic action in London, including the rowing finals at Dorney Lake, Eton. However, that's not the only rowing event taking place that day: crews from across the country will be competing in the Sudbury Regatta, hosted by Sudbury Rowing Club on the banks of the River Stour in Suffolk.

Friars Meadow in Sudbury is an ideal setting, secluded from the town by a swath of willows the river gently winds between reedy banks before it disappears into the leafy countryside. Since its foundation in 1874 Sudbury Rowing Club has held a regatta here on the first Saturday of August for the last 132 years. The event has grown over the years and had more than its fair share of drama. During the 1920's the punt ferrying the Sudbury Town Band across the river sank leaving band members floundering in the shallows. Rowers made repeated dives, and eventually all but one of the instruments were retrieved, and after a little drying out 'the band played on'.

In 1931 a fire destroyed the boathouse and boat fleet just seven days before the regatta and the future of the club looked bleak, but local businesses rallied round with donations to rebuild the boathouse and nearby rowing clubs lent enough boats for the regatta to go ahead. Since then, the club has gone from strength to

