

CORNER
to
CORNER,
EXETER.

A sound walk
Emma Welton
July 2020

⑦ Stick your head into the tall, dark pine hedge...if you dare. It's a different world in there.

⑥ A family of telecoms boxes in a row of grey and green. Can you hear them working? What are they doing?

④ On weekdays the nursery school resonates with children's voices. The old, red bell hangs above, unring. Can you remember, or imagine, how it sounded when it last rang, in 1968?

② Sounds shift as you walk towards the inward corner to the left of the funeral directors. It's a Listening Corner! Once in the corner, turn to face outwards. Can you hear between the traffic?

⑨ This pavement end is as far as you can safely walk north from Exwick, these days. Facing outwards from the Listening Corner, I find the sound settles between cars.

⑧ After the roundabout, you're leaving the city behind. The high wall shelters you at first. By the 30 sign, sounds from across the valley might reach your ears: clangs, thuds, scrapes. I think it's an Iron Man lumbering around, but I never see him. Perhaps you hear something else.

⑤ Take a seat in the churchyard beneath the 200 year old Cedar of Lebanon tree. Cup your ears and look up, focusing on the wind through the pine needles.

The exterior church walls offer excellent Listening Corners. The ancient stones will embrace you.

③ The residents of Exwick Villas make habitats in their front gardens. Some habitats buzz with insects, some jostle with leaves, others are dwellings for cars. A sudden water trickle surprises from behind a bush. When the road is quiet, people linger, chat in the street. Is anyone chatting today?

① At the corner of Exwick Road and New Valley Road, a stunted silver birch sticks out of the new asphalt. Stand as close as you can to its trunk and listen to each sound beyond. Then try to hear everything at once.

