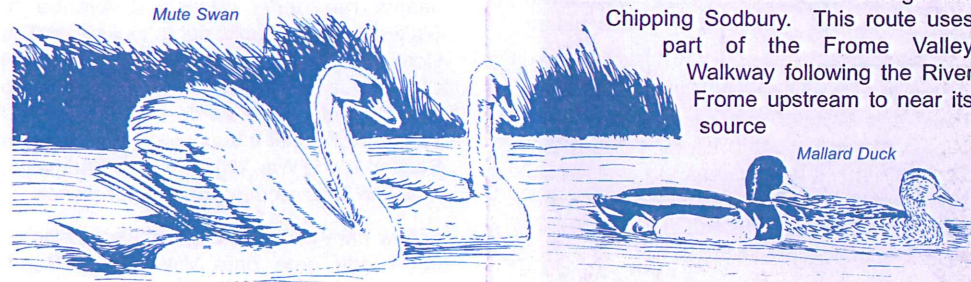


swans to feel comfortable there. Notice how much more colourful the males are than the females.

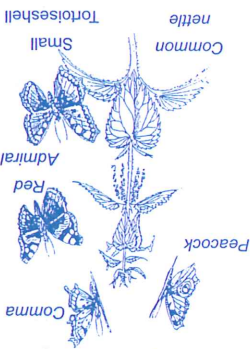
This lake, the river bank and the small thickets of trees are indicative of what is happening to nature today. Wildlife is being forced into pockets and islands of habitat, often much fought over by conservationists and grudgingly left by the developers of road, houses and factories. Only the more resilient species can cope with this kind of treatment and so variety is dramatically reduced.

Since nature reserves of all categories only occupy one per cent of the land use of Great Britain, we may have to resign ourselves to this decline in our native wildlife, unless we can persuade the policy makers to review their priorities. You can help by joining a conservation group, either locally or nationally, and making your voice heard.

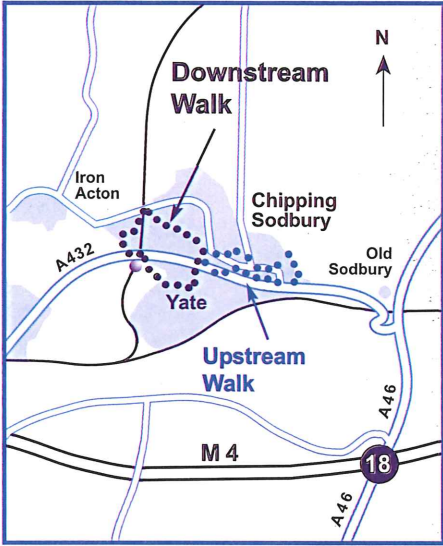


Continue inside.....

the left – a low stone wall and ditch used in the past to keep cattle in, without spoiling the view with a fence. Cross the field to rejoin the route. Leave the churchyard by the northern gate and follow the tarmac path across St Mary's field to Templar Road. This area used to be a water meadow until the north Yate development started in the 1970s. As you walk across St Mary's field, notice the trees planted in screening blocks. Wander through them before rejoining the path. This shows what can be achieved in a short time to create new habitats from what developers left barren in 1983. The choice of species is beneficial for wildlife for oak, willow, wayfaring tree and guelder rose, all provide food for insects and birds. When you get to the bridge over the River Frome, cross the bridge and turn left. The Frome Valley Walkway runs along the river bank from here to Goose Green Way. Along the banks of this section of the river there are several large alder trees. In spring they have a fine show of long yellow male catkins. Look closer and you will see that each tree also bears the small rounded, purple female catkins. The leaves are dark green, rounded and shiny, and the cone-like fruits are very distinctive.



Location Map



Upstream Walk

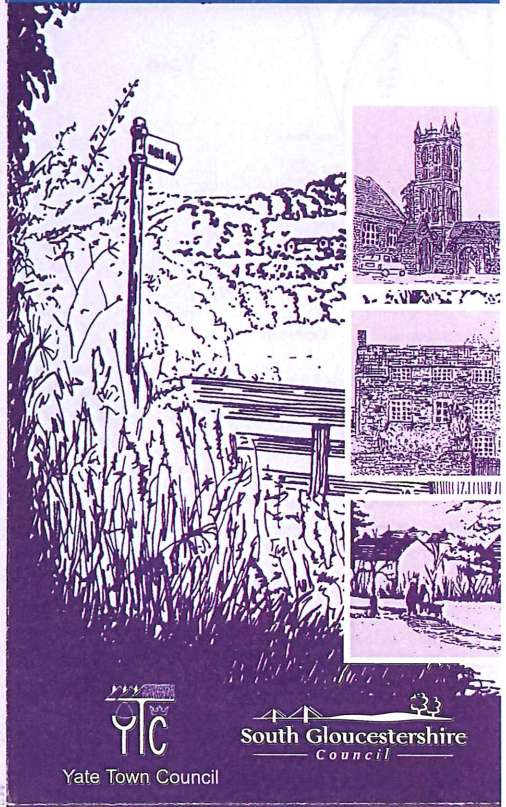
This is another walk in the same series covering an easy circular route around the eastern area of Yate and through into Chipping Sodbury. This route uses part of the Frome Valley Walkway following the River Frome upstream to near its source

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light you can read the names of many well known Yate families on the sides of the tombs: Whereat, Corbett, Cam, Orchard, Neale, Alway and Godwin. Look at the lichens on the gravestones as you pass through the churchyard. These simple plants grow slowly, spreading out to form circular patches of yellow, black and grey/green. By comparing the size of the patches with the dates on the stones you can get some idea of the growth rate. Lots of birds use the older part of the churchyard where they can hide and sing from the established trees and bushes. Expect to see blackbirds, thrushes, robins, tits and finches. Jackdaws flap round the Church tower and the tall Scots pines to the right of the path. Contrast all this activity and bird-song with the newer area of graves. Here there are no bushes or trees and the birds feel less secure in such open conditions. You can go on through the churchyard or go back to Church Road to join the river. If you do this, turn left on Church Road. At the bridge, turn left along a wooded path along the river bank. Across the river, the former lawns of the rectory sweep down with magnificent exotic trees. At the end you reach St Mary's field, watch for the ha ha on

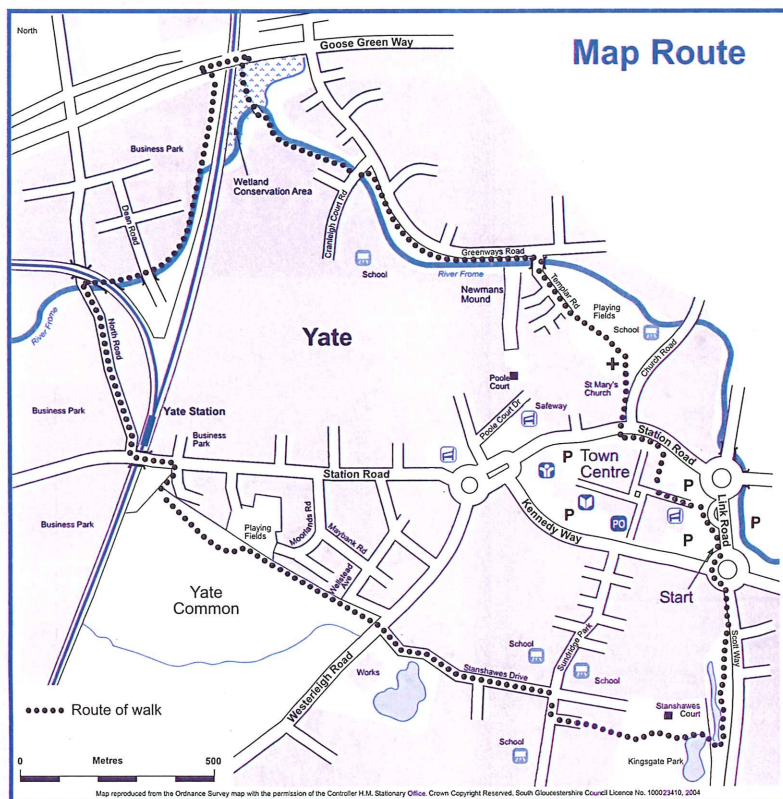


DOWNSTREAM WALK YATE



Designed by Graphics and Mapping 10356/05

Starting from the Shopping Centre, cross Station Road and walk to the White Lion. The White Lion was built in the sixteenth century, but few old features survive. Turn into Church Road, the main turnpike road from Yate to Wickwar. Local clay roads were muddy throughout the winter, so a turnpike trust was established to improve the road to Wickwar for through traffic, on payment of a fee. To your left are a cluster of historic buildings, Yate Heritage Centre, restored as a Millennium Project, was once stables for the White Lion. On your left you will see the Youth Centre. This was built in 1855 as the National School, through a Church of England scheme to provide village schools nationwide. It remained a school until the 1960s. The cottage opposite was the head teacher's house for quite some time and before 1855 was itself the school house. Go through the lych gate. St Mary's Church is Norman, although it probably replaced a Saxon church. The church was extensively altered in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but you can still see a Norman window in the south transept. Look carefully for scratch sundials on the walls of the church – and for the mass dial with the figure of an angel above the priest's door to the north of the church. An important collection of 26 chest tombs in the churchyard shows how wealthy the parish was in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Depending upon the



Map Route

trees to come into leaf and is often called quickthorn. There is a country saying 'cast not a clout till May is out' meaning it is not considered warm enough to leave home without a coat till the hawthorn blossom (May) is out. Since this usually coincides with the month of May, there is much discussion about which may be meant.

Wheelchairs can go along the pavement of the bypass and turn left at the traffic lights, into North Road following the route again at the bridge.

Along with reeds, rushes and sedges look also for clumps of leafy comfrey. The flowers can be white, purple, pink or blue. The plant used to be called bone-knit because ancient herbalists believed that the roots grated into a mash and applied to broken bones would help them to mend.

Stinging nettles are common wherever there is rough vegetation. The nettle stings because when touched, minute hairs on the leaves and stems are broken off releasing an acid which causes a skin rash. The stings do not affect the red admiral, small tortoiseshell, peacock and comma butterflies. They all lay their eggs on the nettle and the caterpillars later feed on the leaves.

Cross Cranleigh Court Road. Follow the tarmac riverside footpath along the north bank of the river, south of Oak and Ash Close. The path leaves the houses behind and crosses two meadows towards the railways bridge.

Just before climbing the path onto Goose Green Way you will cross a piece of land bounded by a road, an industrial estate and housing. This low lying area is kept to provide a flood plane for the river in winter and has been specially planted with species that like wet feet. Despite its location, this area of rough grass and bushes of hawthorn and blackthorn

is a good place to pause and look for wildlife. In the grass there will be grasshoppers, spiders, voles and field mice. The many teasels are sure to be visited by goldfinches who acrobatically gather seeds.

The thickets are mostly blackthorn – be careful for it has a nasty thorn. In autumn the sloe berries cover the bushes with a blue black sheen. The hawthorn is one of the first

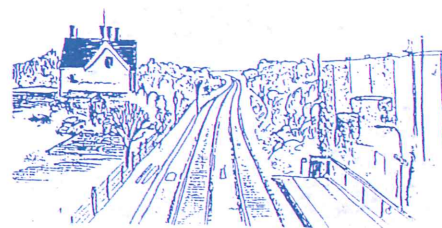
An inn used to stand on the junction of Broad Lane and Watery Lane, just beyond the bypass bridge over the railway. Called the Colliers Arms, it lay between the coal-mines behind you alongside the railway, and the coal mines along North Road, a very popular, but none too salubrious spot!

Turn left over the railway, then turn left again following a sloping tarmac path back down to the riverside. The path runs between the river and a landscaped mound – behind it lies the industrial estate, but this is a tranquil spot, removed from the bustle of Yate life.

Here the river is slow flowing with many rushes growing on its banks. About a mile on, climb over a low stone wall into North Road, Yate. (This could be difficult for some people without assistance). The railway bridge just to your right was part of the Midland Railway branch line to Thornbury. Now it only carries the line to Tytherington Quarry.

From here, go under the railway bridge and turn left onto North Road. On your right are a row of cottages and a wooden chapel. North Road Chapel was built for miners, as was the row of cottages – called Jubilee Terrace to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee. At the southern end of North Road the factory on your right stands on what was Stover Common. Turn left onto the railway bridge, crossing the road at the pelican crossing.

The railway line towards Yate was founded by a wealthy Coalpit Heath collier to take his coal to Bristol. The Bristol end opened in 1835 using the GWR broad gauge. It was the first railway into Bristol, beating the Bath to Bristol line by 5 years. Yate Station was opened when the line was extended northwards towards Gloucester on 8 July 1844. The Brunel designed station shed and station master's house and turntable bay survive from 1844, but the other station buildings were demolished after the station closed in 1966. The station reopened in 1989.



Looking south past Brunel's Station Master House

Turn right into Westleigh Close. About 50 yards on, you will see a gate on your right with a footpath through onto The Common.

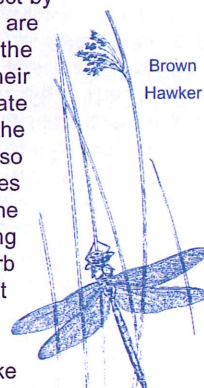
The Common is a lovely open space, much used by walkers, dogs and sportsmen. Unfortunately, this heavy use means there is less obvious wildlife. However, skylarks sing high above and surely there is no more evocative sound giving a sense of well being, than a soaring lark.

Much of the area now built up to your left was Eggshill Common. During the 1914-1918 war there was a German prisoner of war camp on Eggshill Common. Many people worked in the Eggshill Collier, whose coal seams run under Wellstead Avenue to Blakeney Mills. Public rights to walk on The Common were granted late in the last century. It survived as a gorse and scrub area owned by the Lords of the Manor of Westerleigh, until it was ploughed up in the Second World War 'dig for victory' campaign, resulting in its modern, open appearance.

Follow parallel to the edge of The Common up to the gate onto Westerleigh Road. Cross Westerleigh Road and go into Stanshawes Drive. Continue along Stanshawes Drive where it narrows to a footpath. Notice the two old houses on your right. These were the gatehouses to Stanshawes Court. Occupiers had to keep a watch for carriages coming along the drive and rush out to open the gates. Walk up what was the long drive to Stanshawes Court. When the footpath reaches a main road at right angles to Sundridge Park, cross the road and turn right. After a few yards, turn left into Elmwood.

Straight ahead is the gate into Kingsgate Park. Go through the park to the far corner, past the lake, looking at Stanshawes Court itself on the left. Go out through the gate and turn left along Scott Way, returning to the Shopping Centre.

Kingsgate Park is very special. A colony of greater crested newts live in the newt ponds making it a site of national importance, for this species of newt is on the endangered species list and is protect by law. Unfortunately, you are unlikely to see the amphibians, but their presence does indicate the good health of the newt ponds. You will also see many other species of plant and animal in the lake. Early morning visitors may well disturb a heron from his patient stare at the water for the suitable fish to stab with his dagger-like beak. The lake is also large enough for mallard ducks and



Brown Hawker