THAMES (August 2021)

**INTRODUCTION - Trewsbury Mead (The Source)**

Here we are in the grass green heart of the English countryside

Trewsbury Mead.

All around, over the hedges and past the trees is farmland

We’re under the branches of an ancient Ash tree.

110 metres above sea level.

This is the source of the longest river in England.

There’s not much to see. No gift shop or tea shop. No fabulous fountain. In fact, for much of the year there is no water to see here at all, this patch of land can just be a muddy puddle or even bone dry… and without that humble block of stone to tell us that this is the source, we might not know.

The river is a secret, buried beneath. If we lie down, put our ears to the ground we might hear it … water …seeping and creeping through the cracks and fissures below … before it bubbles up to the surface and becomes … the River Thames, at the start of its 215 mile life.

Next to other great rivers of the world it’s not long. But it’s not the miles that matter, what makes a river special is what happens along it, on it and in it… so for now let’s go with the gentle flow as this young stream begins its passage to the sea.

It’s soon joined by tributaries delivering water from other parts of England … the River Churn from the hills of the Cotswolds in the north…the river Ray from Wiltshire in the south. They have their own stories but we are on route with the Thames, which 30 million years ago was itself a tributary of a huge river which flowed through Europe…

ripple, riddle

drift, slide and flow

wander and wind

rush and roll

run river run