***The Thames: Liquid History***

1. The River Thames is perhaps best known as the river that flows through London. It laps at the ancient walls of the Tower of London, flows past the Palace of Westminster and is spanned by Tower Bridge.

2. The River Thames starts its cross-country journey at its source at Thames Head in Gloucestershire and spills out into the Thames Estuary at Southend-on-Sea.

3. In 1929, John Burns, the London born radical politician and keen historian, brilliantly described the Thames as "liquid history" (see right). Julius Caesar was held up by the river in 54BC, the Magna Carta was signed on its banks and Vikings, pirates, the Dutch navy and the Luftwaffe have all used the Thames to navigate their way into London and threaten the country. Today we can also see Vikings sailing down the Thames, but only for some movie promotion campaigns.

4. The Thames is in many ways connected with sports. Today there are approximately 37 major rowing clubs along the river, and more than a dozen university clubs.

Then, you must have heard about the famous Boat Race, an annual event between the boat clubs of Oxford University and Cambridge University. It began in 1829, and is very popular nowadays. The Thames played a very visible role in the 2012 London Olympics. The Olympic Torch was carried by boat along a stretch of the river in Central London.

5. The river has also inspired poets, writers, painters and composers for centuries. Charles Dickens was a regular visitor to the *Prospect of Whitby* pub on the banks of the Thames and featured the river in his book *Our Mutual Friend*. Jerome K Jerome's classic book *Three Men in a Boat* describes a boating holiday on the Thames. In 2012 the Thames was used for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

6. What can the Thames be used for?

7. And finally there are some more facts about the River Thames.

* The river is 215 miles long.
* It has over 80 islands.
* There are more than 200 bridges across the river (not only in London).
* There are more than 20 tunnels.

8. A quiz:

***1. What sight can’t you see on the Thames?***

* *The Palace of Westminster*
* ***Westminster Abbey***
* *Tower Bridge*
* *The Tower of London*

***2. Who described the Thames as "liquid history”?***

* *Julius Caesar*
* *Vikings*
* ***John Burns***
* *Charles Dickens*

***3. The Boat Race is held between:***

* ***Oxford and Cambridge***
* *Rugby School and Eton College*
* *London and Manchester*
* *Essex and Devonshire*

***4. What book describes a boating holiday on the Thames?***

* *“Our Mutual Friend” (Ch. Dickens)*
* *“The Adventures of Tom Sawyer” (M. Twain)*
* *“The Deerslayer”(J. F. Cooper)*
* ***“Three Men in a Boat”(J. K. Jerome)***

***5. How many bridges are there across the river?***

* *40*
* *100*
* *150*
* ***more than 200***

**Thank you for your attention!**