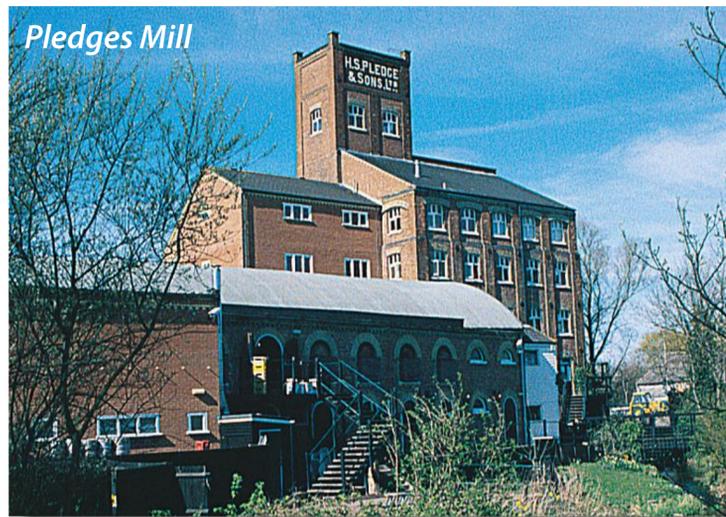


NORTH PARK

A tale of two rivers

North Park is bounded by the Great Stour and East Stour Rivers. They meet north of here, just beyond Mace Lane, where there be used to be a ford. Some historians claim that this was the ancient ford after which Ashford was named; others believe it was one at Beaver Road.



Pledges Mill

To the north of the park stands Pledges Mill. The history of milling on this site goes back to the Domesday Book of 1086, but the existing building, once owned by Lawrence Pledge, dates from 1864. In the 20th century, water mills declined due to alternative power sources, and by the early 1970s the mill lay derelict. Following a fire in 1974 it was renovated and turned into a nightclub.



Moorhen

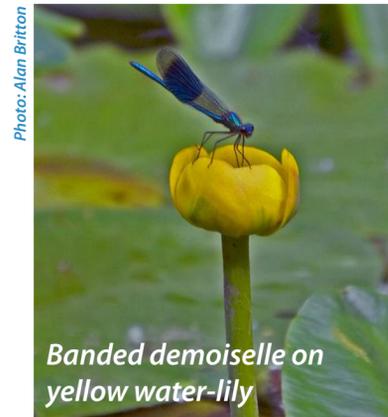
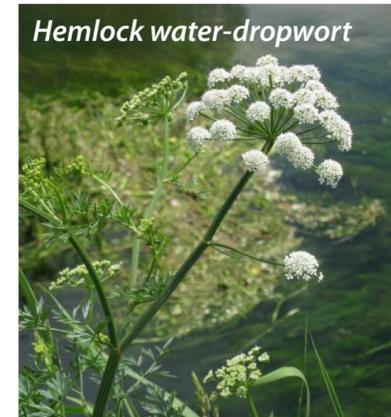


Photo: Alan Britton

Banded demoiselle on yellow water-lily



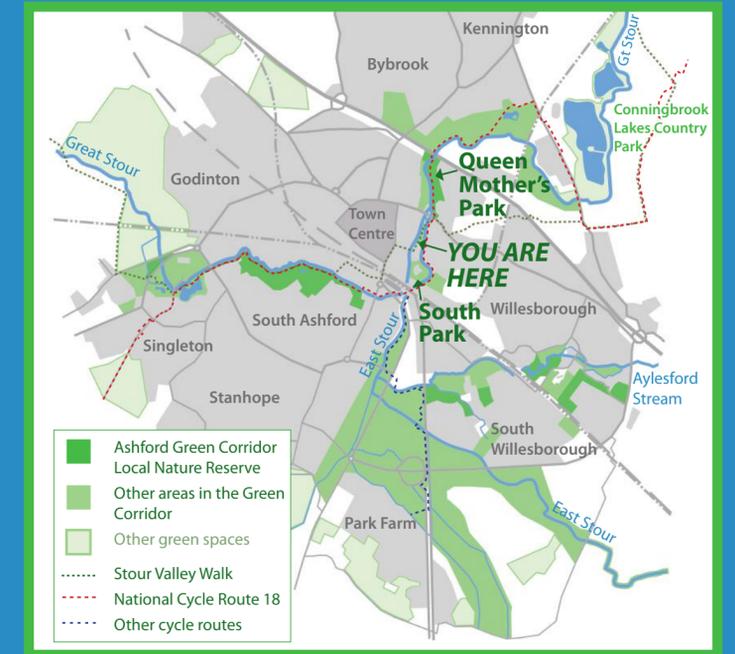
Hemlock water-dropwort

The rivers are excellent wildlife habitats, as celebrated in the sculptural seating by artist Steve Portchmouth. They are home to fish, damselflies and plants like the yellow water-lily. In spring you'll see wild flowers like water forget-me-not, hemlock water dropwort and cuckoo flower growing on the banks. This is also a good place to see moorhens searching for food in grassy areas. Recent work on one of the mill weirs, funded by the Environment Agency, will make it possible for fish and eels to travel upstream to spawn.

Some of the most distinctive features of the riverside are the pollarded willows. Managed in the traditional way, the crown is regularly cut back and re-grows to form the distinctive shaving brush shape. These magnificent trees are probably ancient survivors from when the park was an agricultural field, and pollards were a valued source of wood in a landscape with little woodland. Mature pollards like these are also superb wildlife habitats for birds, lichen and rare insects.



Pollarded willow



The Ashford Green Corridor

Discover one of Ashford's greatest assets!

Since the middle of the 19th century Ashford has expanded but land close to the rivers has not been built on, due to the risk of flooding and because the Borough Council has protected it as green space. Some areas are designated as Local Nature Reserves.

The resulting undeveloped 'fingers' of land, around the rivers Great Stour, East Stour and Aylesford Stream, reach right into the heart of Ashford. Collectively they connect to form the Ashford Green Corridor, which provides both people and wildlife with routes through the town and to the countryside beyond.

Queen Mother's Park

South Park

An **Ashford Green Corridor leaflet**, which includes walking maps and information on other areas of the Corridor, can be downloaded as a PDF from www.kentishstour.org.uk or by scanning the QR code.

