

SILVER BIRCH, EXETER

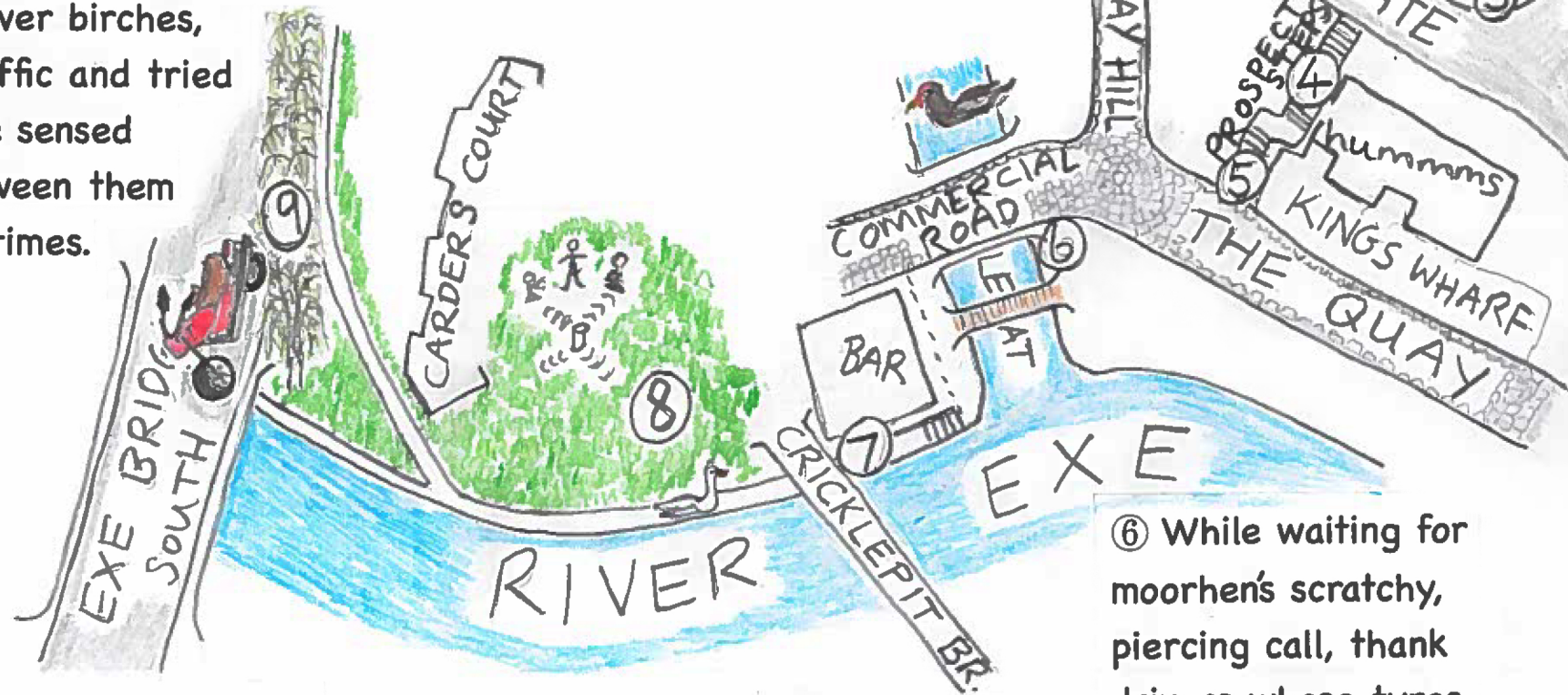
A Sound Walk for
Cygnet Theatre's 40th Birthday

Emma Welton (49) with
Elly Lee (22) and
Rosalind Williams (65)

A spring Sunday, 2022

⑨ Traffic, ever droning from the wings,
takes the stage - dominated by bikers
accelerating cataclysmically from green lights.

We stood with the silver birches,
listened deeply to traffic and tried
to hear the trees. We sensed
that the balance between them
will switch in our lifetimes.



⑧ Picnickers may be heard in
groups spread across the
riverbank, some with recorded
music that declares their taste
and their territory.

⑦ Listen closely to the throng.
Beneath the bridge, children and
ducks laugh, pigeons and parents
gobble & cooo.
Up on the bridge, face downriver.
Close your eyes and let the whole
scene float into you.

⑤ Dogs skitter up steps. Pairs
of gulls clamour from rooftops.
Chatter bubbles from outdoor
cafes - the hubbub of humans,
unthreatened.
Bicycle wheels spin.
A bus stops and sighs.
The weathered stone buildings
imprint their texture on the echo.

③ Dead beech leaves'
wintry rustle is muted
by new green growth.
All kinds of aircraft
roar overhead, making
conversation difficult.
We drew close together
and watched each
others' mouths to hear
each other speak.

⑥ While waiting for
moorhen's scratchy,
piercing call, thank
drivers whose tyres
clatter cobbles
pianissimo.

④ Hidden traffic above,
people below. Garden birds persist.
Kings Wharf's backstage (carpark)
hosts many electrical chords.
Hum in harmony with them
(or in discord if you prefer.)

① The spring leaves of a
silver birch flutter gently,
'sssss'. Stroke the peeling
bark tenderly.
Learn these sounds.
The sonic smoke of the ring
road pervades, but wren
holds the stage, declaiming
its territory with rolled
'rrrrrrrr's.

② Sounds spill between
neighbourhood and theatre:
tender onstage scenes may be
accompanied by jolly marching
music from Temple trumpeters.
Locals hear Cygnet's annual
Stage Combat Training Week
begin in silent focus, introduce
footwork & tinging swords and
climax with bloodcurdling howls
and dramatic dying sounds.

Walk distance:
about 600metres

