

20th April 2007

Actor Robert Powell Launches Two Cities Boat Race

Robert Powell, star of *Holby City*, *The Detectives* and *Jesus of Nazareth*, returned to his birthplace yesterday (19th April) to officially launch the 36th Two Cities Boat Race – the annual Manchester vs. Salford University rowing contest that will take place on Saturday 12 May this year.

The distinguished Salford-born actor met the two teams at Salford Quays waterfront to discuss training for the big race and the involvement of official charity SPARKS, of which he is president.

Robert Powell said:

"I am delighted to lend my support to Two Cities Boat Race and thrilled that SPARKS has been chosen as the benefiting charity. The boat race on 12th May promises to be a fantastic day and will help put the Northwest on the map as a region for up-and-coming sporting excellence".

Two Cities Boat Race will see both university rowing clubs going head to head along the Manchester Ship Canal on 12th May 2007 – with thousands of spectators lining the banks of Salford Quays to watch the fiercely contested races.

A graduate of The University of Manchester and an honorary graduate of the University of Salford, Robert Powell also spoke of his pleasure at supporting both institutions, as well as the official charity:

"I have close links with both universities and SPARKS is a charity that is extremely important to me. The money raised will make an invaluable contribution to medical research, helping give children the best start in life. I am delighted to officially launch this fantastic event".

Admission to Two Cities Boat Race on Saturday 12th May 2007 is free. For further information on the event please visit www.twocitiesboatrace.co.uk. For further information on SPARKS please visit www.sparks.org.uk

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