

OUR CLASSIC ROUTE, Exeter

A Sound Walk

Emma Welton, with James and Harry Banyard

December 25th 2020

⑨ Black-headed gulls shrieked.

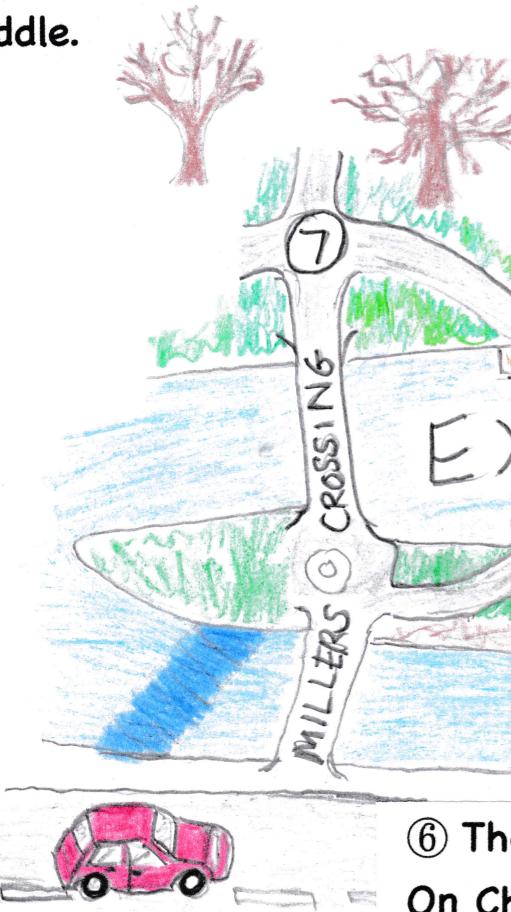
Wagtails chased, with precise tapping footwork.

Interspecies music: Crow and seagull yelled battle cries.

⑦ Can you find the ash tree?

(Listen for its dry keys shuffling)

Interspecies music: On Christmas Day, a human called, 'No! no! no!', cheerfully to a dog lapping up a puddle.



⑥ The wild weir grows thunderous. On Christmas Day it was balanced by gentler traffic than usual: the city on an inbreath. Cars rolled past slowly, each sound its own event.

① What sounds summon your ears, today? For me, it was the beech hedge suddenly shivering its dry winter coat.

② My wellies splashed through the permapuddle.

A dog's feet splashed, light-toed and quick.

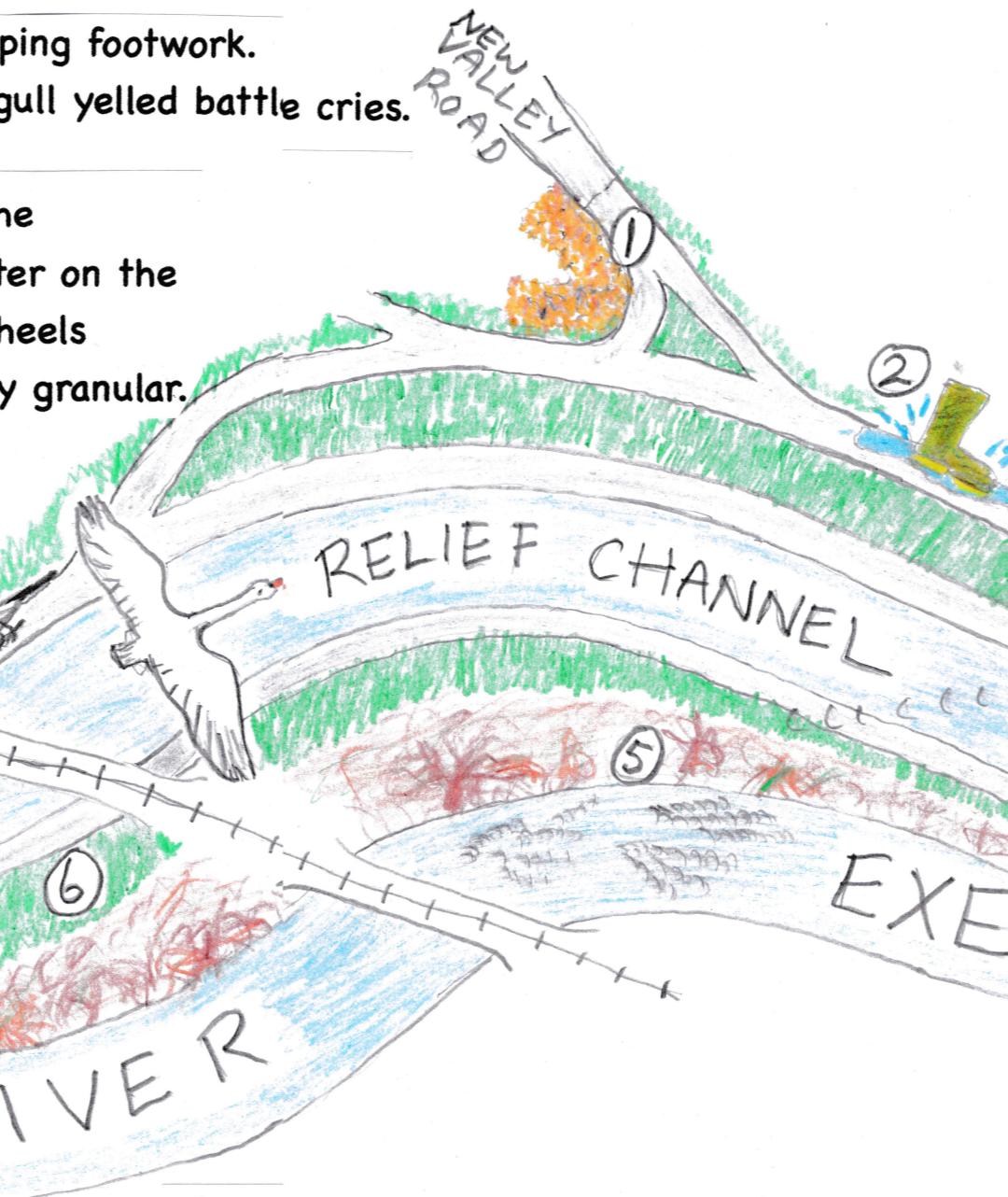
How do people sound, talking to each other in this landscape?

On Christmas Day children's shouts echoed within quiet.

③ Our walk's musical climax began when messy flapping filled the channel airspace: a swan. Closer, its forceful wingbeats pulsed out low throat whistles and sighs between feathers. Braking feet p-p-p-p-p-p paddled desperately to avoid crashing into its mate.

A cormorant landed nearby: 'plop'.

⑧ Our boots sucked in the sediment left by floodwater on the concrete path. Scooter wheels rolled through it, smoothly granular.



⑤ Wind rippled the river surface into frond-like patterns. I could hear its delicate sound-trace if I closed my eyes.
What is today's wind-river music?

④ Prattling family nonsense floated happily across the water. Close at hand, hidden in foliage, small birds trilled solos. Our feet squelched in sodden turf.

Distance: about 2 kilometres

