

An introduction from the Dee River to the Tees River

This PechaKucha began as a performance starting during slides 1 and 2, where the audience were introduced to a jug of water from the Tees and a bottle of water brought from the Dee Valley in Scotland. The bottled water from the Dee Valley was poured into a jug of water from the Tees Valley and then the mixed water was poured out into cups for the audience and the last cup for the presenter of the PechaKucha. From slide 3 the presenter then read out a poem, which the intention of providing a viewpoint from the Dee River talking to the Tees River. With each slide, a verse of the poem was read out.

Slide 2) Introduction

Slide 3)

I am the Dee, and you the Tees,
I am the one in Scotland not Wales,
For I rise in the Cairngorms and,
Flow to the North Sea at Aberdeen,
Are we the same? We have two ees,
But I begin with a D and you a T,
I am singular, but you are plural,
Is there more than one of you?

Slide 4)

They say, these humans called scientists,
That the age of rivers are their rocks,
My rocks are granite. Four hundred,
million years old. Are you as old as me?
The land has changed since I began,
My waters have fluctuated many times,
The melting of glaciers has angered my banks,
And risen the levels of my groundwaters,
I have cradled glaciers for thousands of years

Slide 5)

There was a rather cold snap four hundred
Years ago, and pockets of ice came back,
I had one in my corrie
It picked at my granite rocks and made piles
Of debris and boulders and the deer
Avoided my icy, cold ridges,
But then it melted and again my waters
Raged and shifted my gravels
It was best not to live
On my banks in those days

Slide 6)

But today, things have changed

There are no more glaciers to melt,
And yet at times there is water in excess to the norm,
My banks fill with waters from the air
And I feel my boundaries fill to the limits
My waters begin to surge and tug
And rise well above my banks
I can't help it, but I flood,
And rage all the way to sea.

Slide 7)

I'm ashamed to say that at times of flood,
I am not kind to those living on my banks.
Two or four legged, they are all the same
For it is the nature of my flooding waters,
Tees, do you flood? Can you keep those,
Torrents at bay? In your rocks, soils and trees?
I simply cannot, as
I have no space for such torrential rains.

Slide 8)

I've heard of a thing called modelling
Something that predicts when and where
I will flood.
Have you heard of such thing?
I find it hard to imagine,
I can never tell when I will flood,
First of all, it's not simply the amount,
Of rain that falls, but also how full I am,
Before the rains. Or even sometimes,
After a drought, my peat,
is so cracked the waters flow through.

Slide 9)

And then now these humans,
With their machines are cutting trees
They were planted like squadrons,
In lines of salute,
And even though these trees are still children,
They are cut for their wood
My soils are now bare,
Exposed to the rains and
Less water is transpired back to the air,
So where will these fair waters go?

Slide 10)

I consider myself lucky,
As I am one of the few that still has,

A few remnants of Old Forest,
Are you one of those lucky few too?
These old forest, stabilise my soils,
Slow down the fast-flowing waters
And form stable, diverse, systems
That help manage my waters,
But even these are under some
Strain, as the rains fall fast and furious
These days.

Slide 11)

I am not only what you see,
A silver serpent winding my
Way to the sea.
I am also in the rocks, soils
Trees, heather, and I even make up
70% of those humans. I am
Everywhere in all those
Living things. Maybe we have met before?

Slide 12)

So, Tees, water happens on your banks?
I have salmon fishing.
Its importance outweighs most things,
For, I'm told that it makes millions of a
Thing called money.
Humans come from miles to pull out
The salmon from my waters and put them back
But the salmon tell me it just slows down their
Mission to spawn in my waters

Slide 13)

I have a group of humans called "ghillies"
Who spend months in rubber boots
Standing in my waters
Seemingly teaching other humans
Who chat in metal plaques and make
Deals standing in my waters
Sometimes they turn quiet and at last
Begin to chill in my waters
And let go of burdensome dealings and
Slowly they understand my living waters

Slide 14)

I also have the Queen on my shores
She sits in a fortress called Balmoral Castle
Her entourage are called the Royals

And for some reason they seem
To have a lot of clout in my catchment
They come in the summer with Corgies
And horses. They seem to have a jolly good time
in my valley and banks

Slide 15)

Hunting is a big thing in my catchment
It has been around for thousands of years
In one way or another, the hunting changes
All things living in my boundaries
There were once wolves, bears and Aurichs
But now all that is gone
Now these humans breed
Something called grouse
They burn the heather, reducing tree growth
Just for a few birds to shoot.

Slide 16)

I do have a few beauty spots,
I understand that Queen Victoria
Rather liked my waterfalls in
the Linn O'Dee. My water's do seem
to create a rather calming atmosphere
to the stressfulness that these humans
seem to create upon themselves
And today there's a lot of people who like
To walk my slopes and ridges and
even take a plunge into the depths
of my deeper pools.

Slide 17)

Waters from my springs are
Bottled by humans and transported beyond
My realms. I assume this is a good thing
If I consider that over 1 billion litres of
Rain falls around my springs
Perhaps it is good to pass clean waters
To other places, or am I simply a resource
For this thing called money
What do you think Tees? Are you simply a resource?

Slide 18)

I consider myself lucky.
My waters are quite clean.

I suffer some pollution. But
These humans seem to be more considerate
than in the past, when
Anything could be thrown into my waters
Without a thought. I understand
That I should thank a human thing called the
European Union Water Directive.

Slide 19)

The standards of my water quality also relate to
My modified banks. So, the waters at my outlet
Aren't the best, as the marshes of my estuary
Were straightened and deepened to form a
Harbour for large ships and industry
So even if I try my best, these waters
Remain poor.
However, they contain fish,
so, they can't be all that bad

Slide 20)

I hope this introduction of myself to you
The River Tees, might help to understand
Who I am. I would be delighted to get
To know you too, even though our
Catchments do not meet.
So, may I make a toast, by mingling your waters
And mine to make the impossible possible
In these time of change.

In the last slide the presenter raises the glass of mixed water to the audience and says
Cheers! And then drinks the water.

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