



OUR RIVER

Winning Entries

River Teign - A Lazy Afternoon **By Virginia Griem**

The trout are hunting dragonflies,
and there are dragonflies today, and damsel flies
and demoiselles.

Here by the river, our search for a sliver of shingle
unoccupied by dogs and picnics brings us to this
bend, a parting of streams, a pool where trout
can feed at ease.

Beyond the bend a bigger fish, perhaps a salmon,
jumps. Not a patch on our bright trout, but still
a silver noise on the quiet water.

A whizzy winged dipper dashes past mid-stream,
white bib flashing, scythes a path through a cloud
of caddis fly.

A wren pipes an alarm, the sun dips behind the
willows, the trout are quiet now. Voices call a dog,
and a man approaches holding a rod.
It's time to leave, go home.

FROM FLOWING DREAMS TO NIGHTMARE REALITIES

By David West

If dreams were competitive beasts my favourite champion would be that for the River Teign. Starved of fishing during long winter months, I doze into her riffles and pools to just dwell for a while. Bathed in sunlight and at one with the river world.

On glistening boulders dippers bob and wagtails dance to a flicking beat that we cannot hear. The water flows cool, pure, and clear as crystal. In trance, olives begin to appear - they flutter and drop, flutter and drop, beneath the shade of a mighty alder.

My slumber persists as the lightest of sips breaks our rivers glassy surface followed by a splash! The trout reveals his secret whereabouts from within safe and tangled roots. I pause then cast. A perfect line dropping with the lightest of touches and my fly, a mix of fur and feather, sails with wings outstretched beside natural offerings and just above the mark.

I wait a moment and the surface erupts – shattering peace. A flurry of splashes and the fish dives for cover but this favourite dream does not end in disappointment. A beautiful small brownie with golden belly and spots of red, black and blue, safely finds the net. Is admired for a moment and then once more returns to his tangled lair. I snore in pleasure.

I can dream, the memories still rich in detail from times gone by. But what of future generations? A nightmare fuelled by hidden sewage discharge and agricultural pollution, of animal waste and road run off. A lethal cocktail topped with insecticide laden swimming dogs and damaged spawning gravels.

The Teign is dying a creeping death it needs our help to do more than just dream.

**Teign [Tin], Teign [Tain], Teign [Teau]
By Peter Allen**

Dear Teign,
Please tell me: where do you begin?
I've traced your limbs higher and higher
through tussock and mire,
into cotton-grass coombes and Celtic tombs.
But you're hard to find. Ill-defined. Until,
as sure as water flows from moss,
you gather strength,
drop by drop.
Coalescing. Flowing. Growing.
A ribbon of silver
plunging through pool and rock.
Dear Teign,
How you roar come winter
when your limbs are flushed by rain,
where the salar soar and coarse and struggle
through your veins.
Silver flashes, secret glimpses
in your peat stained waters.
Miles of endless sea,
yet you are where they should truly be.
Dear Teign,
Will you ever cease to flow through England green?
How does it feel to meet your demise,
to live, be born, be old, be young
all at the same time?
Circular yet linear,
you exist on a plane of time unlike mine:
deep time.
You are the liquid thread between.
You've watered creatures long not seen,
weaved through lands of ice
and yet,
you will see the world
long after human eyes.

Constant
By ALFREDE EGLESTON

I watch it from my window,
I see it in my dream,
Falling, tumbling, turning,
A constant moving street.
I live within that street
Where water always flows
And fins shimmer in the aqua wind.
A nursery of dragonflies
Wriggle in the silt,
Dreaming of the day when they will
fly.
The crayfish, a species split in two,
View each other with a suspect gaze.
It's sad to see the crayfish race
Split beyond repair.
The street, a constant flow,
Is paved with mossy panels
Overrun with moped minnows
Who speed with such delight.
Their eyes flitting, scouring in every
cove,
Looking for the camouflaging pike
Whose mouths are deadly caves.
They hide in muddy lay-bys,
They watch, they wait.
The street is in full spate
And it winds its merry way.

Each day the visitors come and go,
Returning to quench their thirst
Of the street that tumbles by:
The sheep, the cows, the bats, the
voles
And all the feathered spectrum.
Rain brings a temporary expansion,
A chance to see beyond the street,
A chance to travel further
But it never lasts for long.
The street
It strokes the granite hillside.
The street is on the move,
Always on the move.
A world of aqua fuss and foam,
The river I call home.
You may never see my curious eye
Or my fleeting silhouette.
It does not matter,
I am there.
The constant moving street
Is every river that you meet.

I will see you there.
I am always watching.
Always.
Respect what is not yours.
This street belongs to all,
Not you, not me.
The river, it is free
And will flow eternally.



Dog Otter
By Ian Royce Chamberlain

You're following the River Teign
upstream, reach a sandy beach
and find a perfect set of prints.

You call up Google images
for paw-prints, check, compare,
confirm – fantastic!
Here in the sand, these tracks –
quite recently, an otter!

You make plans for camera
and a trip that's motion sensitive,
a hiding place from which
to spot nocturnal otterings.
You imagine that amazing clip
you'll show your envious friends...

The river bends to another sandy beach
and another set of perfect otter prints.
This is just so wow!

You track them, reach the corner,
follow round – and there's the perpetrator
caught mid-scamper – almost otter-shaped
but dachshund.

Autumn on the Teign
By Charlie Jones, aged 12

Warm sunlight spearing iridescent water,
Contented trout lie, tails swishing,
Burnished pebbles tumble in lethargy,

Treasures uncounted, spider's webs,
A kaleidoscope of colours, hanging off
trees,

Gilded golds, and rusty reds,
A duck, wind-ruffled feathers, paddles at
ease.

Burbling rapids, down a narrow fissure,
The water lit up with yellows and oranges,
The spine-snapping speed of a silent
kingfisher,
Hurriedly for minnow she hunts.

Darkness creeps into the day,
The moon shines cold on a bitter night,
Agitated rushes, thrash, and sway,
Glacial temperatures, reflect a pale blue
light

An unsettling stillness slips over the land,
A net, drawing all in, unawares.
Guided by an all seeing, cold-hearted
hand.

Sinister eyes spy from hidden lairs,
The net of evil,
The hand of winter.

Dry leaves crackle under wary feet,
The piercing shriek of terrified birds
Frigid water slides under ice in a narrow
creek.

Cold, harsh light filters through weath-
ered firs.

Icy pinnacles of frost gather on dormant
vegetation.
Forlorn reeds drape in turbulent currents,
Ragged-woolled sheep cower from the
situation.

Hungry, hovering high over the horizon,
Swooping down, a fighter jet,
Engines screaming, a high screech
Issued from baleful lungs.
Petrified, Frozen,
Trembling. Twitching.
Living its last moments.
Talons outstretched,
Eyes glittering with malice.

Splash.

It strikes.

What was, is no more.

Autumn, the bringer of darkness.



Our River
By Ellie Schaefer, aged 12

Sometimes I feel free, twisting and turning upstream
Sometimes I live in fear, seeing the shadows of people,
People that can kill.
But when I feel free,
I can do anything.
I can run,
Fly,
Jump.
I am free.

The Journey Is Long
By Brendan O'Brien, aged 14

Fish go plop
Down past the drop
Fish go jump
Over the bump

Water is fast
It will last
Fish is strong
But the journey is long

The trip is tough
Fish has had enough
The rocks are tricky
But fish can't be nit-picky

The fish wants rest
That would be best
The end is very near
But there still remains the weir.



The River Teign
By Emily, from Christow Primary School

I stood on the river bank,
Watching the river flow past,
It gurgled over the rocks,
Its flow strong and fast,
It clatters across rocks,
The sound music to my ears,
It moves downstream,
And crashes down weirs,
And the river clatters over stones,

The birds sing their sweet songs,

This is nature`s orchestra,
And it can do no wrong,
So why should we harm our beautiful river,

Is the question I ask,
We need to save our river,
That needs to be our task.



The Sapphire Serpent
By Jack, from Umberleigh Primary School

In the beginning I burst out free,
Absorbing sunlight as a tiny spring.
I begin to trek down the hills.
Wounding in between rocks like a sapphire blue serpent

Glittering, shimmering, sparkling, I trickle downhill.
I start to froth and bubble like a witch's cauldron.
My other glistening fellows start to join my trek
As I start to pick up pace and we begin the race.

I crash into boulders, tumble over moors.
I slice into land, making me bigger than ever.
Like a huge erumpent I thunder through forests.
Through all these years, I finally have a view.

I race past my brothers and sisters.
I can see the ocean smiling down on me,
At last I can be part of a big family.
In the end I tumble into the open arms of the sea.



The River's Course
By Cecily Home, aged 11

A peaty murk swells within me at my early beginning,
Softening my edges where salmon spawn.

I run through desolate moorland contours where wind can bite with
icy teeth,
Before I descend sharply between rocky outline and harts-tongue
ferns,
My watery body shaping sharp edges and polishing bank.
Then down through meadow, park and pasture.

Finally, I slow through ancient woods, in this my favourite reach,
I've cut deep millenia ago.
Here the screening oaks take the wind and life abounds, above,
around, within.

Bands of birds sing so merrily, Wagtail, Tit and Chifchaff,
While Otter waits on Trout and Trout on Mayflies, which dazzle and
glide my silky surface.

I am effected by all around, man, animal, element,
Take good care of me less when in times of wrath I will swell and so
much be lost in floodcloud,
But love my meandering so every stone and pebble be seen,
Accept in my tawny depths ripe with wisdom.



Water
By Matilda Baker, aged 11

Water
Flowing
Rushing
Tumbling
Over rocks
Stilling in pools
Then picking up speed
Out of nowhere
To crash and churn
Down a weir.

Salmon
The strength it uses to push
Up over the weir
Is not always enough
To push up
Up up
Through the breaking water

Water
Flowing
Rushing
Tumbling
Over the weirs

Weirs
Not the only things
The salmon have to dodge
On their journey
Fishing boats
Dams
Dogs
And many more.

Water
Flowing
Rushing
Tumbling.
The salmon's home.