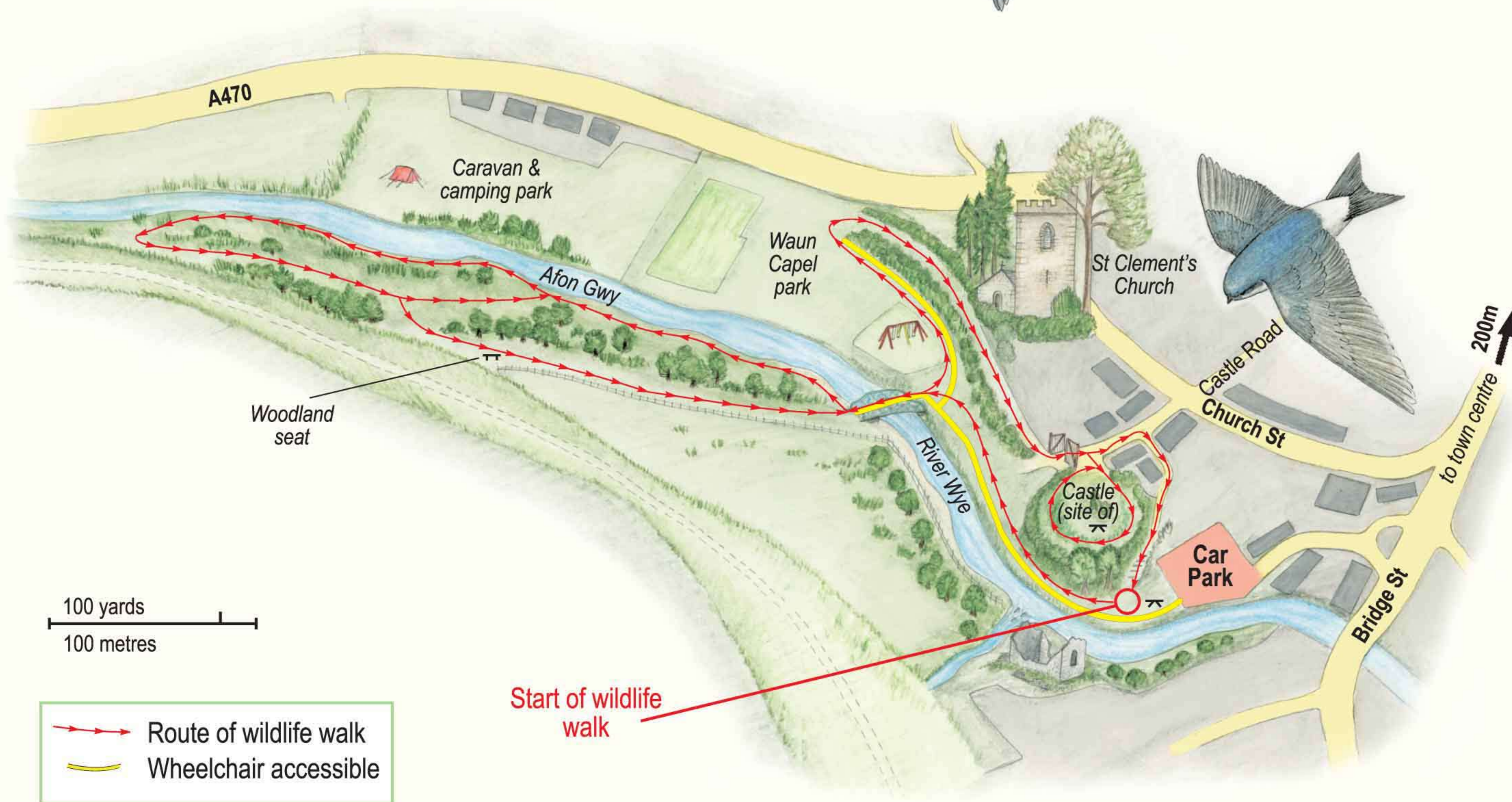
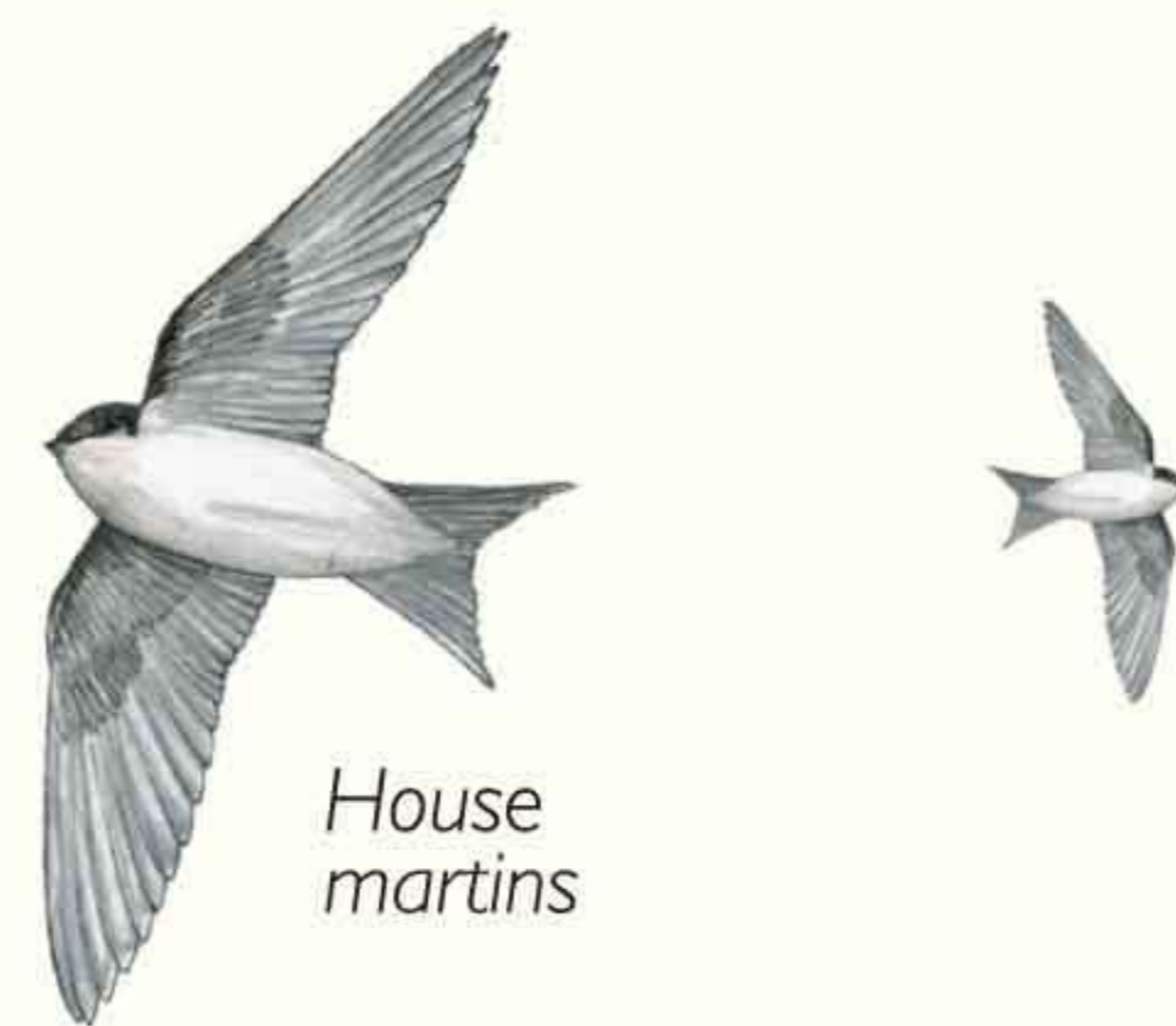


Waun Capel Wildlife Walk

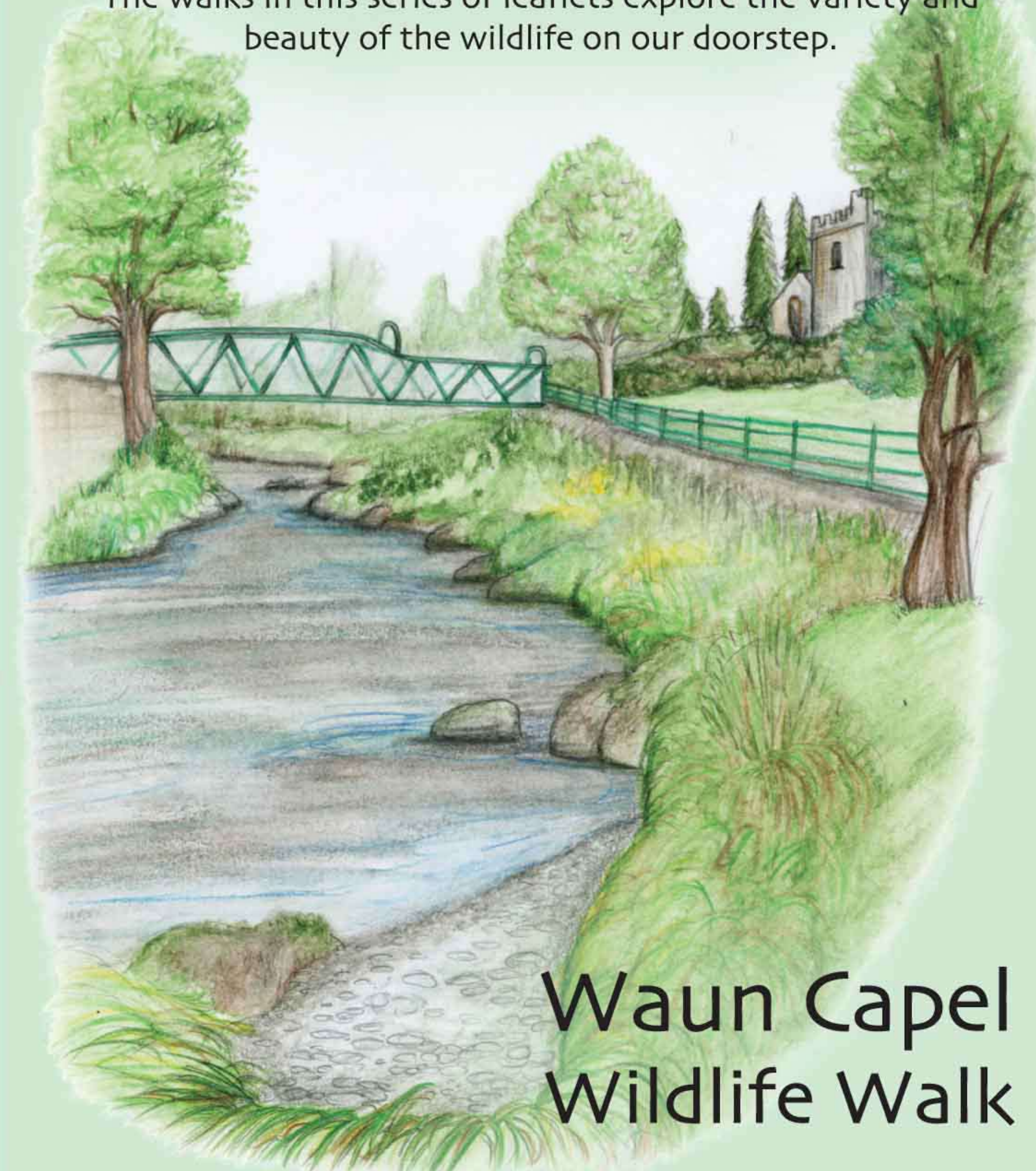
Take care when crossing roads and when near the river. Dogs should be under strict control.

Accessibility: The path from the car park into and around Waun Capel Park is fully accessible to wheelchairs and push chairs (see map) but sections of the woodland path are uneven and can be muddy in places.



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.



Waun Capel Wildlife Walk

A circular walk from the car park at the end of Gasworks Lane off Bridge Street, where there are picnic benches by the river. The walk makes a circuit of Waun Capel Park and the castle mound, a distance of 1¼ miles / 2 kilometres that takes about an hour to enjoy. Parts of the walk suitable for wheelchairs and push chairs are marked on the map.

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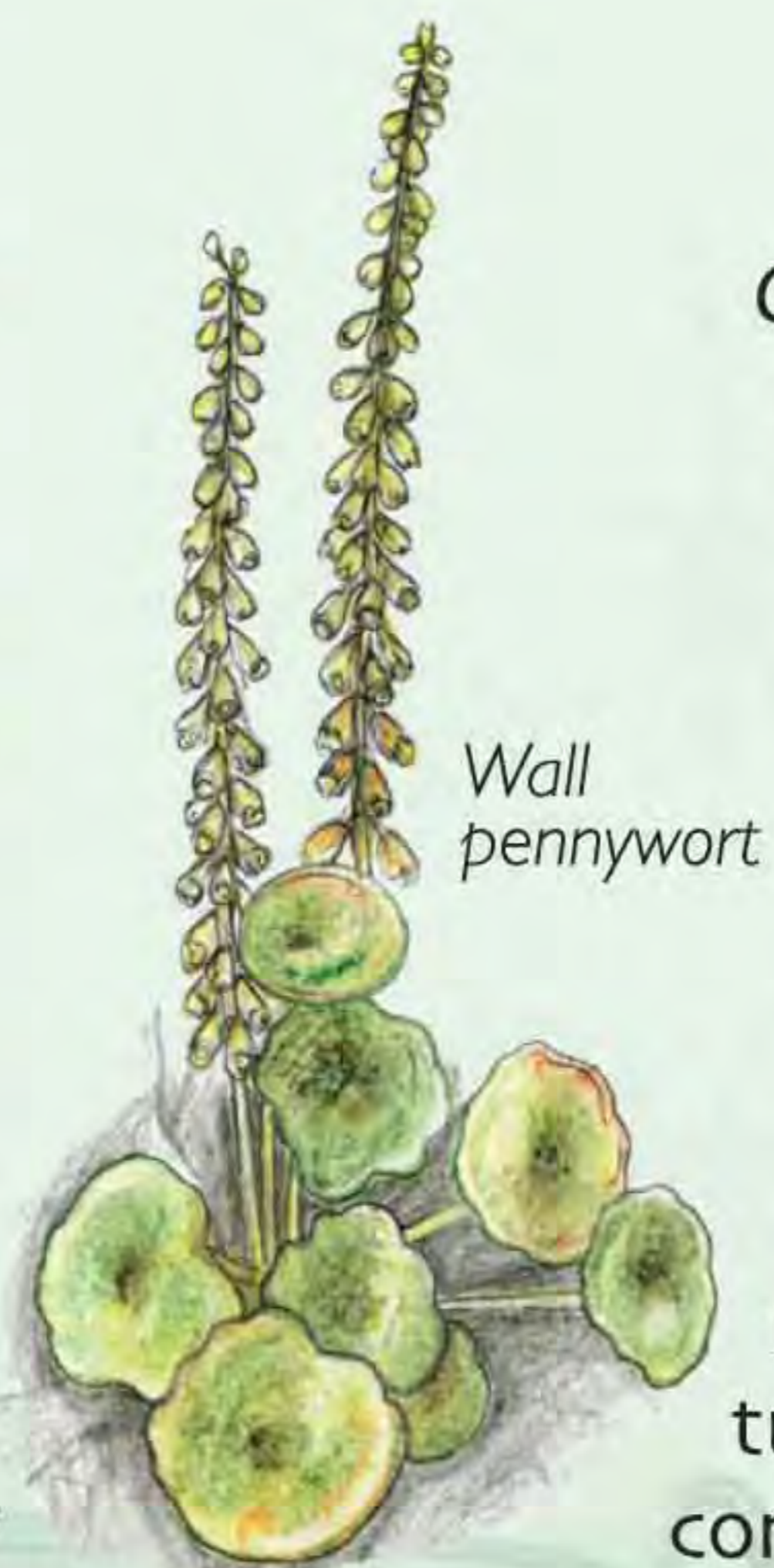
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The more you stop, look and listen
the more you will see!

The path starts by the interpretive panel below the castle mound where the south facing rocky cliff is warmed by the sun and is a favourite basking place for warmth loving insects such as comma and red admiral butterflies. Look for plants like wall pennywort, wood sage and sheep's sorrel that grow in the rock crevices and the variety of crusty lichens and tightly growing mosses on the otherwise bare rock – an unusual wildlife rockery right in the town.



Wall pennywort

Cross the bridge and turn right to follow a delightful woodland walk that will take you along the west bank of the river. Nesting boxes along the way are occupied annually by pied flycatchers, blue and great tits, the bat boxes occasionally by long-eared bats. Silver birch, alder and oak trees will be seen and for the keen eyed, a woodland flora of bluebells, wood sorrel, enchanter's nightshade and a colourful and sculptural mix of fungi and toadstools. Surprisingly confiding, otters have been seen in the river here so stop a while by the river and keep watching.



Pied flycatcher ♂

Exit by the main park gate to bring you to the top of the castle mound. Today nothing remains of the castle, but the mound, with its level top and steep faces on three sides still has a commanding view of the river valley and ford below. It is well worth taking time to read the information sign about the castle's history, to walk around this ancient site and sit a while on one of the benches provided.

From the start of this walk the River Wye can be heard, especially when in flood and from the safety of the riverside walkway dramatic views of the river immediately open up. Through the fencing an attractive tumbling tributary will be seen on the opposite bank.



Grey wagtail

Dipper

This is a place to pause and watch for dippers and grey wagtails, beautiful little birds with charming displays of character as they bob and pick, flutter and fuss, about the mini waterfalls. Brown trout can often be seen here in the deep water.

Return through the woodland, either along the lower, level path or, after a few yards take the steep, narrow path up to and along beside the old railway line, giving a view across the surrounding countryside before descending again to the bridge. Returning over the bridge look across to the sloping grassy bank that runs up to the church yard wall. Tall Scots pine trees set off the church and are frequented by goldcrests and siskins that nest nearby. Continue a circuit of the park (see map) and take either of the paths that climb gently up and across the sloping bank.



Wood sorrel



Long-eared bat

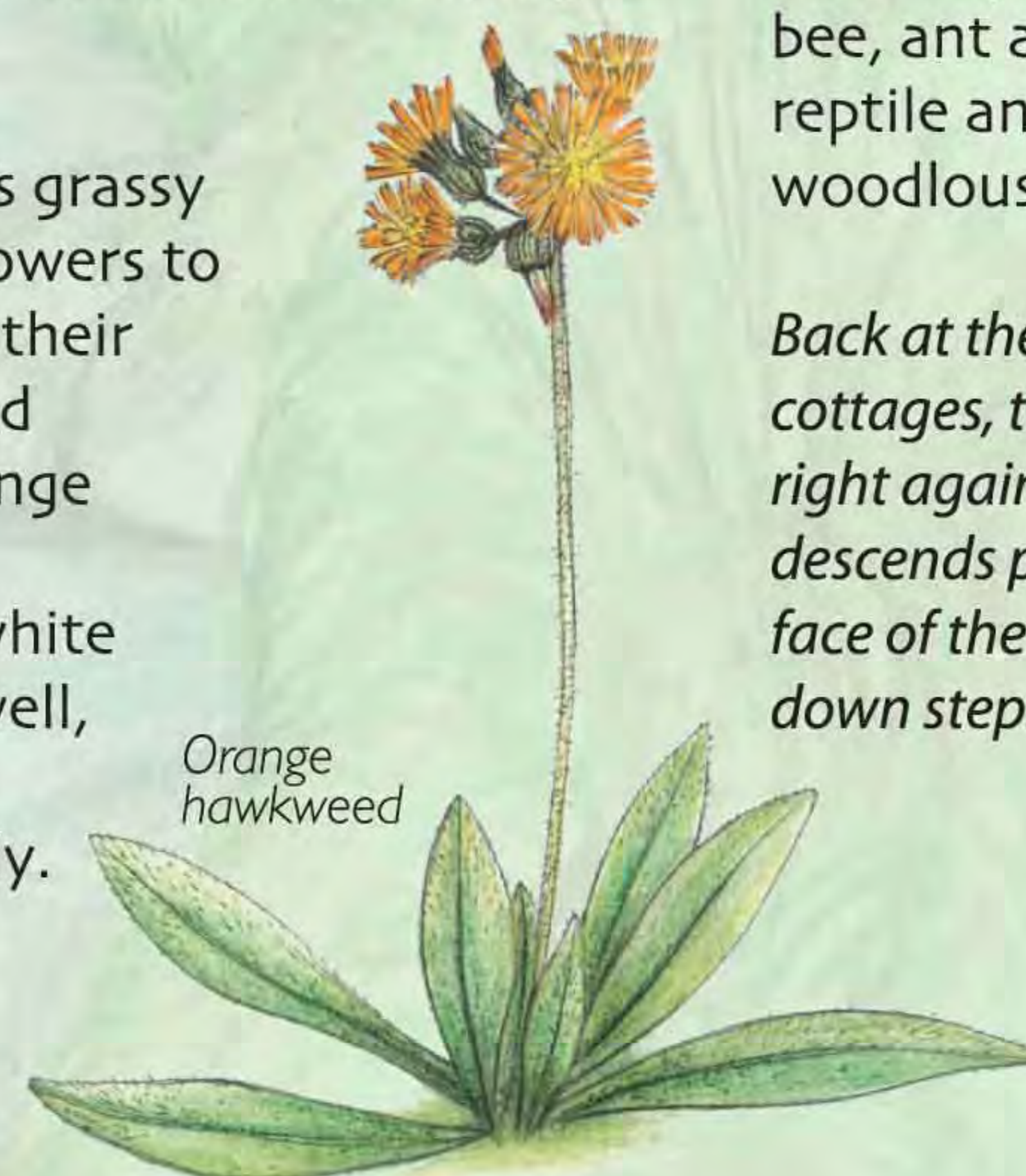
Here, quietly watching reveals as much as you choose to see, for all about you wildlife is there to be seen. The local natural history society, Rhayader by Nature, is undertaking a biodiversity audit of the town and in Waun Capel Park has recorded over 40 species of birds, over 100 species of plant, 80 species of moth and butterfly, 6 species of dragonfly, 42 species of wasp, bee, ant and fly, 5 species of mammal, 4 species of reptile and amphibian, 2 species of worm and a woodlouse!

Where the path opens out into the park the castle mound banks are scrub covered, a favourite haunt of small birds and butterflies. At the river bridge there is an opportunity to stand over the flowing water and wait for a dipper to appear on rocks below and take in the plants that manage to grow in the rocky flood zone that at times is covered by a torrent of water – tall reed canary grass, small willow bushes, marsh ragwort, yellow loosestrife and golden rod find this seemingly precarious existence an opportunity!



Yellow loosestrife

Infrequent cutting of the park's grassy banks helps a wide range of flowers to grow and put on a show with their attendant butterflies, bees and flies. Look for yellow and orange dandelion-like flowers of hawkweeds, small blue and white flowers of germander speedwell, yellow bird's-foot-trefoil and maybe a small copper butterfly.



Orange hawkweed

Back at the gate go between the cottages, take the first right and right again to a narrow path that descends past the shady rock face of the castle mound and down steps to the car park.



Small copper butterfly