

# The River Thames



The River Thames is 215 miles long and has been an important trade route throughout its history.



- Some people believe that the Romans may have been influenced by the Thames when they were choosing where to build London. According to the Museum in Docklands, the river was probably only tidal to where the City of London now sits when the Romans were choosing a site



There are 44 locks on the non-tidal Thames, which begins nears Cirencester and ends at Teddington Lock.



- The first bridge in the capital was located where the current London Bridge stands. It has been rebuilt many times since the Romans first constructed a river crossing there around 2,000 years ago.



- Before engineer Sir Joseph Bazalgette built London's sewer system, much of the capital's waste was dumped in the river. In 1858, the stench from the river was so overpowering that Parliament had to be suspended and the government decided to find a way to rid the Thames of sewage.



- French Impressionist Claude Monet painted the Thames three times. One of the most famous of these paintings is the Thames below Westminster. It depicts the river, Westminster Bridge and the Houses of Parliament on a spring day.



- In pre-19th century London, cold winter weather would sometimes freeze the surface of the Thames. 'Frost Fairs' would be held on the ice, with Londoners enjoying dancing and drinking. The last fair was in 1814 and it appears unlikely there will ever be another one because the river now flows too fast for the water to freeze.





- Author Kenneth Grahame, the author of 'The Wind in the Willows,' lived near the Thames and it is believed he drew inspiration from the river when penning the children's classic.

