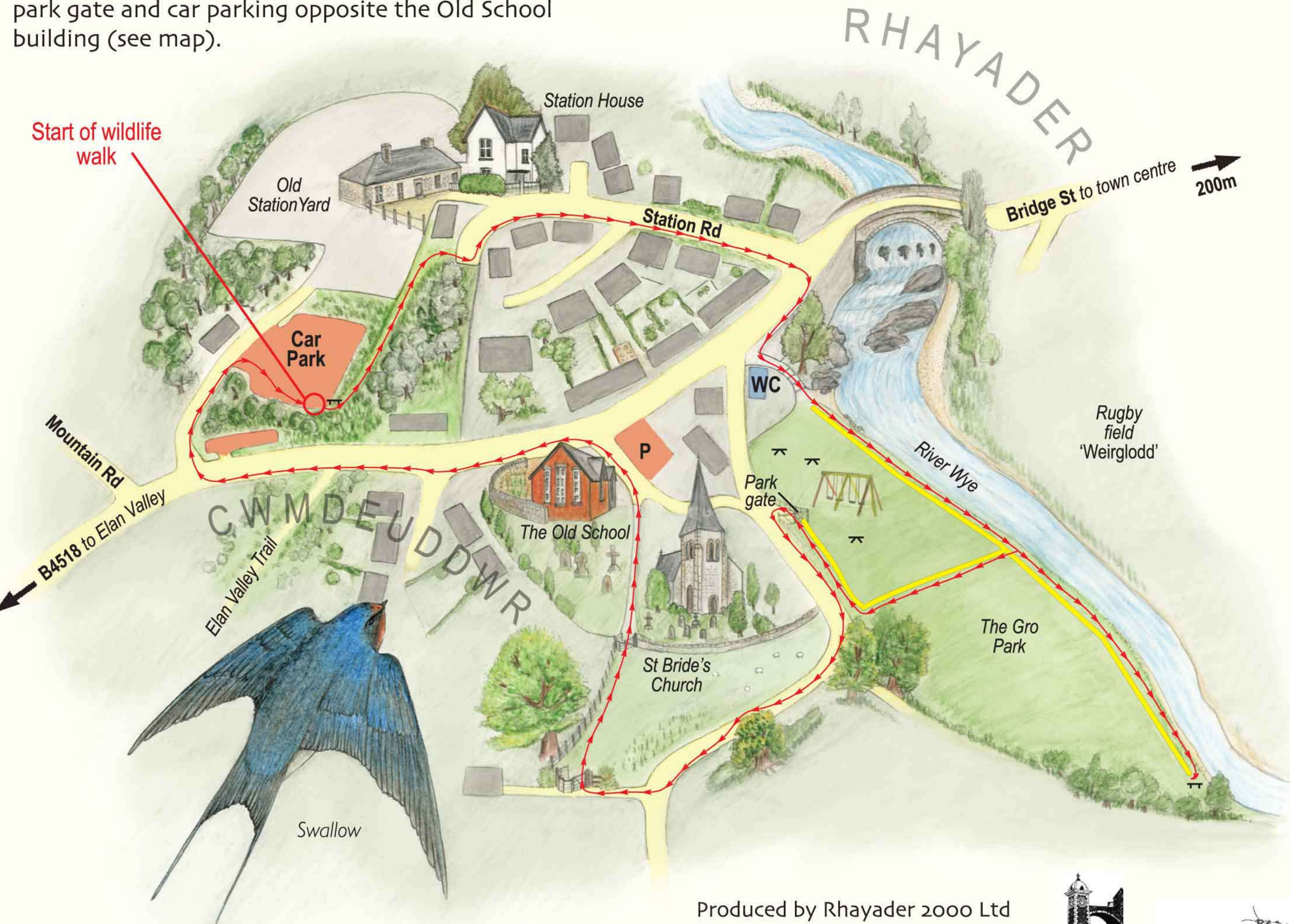
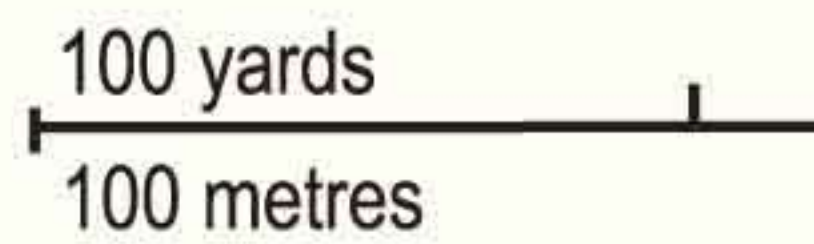


# Cwmdeuddwr Wildlife Walk

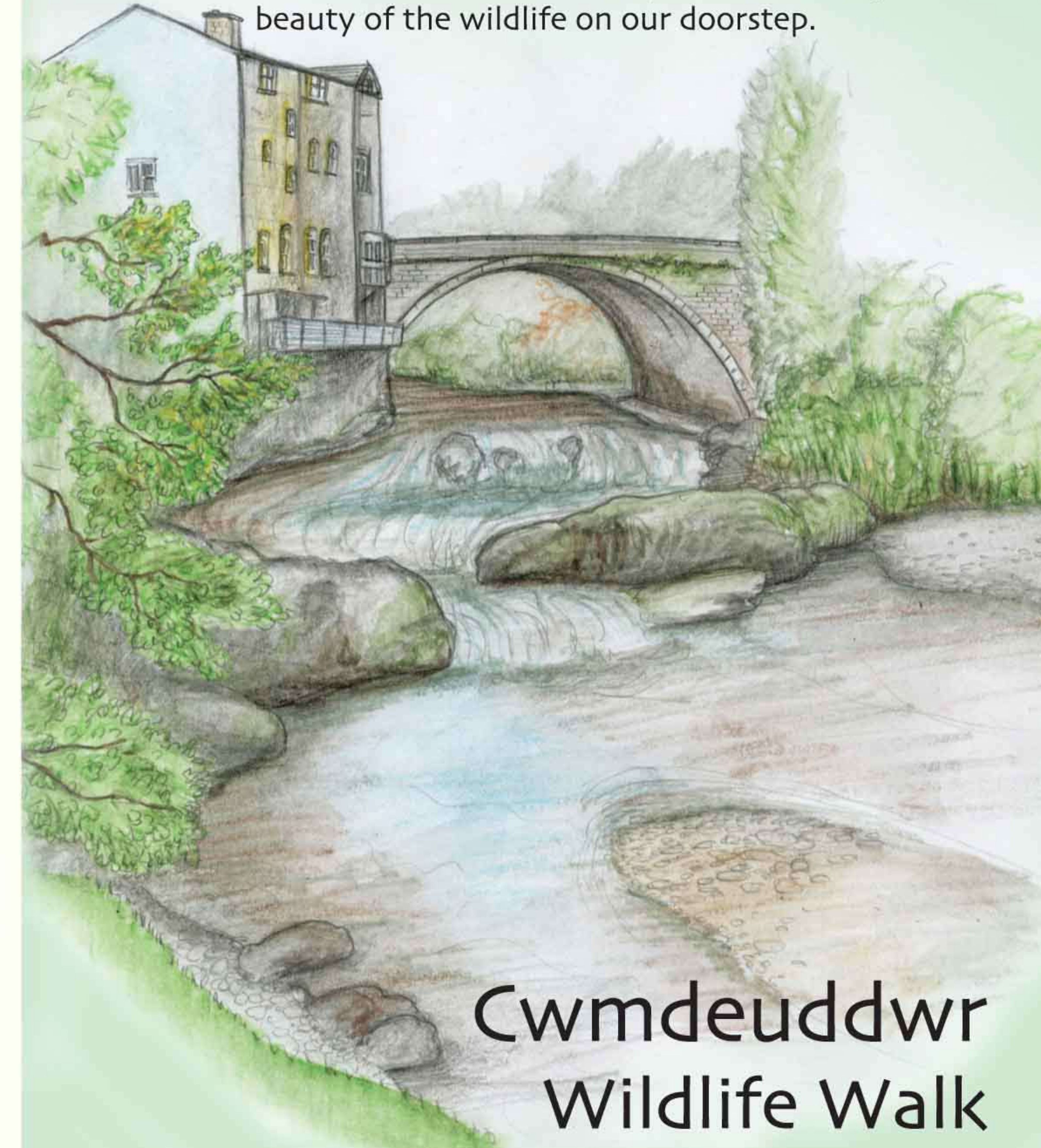
Take care when crossing roads and when near the river. Dogs should be under strict control.

Accessibility: The Groe park is fully accessible to wheelchairs and push chairs with vehicular access to the park gate and car parking opposite the Old School building (see map).



## 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.



## Cwmdeuddwr Wildlife Walk

A circular walk from the old station yard car park to the Groe Park and back via St Brides Church. A distance of 1 mile / 1.5 kilometres that takes about an hour to enjoy. Parts of the walk suitable for wheelchairs and push chairs are marked on the map.

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](http://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](http://www.rhayaderbynature.wordpress.com)

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There is little evidence of the railway dismantled in 1963. Now the old station yard and abandoned railway embankments provide a wildlife haven. The banks surrounding the car park support a tangle of flowering plants and brambles, all important for the survival of butterflies and bees, while other areas of sparsely vegetated 'bare' ground are liked by warmth loving field grasshoppers, beetles, ants and a variety of diminutive grasses and herbs.

Take the path from the corner of the car park by the interpretive panel to discover a viewpoint bench surrounded by scrub. From here the railway line used to bridge the road and you can see below the start of the Elan Valley Trail. Around the viewpoint, look for bushes of broom, harebells, ants and small birds. The willow, blackthorn and broom scrub offers important breeding places for birds such as bullfinches, long-tailed tits, robins and wrens, butterflies and many species of moths and other invertebrates.

On the steep embankment, mature trees of oak, sallow and hawthorn with the occasional conifer provide additional breeding places for birds, notably pied flycatchers and thrushes and more moth species including the poplar hawk moth and great prominent.

From the bench, follow the path beside the fence keeping eyes and ears alert for wildlife and turn right onto the road – follow the road and soon, to the left you will see the old station building and station master's house.

Follow Station Road downhill to meet Bridge Street. Gardens and roadside banks and hedges allow wildlife to move right into the town – green-veined white is a common butterfly here and in season the grassy banks sport yellow hawkweeds and pale toadflax, a plant brought here as seeds whisked along the railway line in the draughts of passing trains.



Bullfinches



Dipper

Townspeople provide nestboxes and put food out for birds throughout the year. Bank voles and woodmice take advantage of the garden shrubberies and any left over bird-food.

Take care crossing Bridge Street and then walk a few yards right towards the public toilets, beside which you will see steps that lead down to a side-gate into the Groe Park. Take time to view the waterfall below the road bridge where, in November, salmon make their way upstream to spawning places. Look too for tiddlers at the river edge.

Walk on to the bench at the far end of the park which is an excellent place to sit quietly and watch the river for birds such as dippers, grey wagtails, kingfishers, goosanders and herons. After a circuit of the park exit by the main gate and turn left into the lane that soon climbs past an old hedgerow oak tree some 250 years old - old enough to have seen the fall and rise of the red kite from its relentless persecution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to its protection and eventual flourishing in the twentieth century. Eyes looking skyward will surely have spotted at least one already.

Soon a footpath marker points right, off the lane and almost immediately right again the path enters a field descending toward the church yard. Nectar from thistles, if left in pasture like this, helps to keep the town's butterflies fed and flying and the variously managed hedgerows help to maintain a varied and rich wildlife. Swallows and house martins may well be in view across the field and around the church from spring to autumn.

Churchyards are almost invariably good for wildlife and here St Bride's is a fine example, well worth taking time to explore. Some grassy areas



Peacock butterfly

are purposefully left uncut for the benefit of butterflies and moths, other areas are cut to benefit waxcap fungi and flowers. Swallows are encouraged to nest in the porch and bats allowed access to safe roosting and breeding places in the fabric of the church.



Swift

Swallow

On leaving the church yard one passes the old school, now a community building making full use of renewable energy sources, and to the rear of which is a new community garden - take a look. The school roof is home to several pairs of the town's small population of swifts that come here each year from Africa to rear their young. Swifts can live for 20 years - that's 200,000 miles of flying they will have clocked up, without taking into account the wandering they do in search of the flying insects on which they feed!

Rhayader wouldn't be the same without its screaming parties of swifts all summer long.



Pink waxcap fungi

From the old school follow the road left until you see the site of the view point amid scrub where you started your ramble. As you pass below

imagine what wildlife there might be among its tangles. Turn off right and back up to the car park where on either side of the road are open areas with tall herbaceous plants like willowherb, nettles, thistles, ragwort, docks and bramble, all vital in the life-cycles of most wildlife-rich towns. Here too is pussy willow that blossoms in April, attracting huge numbers of beautiful moths at night and millions of other insects by day, essential springtime food for our birds and bats.



Sycamore



Ash

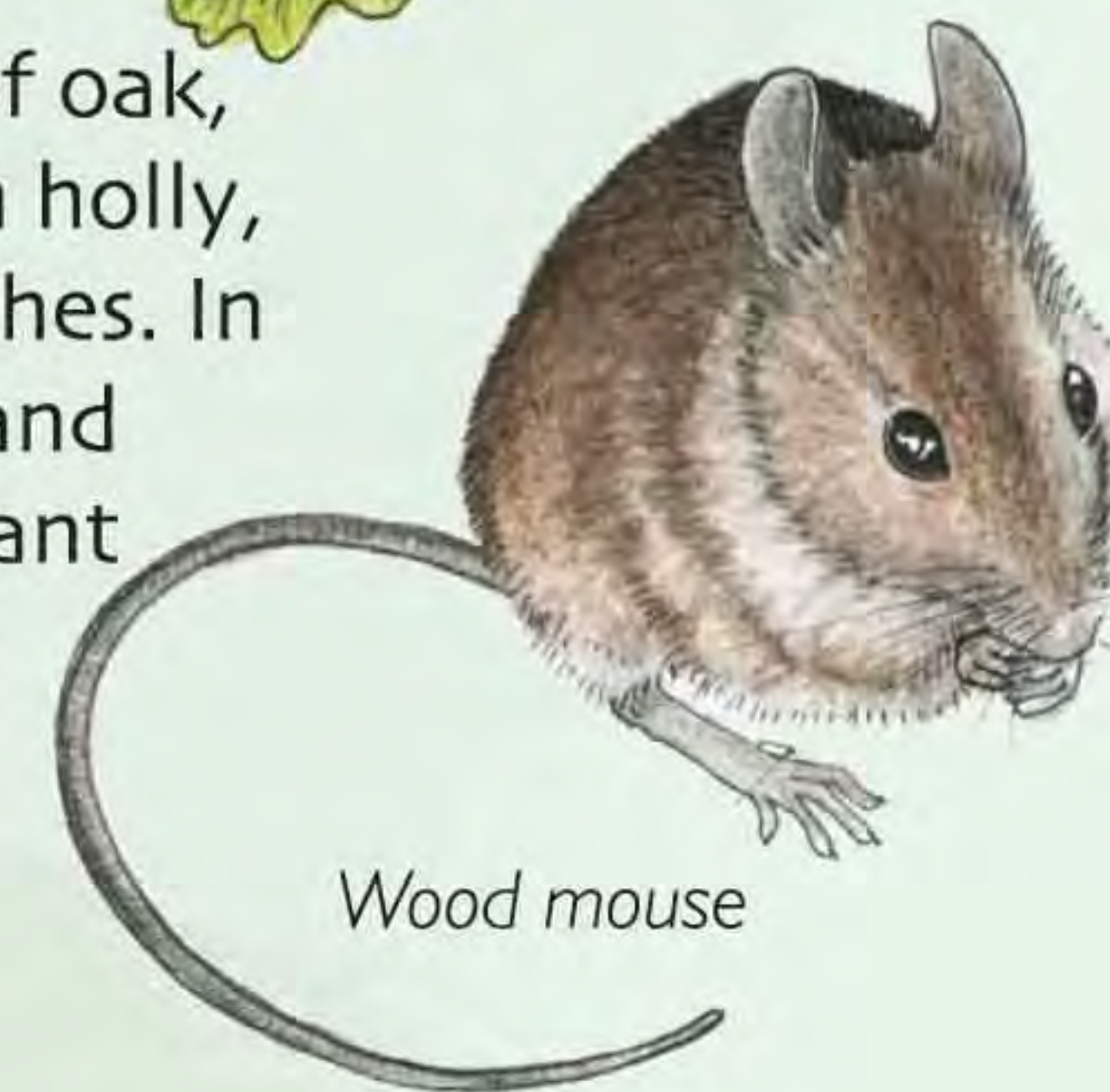
Nearby is mature woodland of oak, beech, ash and sycamore with holly, hawthorn and blackthorn bushes. In autumn their acorns, seeds and berries provide all important food for birds, mice and voles.



Hawthorn



Oak



Wood mouse