



## THE FIRST WINNER OF THE DOGGETT'S COAT AND BADGE WAGER

Mr Robert Cottrell has undertaken researched a list of all the winners of Doggett's Coat and Badge Wager.

The Company has always understood that the name of the first winner had been lost in history.

Mr Cottrell started with the Company's records of Doggett's Coat and Badge which had been started by the late Clerk, Henry Humpherus. The records covered the period 13th July 1852 to 24th July 2001.

Mr Cottrell was particularly interested in the date of the first Wager which was debated as being 1716 or 1715. Reviewing the history of

Thomas Doggett Will, there were a number of characters mentioned in Thomas Doggett's Will that could provide clues as to the early history of Doggett's Wager.

Edward Burt had received a bequest under the Will. He was the Chief Clerk at the Admiralty Office from 1694 before he was transferred to another Admiralty office. Thomas Reynolds and Sir George Markham were the executors to the Will and received a bequest of Thomas Doggett's South Sea Stocks. Sir William Jolliffe who was a Member of Parliament, was bequeathed an additional £200 of South Sea Stock for second and third prizes in the Doggett's Coat and Badge Wager. Mr Edward Burt died in 1722, shortly after the death of Thomas Doggett on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1721.

Edward Burt's connection with Thomas Reynolds may be that Reynolds was a Director of the South Seas Company. Reynolds had his assets seized as part of the South Sea crash in June 1721, just three months before Thomas Doggett's death. Sir George Markham, having been Member of Parliament for Newark on Trent, died in 1736, without marrying, worth £100,000. Sir William Jolliffe was a Mercer and Member of Parliament for Poole at the same time as George Markham was Member for Newark. Sir William was also a Ship owner. The plaque at St John's Church Eltham, where Thomas Doggett is buried, states he died "a pauper in 1721". Certainly his South Sea stock was worthless by 1721 and he was known to have had legal disputes over the Drury Lane Theatre. However, Thomas Doggett's Will dated 10th September 1721 would not suggest he died a pauper. William Burling, an American Professor, writes that Doggett's retirement years saw large changes in his personal affairs when he married a gentlewoman with some £20,000 fortune. And on 1st August 1716 he established an endowment for an annual race.

Mr Cottrell examined the records of Court Minutes at the Fishmonger's Company. They record on 6th October 1721 that Mr Luton offered on behalf of Thomas Doggett's executors, a Coat and Badge with an endowment if the Fishmongers' Company would take on the race, to be rowed annually on 1st August.

The Peter Monamy painting of the first Doggett's Winner hangs in the Court Room of the Company of Watermen and Lightermen. The Waterman's Hall shown in the background was not completed in that form until 1720. Peter Monamy returned to London in 1722. He might have painted the picture after the event. Although a few names have been put forward regarding the identity of the unknown sculler, among them John Broughton, who won the race in 1730 and William Morris, the winner of the first race after Doggett's death. It is Mr Cottrell's view that the identity of the sculler in the painting will remain unknown. The account of the 1814 race in the "Morning Chronicle" records it was the centenary of the Accession of the

House of Brunswick. George I was made Duke of Brunswick in 1705. The report from the "Weekly Journal" of 14th July 1722 records "this is the eighth badge" adding weight to argument that 1715 was the year of the first race. An Account from the "Weekly Journal" of 30th July 1715 records the drawing of lots to race for the Hanover Prize, a Waterman's suit and silver badge showing the Brunswick arms with the prize to be rowed for annually over a course from London Bridge to Chelsea. The "Daily Courant" of 1st August 1715 adds the words "for ever" which words are a recognised phrase used in connection with Doggett's Wager. It is Mr Cottrell's contention that these reports, although not mentioning Doggett by name, bear all the hallmarks of Doggett's Coat and Badge Wager. The "Weekly Journal" of 6th August 1715 states the race was won by John Obie, a low bridge waterman. Looking at the Watermen's Company records, Mr Cottrell cannot find a John Obie as an apprentice but he can find a John Opey from Bermondsey. Later when becoming a Master of his own apprentices, he is recorded as Obie. Mr Cottrell contends John Obey was the first Winner of Doggett's Coat and Badge Wager on 1st August 1715.