

DAEDA'S WOOD

Milton Road, Deddington

DAEDA'S WOOD is the first of 200 Woods on Your Doorstep in England and Wales: a Woodland Trust millennium project supported by the Millennium Commission among others (Daeda was a Saxon who lived in about the 10th century; the name Deddington derives from Daeda and 'tun' meaning settlement). The nine-acre arable field was bought by the Woodland Trust, assisted by substantial contributions from local residents, many of whom helped plant the 3,500 trees in November 1996 and, later, sow the seeds for a wild flower meadow.

The contorted northern boundary is formed by the River Swere, so the trees planted had to be suitable for a sometimes wet terrain: ash, five species of willow, oak, alder, grey and black poplar, aspen, downy birch, osier, hawthorn, blackthorn and guelder rose.

A stretch of path gives wheelchair access and there are two seats. However, Daeda's Wood will be allowed to develop as naturally as possible: so expect to see grass and rank vegetation left to provide habitats for insects and birds. When the trees are mature enough to create a canopy this will change the habitats again. Several grass rides wind through the site.

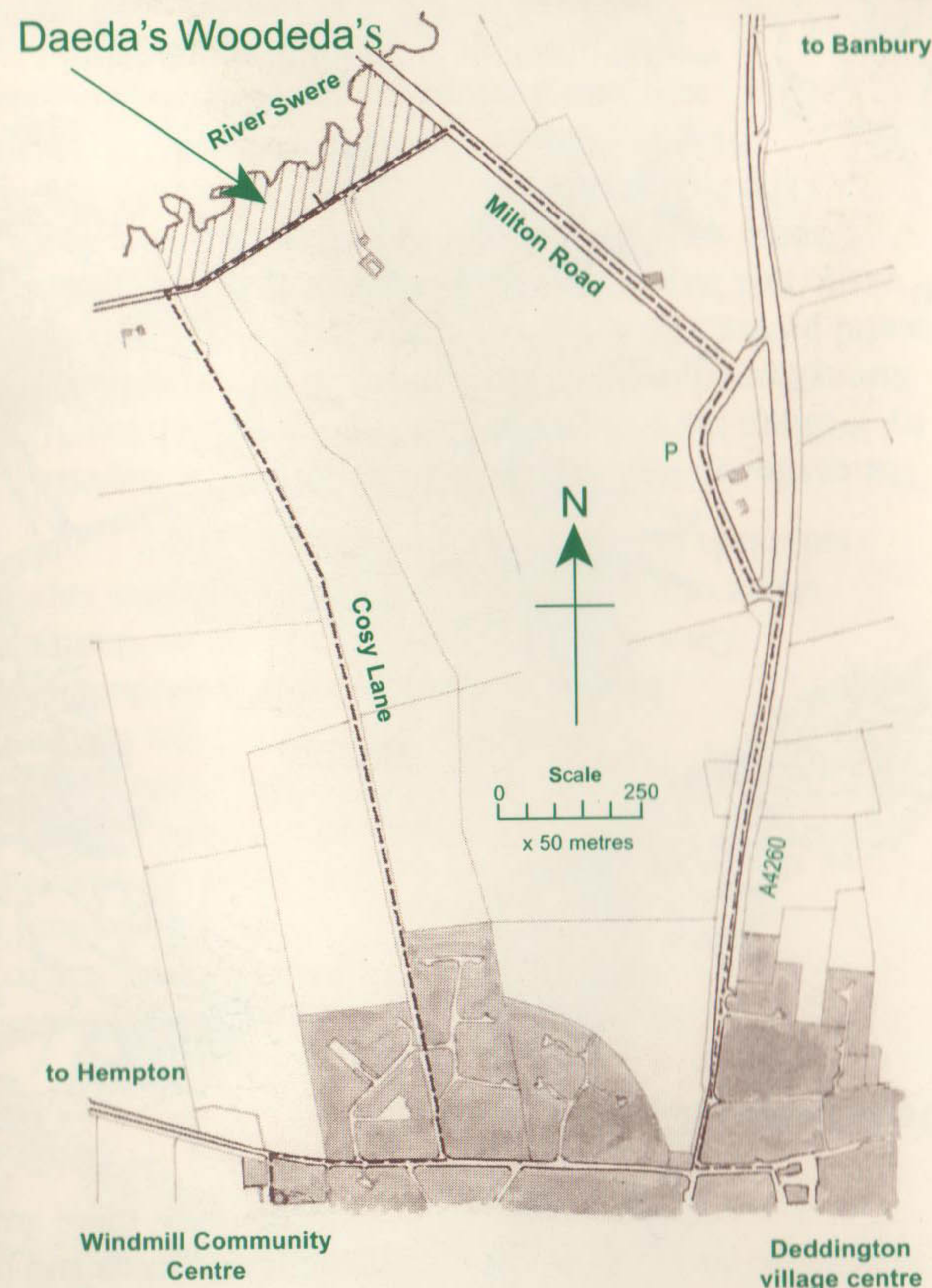


Kingfisher

The variety of wild flowers will increase and change as the wood develops. From spring you can expect clumps of white campion, pink threads of delicate ragged robin, the bold ox-eye daisy; later, lovely mauve clusters of meadow cranesbill, purple knapweed, the scarlet splash of poppies, and waving banks of rosebay willowherb. Later still there will be the handsome rose-pink musk mallow, white or pink flowerheads of yarrow, and large white heads of angelica. Purple loosestrife will add their bright spikes to the Swere's banks, and water lilies drift in the stream itself.

The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Naturalists' Trust (BBONT) chose the Swere's banks as one of their sites for an otters' holt. Sections of the river banks are also home to the unusual beautiful and banded demoiselle damselflies.

There is already a wide variety of birds. In winter sizeable flocks of visiting fieldfare settle noisily in the mature trees, or on the surrounding fields. Along the river you may see



the brilliant flash of a kingfisher, the flurry of mallard or moorhen, or a heron at lift-off. Flocks of yellowhammer are ever present; often tree sparrows or groups of long-tailed tits flit through the trees. Usually there's a kestrel on the hunt, possibly a great spotted woodpecker. As the trees grow there should be increasing summer populations of warbler – willow warbler, chiffchaff, blackcap, garden warbler. And, who knows, perhaps one day a nightingale.

See also *Deddington Circular Walk*, leaflet No. 7 in the Cherwell District Council Circular Walk series.

This leaflet forms part of the Mapping the Millennium series, produced by Deddington Map Group and funded by Rural Action. Other subjects: Churches and Chapels, Where to Eat and Drink, Historical Characters, Fields and Farms, Town Walk.

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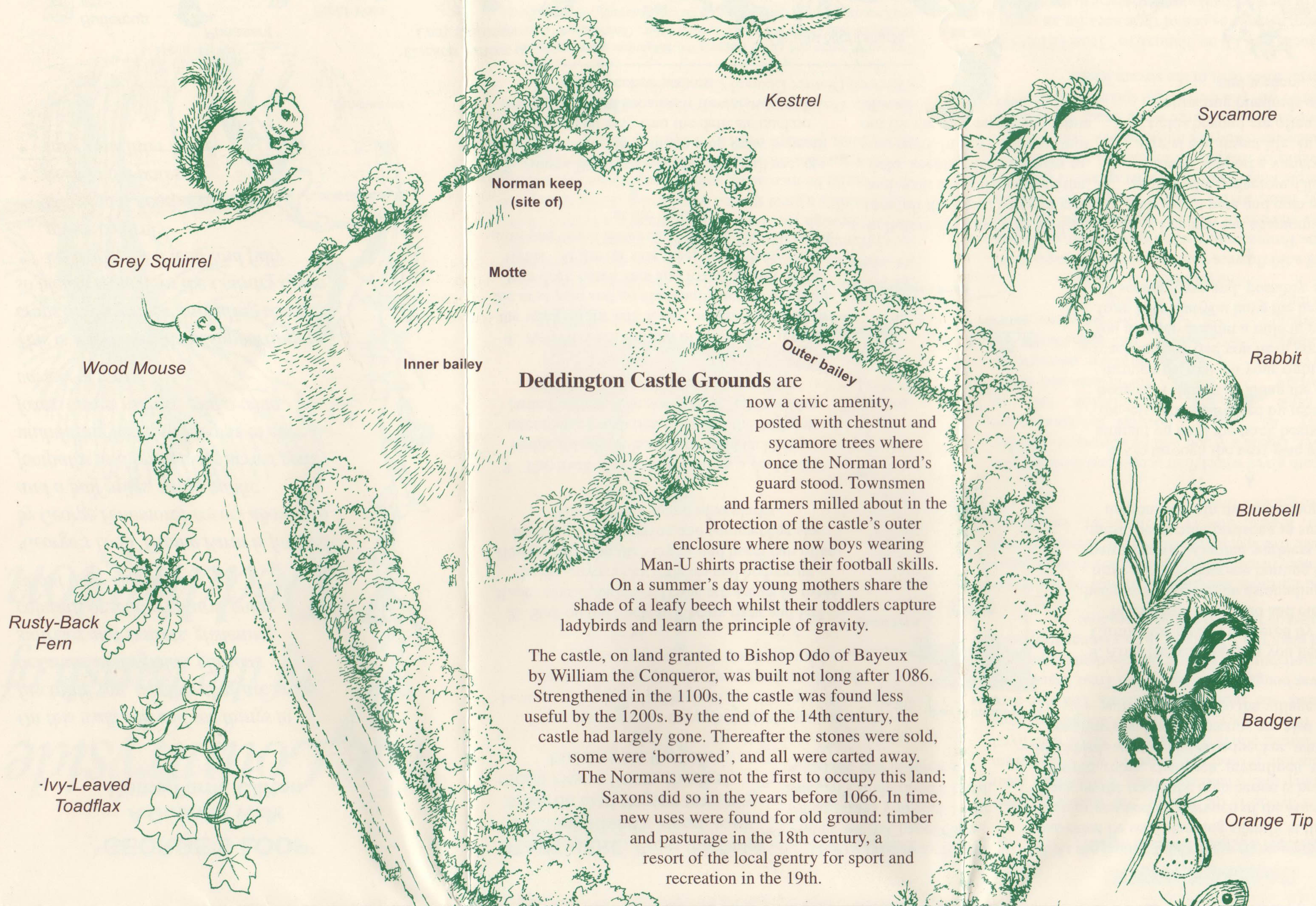
The Stone House, Market Place, Deddington, Oxon OX15 0SD

The Countryside of the Parish of Deddington



MAPPING THE MILLENNIUM

DEDDINGTON CASTLE GROUNDS



Deddington Castle Grounds are

now a civic amenity, posted with chestnut and sycamore trees where once the Norman lord's guard stood. Townsfolk and farmers milled about in the protection of the castle's outer enclosure where now boys wearing Man-U shirts practise their football skills.

On a summer's day young mothers share the shade of a leafy beech whilst their toddlers capture ladybirds and learn the principle of gravity.

The castle, on land granted to Bishop Odo of Bayeux by William the Conqueror, was built not long after 1086. Strengthened in the 1100s, the castle was found less useful by the 1200s. By the end of the 14th century, the castle had largely gone. Thereafter the stones were sold, some were 'borrowed', and all were carted away.

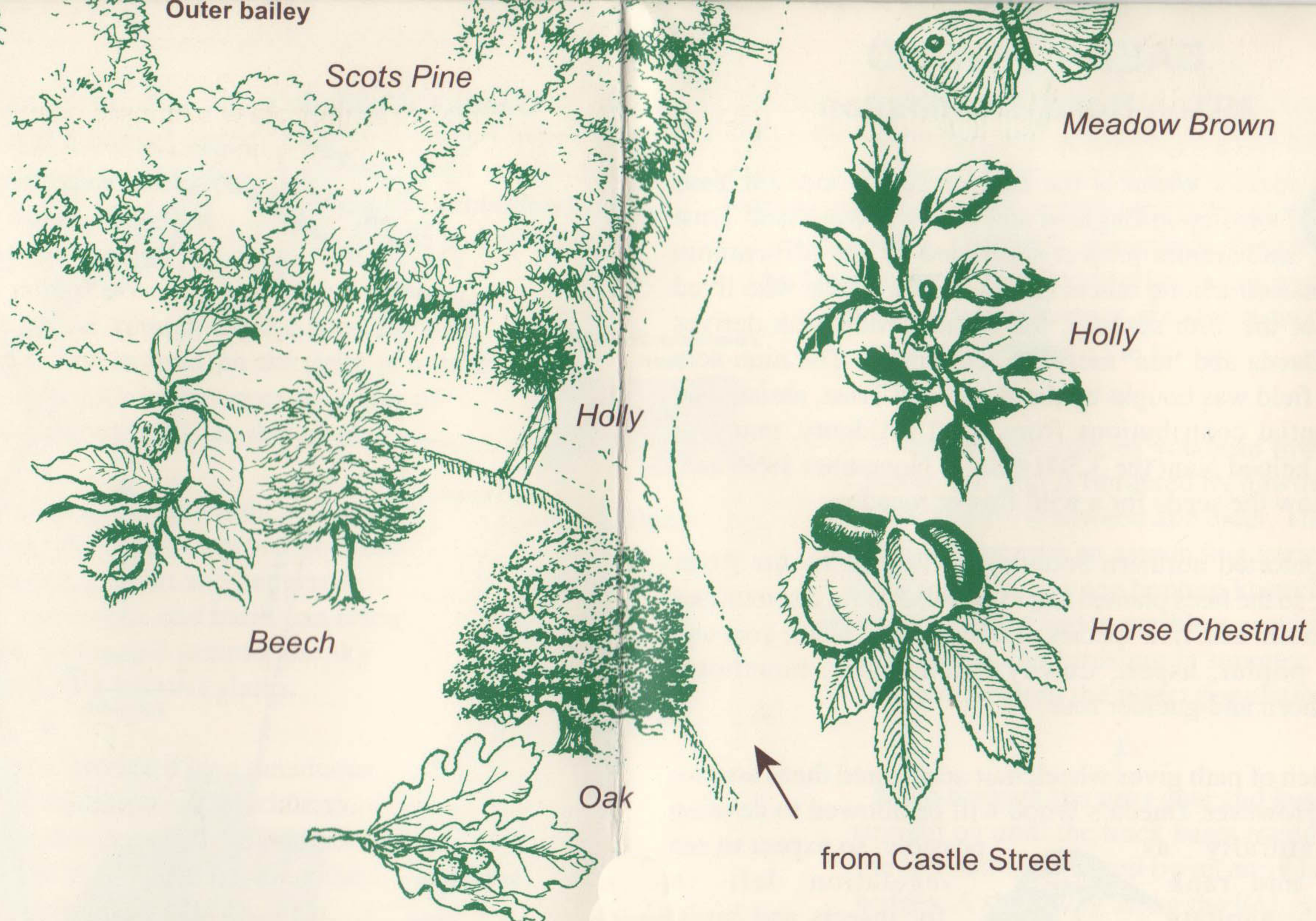
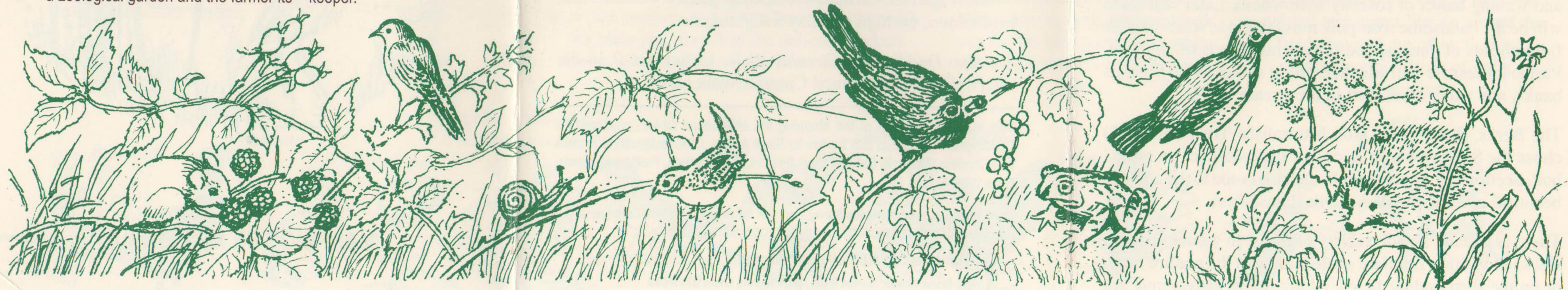
The Normans were not the first to occupy this land; Saxons did so in the years before 1066. In time, new uses were found for old ground: timber and pasturage in the 18th century, a resort of the local gentry for sport and recreation in the 19th.



Deddington's Hedgerows

Insects, birds, and wild mammals are more abundant where hedges have a mixture of trees and shrubs, are wide and densely packed with vegetation, run for long distances without gaps, and connect with other hedgerows of the same kind. There is more wild nature in the 870 or so hedgerows of Deddington parish than in its few wooded sites.

If you get down on your knees and take a hedgehog's view, the bottom of the hedgerow is a hobgoblin's world of crisscrossing branches, spiny passages, thick leaf mould, new stems from old stumps, and worms and beetles. The hedgerow is a zoological garden and the farmer its keeper.



Surprisingly, there are 23 kinds of herbaceous plants in the Grounds, including bluebells and lords and ladies; 26 species of trees and shrubs, including elm, willow, ash and pine; and 3 species of ferns. The land is well suited for uses other than natural history. There is a daredevil's run, on the northern embankment, where sledges make their way on the first snowfall; elsewhere, a tall chestnut tree lends a strong arm to boys who leap into space on a dangling rope; and every day, dogs bring their keepers here to enjoy the air and the special spirit of the Castle Grounds.

'GEORGE'S LOOP'

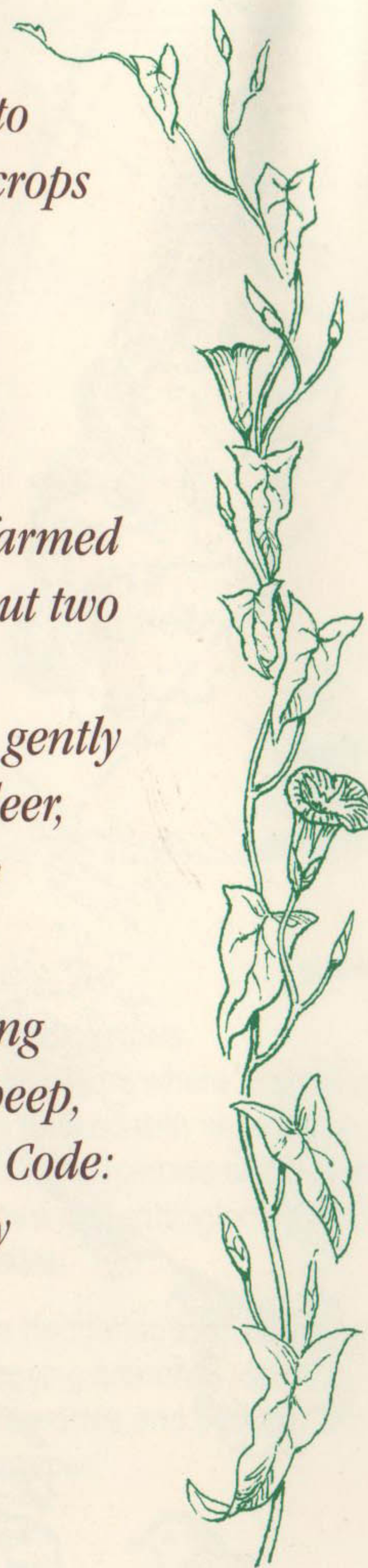
A Country Walk Home Farm, Clifton

On this walk you will see things to fascinate you, whether they are crops or lambs in the fields, glorious sunrises and sunsets, glistening cobwebs or wild creatures going about their business.

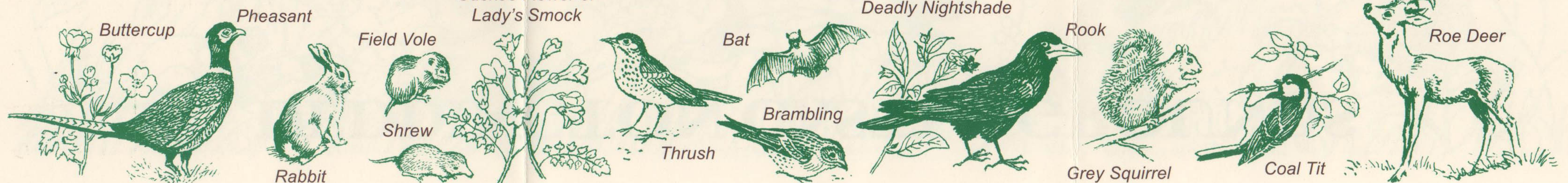
'George's Loop' (Home Farm is farmed by George Fenemore) covers about two and a half miles, using public footpaths and bridleways across gently undulating farmland, home to deer, foxes, hares, rabbits, and a wide variety of birds.

This is a working farm, supporting crops and livestock, including sheep, so please remember the Country Code:

- keep dogs on a lead and fully under control;
- close gates behind you;
- keep to the paths;
- take your litter home.



Bindweed



START HERE: From the Duke of Cumberland's Head, walk towards Deddington until you reach Home Farm, the last building on the left.

1. Enter the farmyard through the last gate and walk between the barns. Just beyond, on the right, is a small copse – look for jays in the upper branches of the trees, and squirrels on the ground.

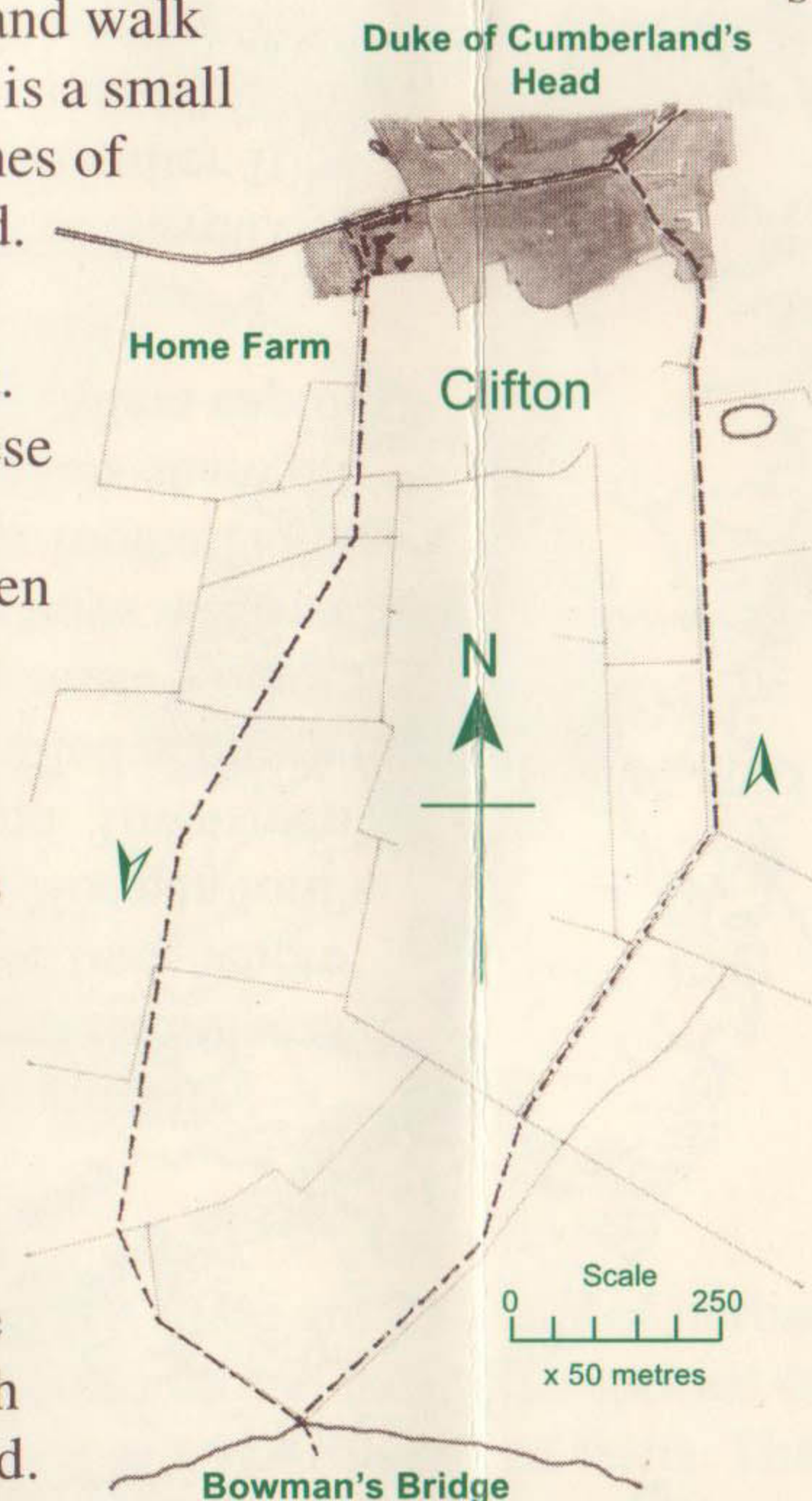
2. Stay on the track as it bears right and left. Rape, wheat, barley or beans are grown in these fields, cowparsley, grasses and hedgerow flowers grow on the verges, and hares can often be seen here. In spring and summer the sky fills with the sound of skylarks.

3. The track is now bordered by a deciduous hedge mainly of hawthorn and blackberry, interspersed with oak trees and the odd pollarded willow. The windswept fields on the right are regularly grazed by roe deer.

4. As you reach the end of the hedge, ignore the track on the left. Carry on straight through the next gate and go diagonally across the field. Roe deer, hares, rats and foxes inhabit these fields. At the far side, keep to the hedgerow until you reach Bowman's Bridge and the brook at the bottom.

5. Above Bowman's Bridge you will see, or hear, the rookery and in the long grass beneath the trees you may find the delicate cuckoo flower, so called because it flowers when the cuckoo arrives.

11. The bridleway finally comes out in Chapel Close, which brings you back to the Duke of Cumberland's Head, and the end of the walk.



6. Before you reach the bridge, turn left through a wooden gate and walk along the edge of the field, keeping the hedgerow to your right. In early summer look out for the tiny purple and white flowers of heart's-ease, or wild pansy.

10. At the fishing lake on the right, a pair of herons can often be seen standing silently at the water's edge, or perched on a branch of the island willow. Back on the track, the high hedge is home to the wren, robin, chaffinch, greenfinch, thrush, blackbird, wagtail and woodpecker, while swifts, swallows and house martins are also regular summer visitors to the village.

9. After the next gate, as you head towards Clifton, the path is bordered by hawthorn, blackberry, bindweed and elder. The hedgerow supports an astounding variety of birds and you may see hunting kestrels or sparrowhawks. Garden warblers provide the most spectacular birdsong in summer, and dragonflies join the insect population.

8. Go through the next gate and keep straight on until the track bears round to the left and is bordered by recently laid hedges. A short way along the hedge go through the gate on your right – if you reach the oak tree you have gone too far. You now have about a mile to go and it is from here that you have the best chance of seeing foxes and, possibly, a badger.

7. Poppies and chamomile are also abundant here and crab apple trees grow in the hedgerow. Old pollarded willows support a variety of plant, animal and insect life. In winter the fields beyond are often flooded, attracting hundreds of gulls and waders.