

# BRIDGES & TUNNELS, EXETER

A Sound Walk  
Emma Welton  
May 2021

① Long ago, crossing the river here involved splashing. Face upriver and listen to the view. Without turning, listen, particularly, to tyres on smooth tarmac.

② Go down the subway ramp (play the railings) to the three-way junction beneath the road, where sounds from above move from one tunnel into another. Sing the graffiti lyrics, directing your voice to the curved walls. Glory in resonance. (I hope people applaud.) Then take 'City Centre' exit.

③ Cross the grassy area between trees & through the old Exe archway. Imagine (enhear) people & animals splashing across this former river-bed. Today, traffic and wind in the willows say, 'shhhhhhhhhh'.

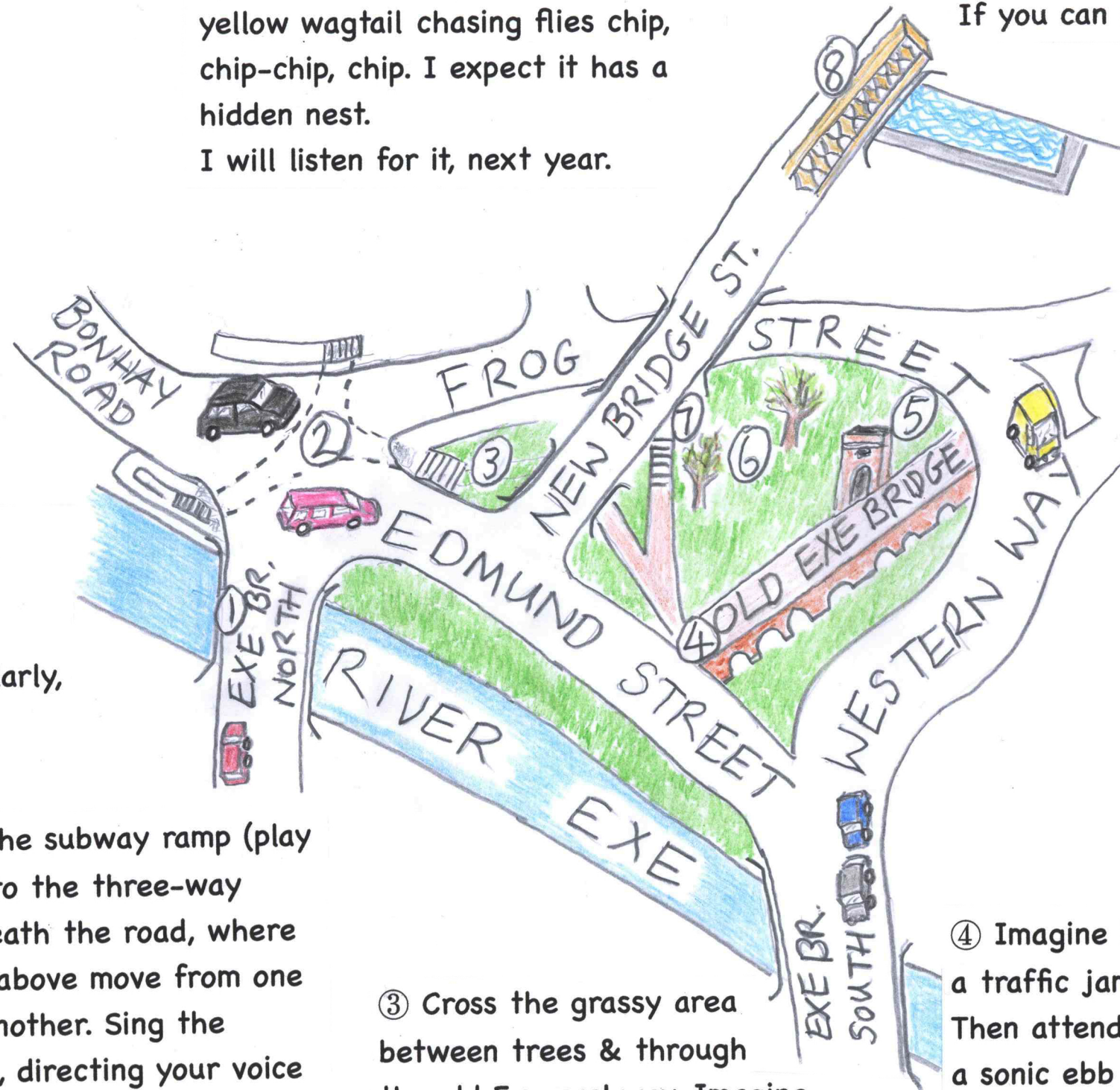
⑧ Look over the parapet to the exposed leat below. Sound bounces up: water trickling over stones, a yellow wagtail chasing flies chip, chip-chip, chip. I expect it has a hidden nest. I will listen for it, next year.

⑦ Heading up to New Bridge Street, find an ash wearing fresh green leaves and dry bunches of last year's keys (by listening, if it's windy). If you can reach, brush them with your fingertips.

⑥ When the first Exe bridge was built, its music began. For 900 years it crescendoed until the spring 2020 lockdown opened a window in time, sound and space. In blew other music, of the past and the future. Perhaps a 900 year decrescendo has just begun.

⑤ I heard two drakes chasing a duck through long grass, she quacking. And a car with windows open, full of women singing.

④ Imagine hooves and cartwheels on this paving - or a traffic jam caused by farmers droving cattle in 1300. Then attend to today's music. Traffic lights conduct a sonic ebb and flow. With eyes closed, follow one engine's crawl around the system. Then take refuge in St Edmund's tower.



Walk distance: about 500 metres.