

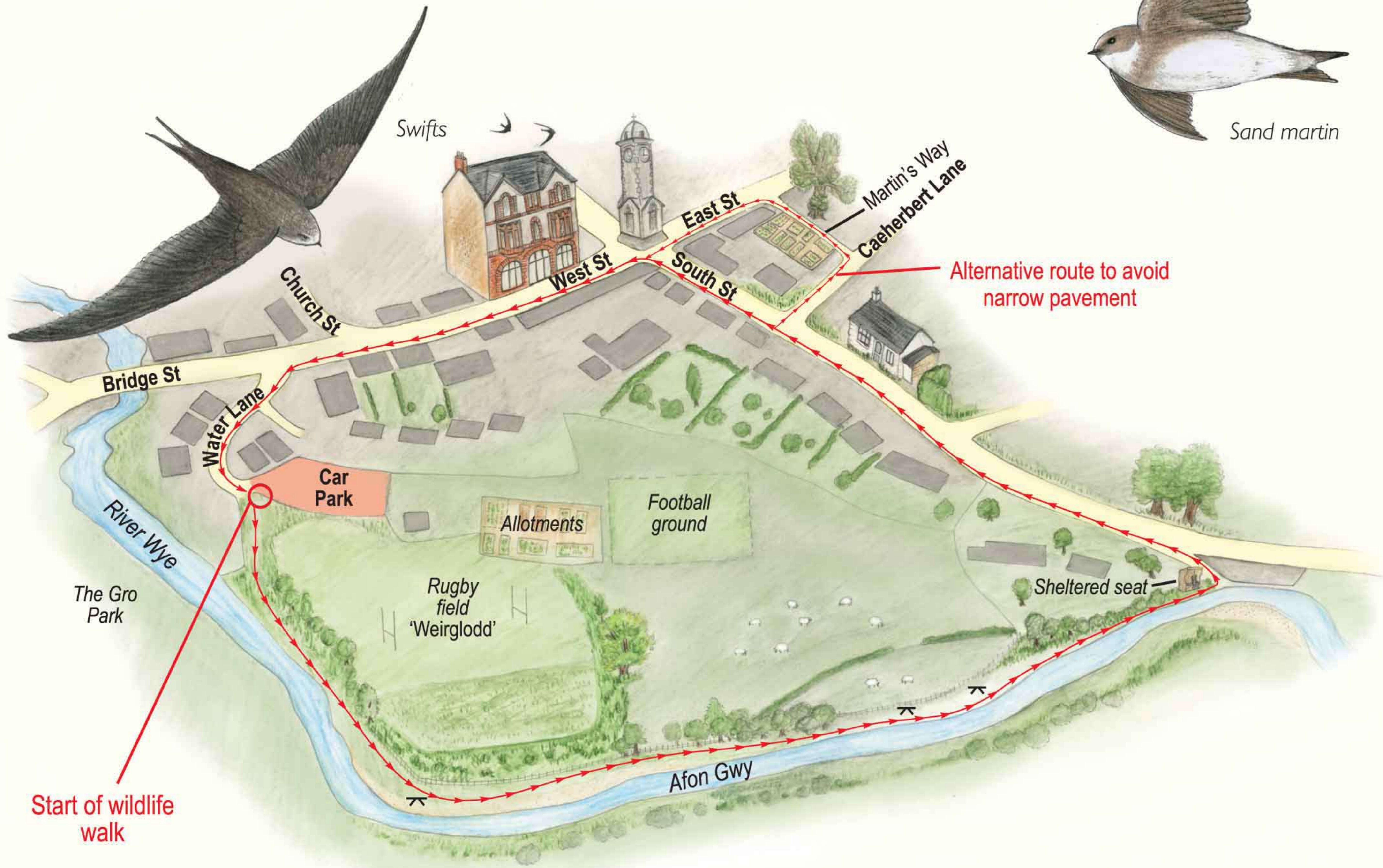
Riverside Wildlife Walk

Take care when crossing roads and when near the river. Dogs should be under strict control.

Accessibility: Unfortunately this walk is not suitable for wheelchairs as the riverside path is uneven and can be muddy in places.

→ Route of wildlife walk

100 yards
100 metres

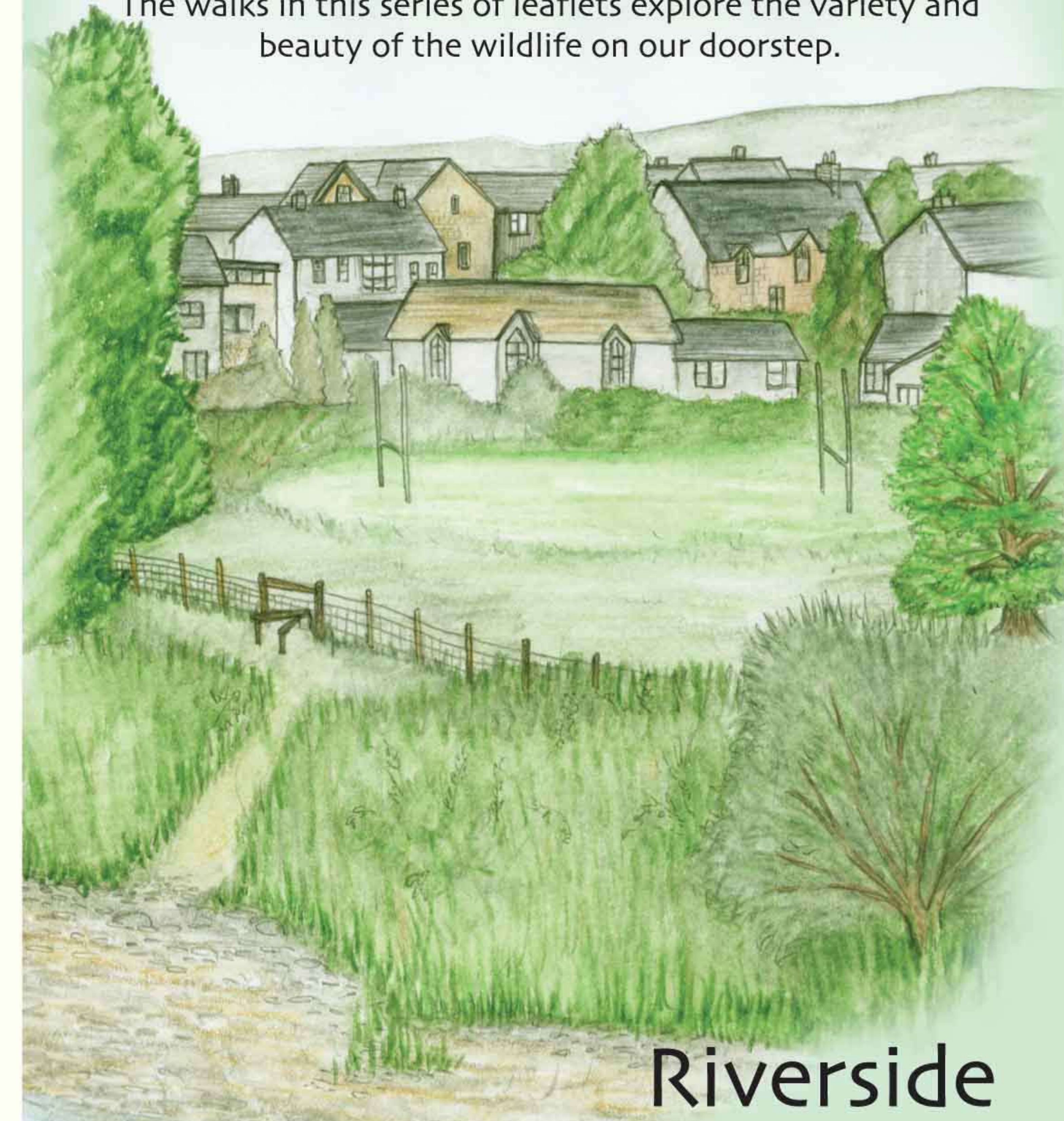


The Wildlife Centre of Wales Canolfan Byd Natur Cymru

Rhayader Town Wildlife Walks

Rhayader has a wonderful variety of wild plants and animals living among its buildings, parks and gardens. The fast flowing, boulder strewn River Wye passes right through the town forming a very important natural corridor along which wildlife travels, enriching the town for the enjoyment of everyone.

The walks in this series of leaflets explore the variety and beauty of the wildlife on our doorstep.



Riverside Wildlife Walk

A circular walk from the Rugby Club car park at the end of Water Lane off Bridge Street. The walk follows the river bank with picnic benches along the way and returns via the town centre clock, a distance of 1 mile / 1.5 kilometres that takes about an hour to enjoy.

The more you stop, look and listen the more you will see!

For more information about the town and other walks to enjoy around the area look on our website: www.rhayader.co.uk

To find out about our wildlife, including recent sightings go to the local natural history society's website: www.rhayaderbynature.wordpress.com

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The riverside walk path starts to the right of the interpretive panel and following the bank offers views across the river to the Groe Park.

Rivers have an attraction that draws people, peaceful in times of low flow, frightening as a raging boiling torrent. Gentle riffles, deep pools, falls, shingle beaches, strews of giant boulders, there is always something to delight, inspire and hold in awe when one visits a river.

Ours, the River Wye, is one of the finest and is long famed for its salmon. Atlantic salmon ascend the river in spring and autumn to find traditional spawning places among the riverbed shingles. Once a 63lb salmon was fished from these waters and 20-40 pounders were commonplace. Today a 12 pounder would excite any fisherman and few are caught, except in the north Atlantic, where our fish are "hoovered" up with ease by giant factory fishing boats.

Things however are changing for the better as people resolve to improve the rivers with healthier waters for fish to return to and us to enjoy.

At the bend in the river it is safe to explore the waters edge from the shingle beach. Here in the gentle riffles little parties of tiddler minnows gather and stone loaches hide beneath stones.

Under the river bank trees of alder and sallow you may spot some small pink flowers, pink purslane, an American plant now common along the banks of the river, its seeds spread along by the regular flood waters.

Grey wagtail



Adjacent to the path the Rugby Club playing fields provide very good habitat for wildlife. Areas all around the main pitch are now managed specifically with wildlife in mind: the uncut edges provide long grassy habitat where voles and mice live and small skipper, large skipper, meadow brown and ringlet butterflies breed; the large level area managed as a traditional hay meadow is cut just once a year in late July or August and is particularly rich in flowers, most notably butterfly orchids and is frequented all summer long by dainty small copper butterflies and day-flying silver Y moths.

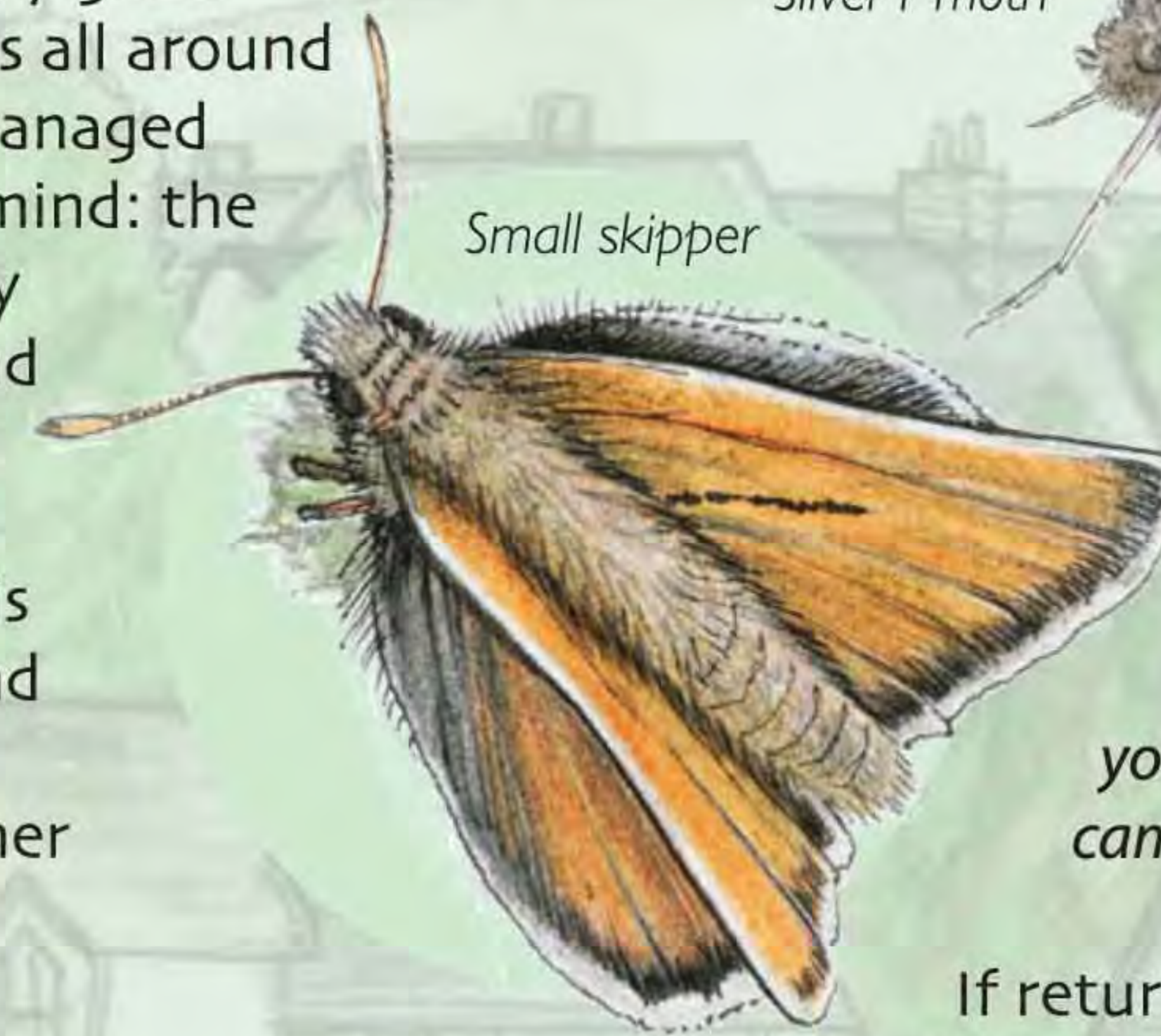
Before reaching the far end of the riverside walk sheep grazed fields will be seen to the left of the path with tall hawthorn hedges. Here the humps in the fields close to the path are built by the very tiny yellow meadow ant, a sign of long-grazed but otherwise undisturbed grassland on dry soils. This miniscule little ant lives hidden to view in colonies of many thousands, constructing a mound with soil particles brought from tunnels excavated underground. The mound warms up during the day and the broods of young ant pupae are moved about within a complex of galleries and chambers, up into the mound during the day and down into the warmer galleries beneath at night.

At the end of the riverside path sit for a while on the sheltered bench to watch the river, frequented by some beautiful wildlife: gorgeous grayling fish, part of the trout family with an elongated flowing dorsal fin edged in softest pink, mayflies – delicate, ephemeral, aerial ballerinas, electric blue and apricot orange kingfishers, creamy pink goosanders and the delightful little brown and white-bibbed dipper.

Silver Y moth



Small skipper



The walk then climbs up away from the river, turning left onto South Street and into the centre of town, (or you may prefer to return the way you came).

If returning via the town contemplate the variety of plants in the gardens along the way – most now "domesticated" wild plants from different parts of the world but interspersed with our own native plants, many that we call weeds. Together they form an essential resource that attracts wildlife to enjoy right up to our back door.

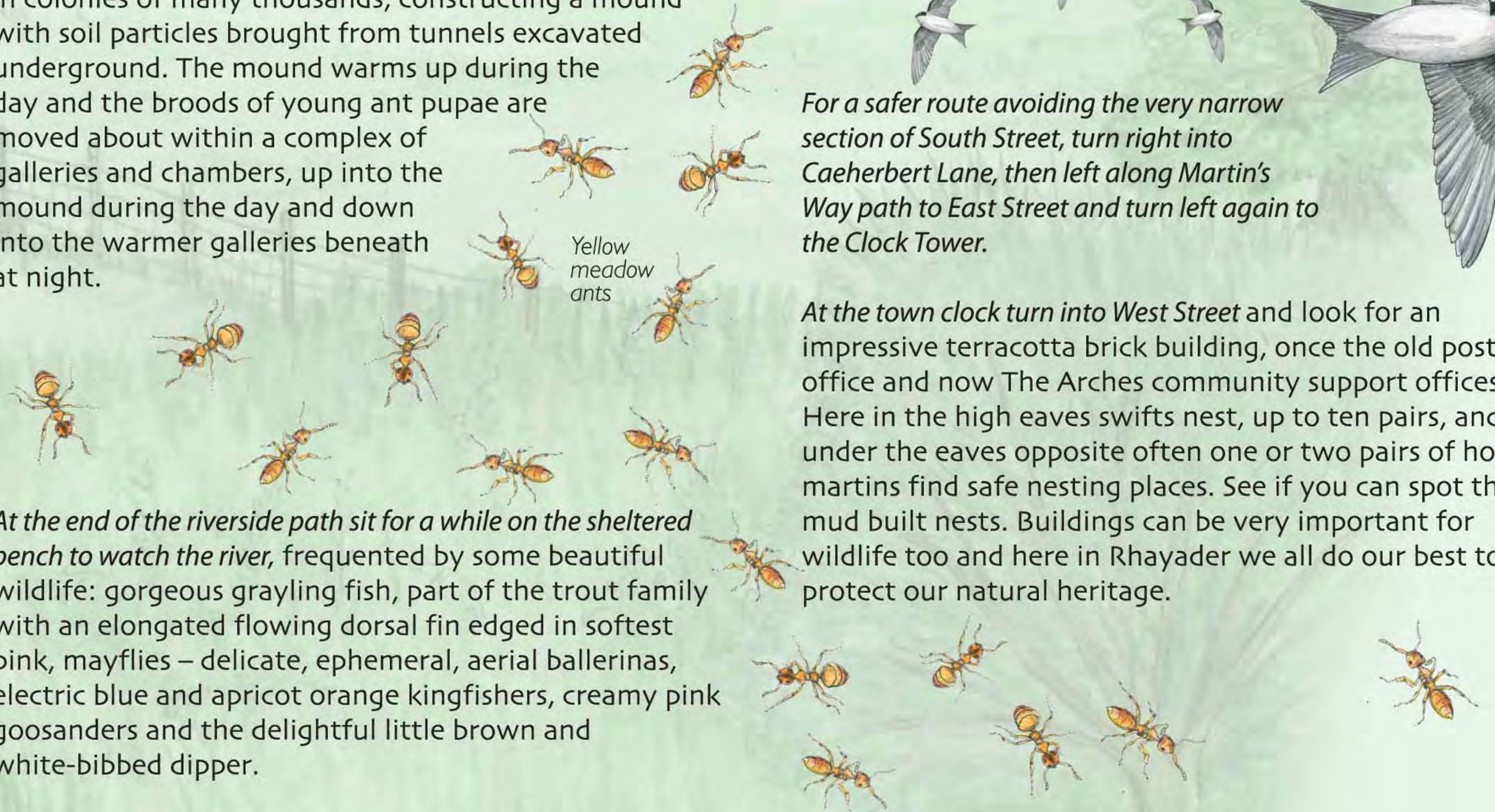
House martins



For a safer route avoiding the very narrow section of South Street, turn right into Caerherbert Lane, then left along Martin's Way path to East Street and turn left again to the Clock Tower.

At the town clock turn into West Street and look for an impressive terracotta brick building, once the old post office and now The Arches community support offices. Here in the high eaves swifts nest, up to ten pairs, and under the eaves opposite often one or two pairs of house martins find safe nesting places. See if you can spot their mud built nests. Buildings can be very important for wildlife too and here in Rhayader we all do our best to protect our natural heritage.

Yellow meadow ants



Pink purslane