



Thames: Sacred River

Peter Ackroyd

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Displaying the same qualities as **London: The Biography** — scholarship, wit, anecdotes, spirit of place, narrative and character — this hugely enjoyable book will be another mammoth bestseller.

Thames: Sacred River is a history of the river from source to sea from prehistoric times to the present. It covers the flora and fauna of the river, paintings and photographs inspired by the Thames, its geology, smells and colours, its literature, laws and landscape, its magic and myths, architecture, trade and weather.

The reader learns about the fishes that swim in the river and the boats that ply on its surface; about floods and tides; hauntings and suicides; miasmas and sewers; locks, weirs and embankments. Here is Shelley floating on the river under poetical beech trees; Hogarth getting roaring drunk on a boat trip to Gravesend; William Morris wondering whether the same Thames water flowed past his windows in Hammersmith as flowed past his house at Kelmscott 100 miles upriver.

Peter Ackroyd has a genius for digging out the most surprising and entertaining details, and for writing about them in magisterial prose, and as historian Gillian Tindall, writing in the *Sunday Telegraph* about the “richness and profusion of material” says “. . . there is so much to enjoy here.”

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