

# Exploring the landscape of Hereford City

with Nic Howes

**START:** Cross Three Elms Road at the pedestrian crossing and follow the path (Hurdman Walk) ahead towards the children's play area. On your left is an Environment Agency monitoring station that maintains an ongoing record of the height of the Yazor Brook's flow; the "hydrograph" produced may be seen at <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/station/4033>. Near the children's playground there is an interpretation board with some information about managing the Brook for the benefit of people and wildlife.

Keep walking along Hurdman Walk with the tree-lined Yazor Brook to your left with its grassy floodplain beyond. The next road you will cross at an offset pedestrian crossing is Yazor Road (**point 1**).

Continue along the path and note that at the first wooden bridge the Yazor Brook passes beneath you and at the next bridge you have reached the "splitting weir", which you will see over the right-hand parapet (**point 2**). At this point a channel (or leat) was dug in ancient times to feed the flow of the Yazor Brook straight ahead and into the moat beyond Hereford's City walls, entering the moat at what is now called Eign Gate, off the inner ring road. The old course of the Brook below this point was cut off from the flow of the Yazor and was renamed Widemarsh Brook, being fed by springs rising from gravels left by the last Ice Age and still having a flow sufficient to power four mills before entering the Wye. In the twentieth century the Widemarsh Brook was connected back up to the Yazor by means of the concrete splitting weir and the main flow now passes under the bridge at point 2. For maps and more detail on the changes described above you can download a pdf from <http://www.bartonshamhistory.org.uk/news/history-of-hereford-city-brooks>

Continue along the path with the

course of the Yazor Brook leat on your right. Redrow built the new housing estate beyond the leat in 2016/2017, on the site of Whitecross School, which had lain derelict for many years. As you pass security-fenced car parks on your left, look out on that side for a narrow path between the fences (**point 3**), heading for steps up onto a footbridge. As you turn left onto this narrow path, look right to see the Yazor leat disappearing into a culvert that takes it under Plough Lane and the Heineken works.

The top level of the footbridge provides a surprise panorama, particularly southwest towards the Black Mountains. Descend from the footbridge northwards to **point 4** where you meet Widemarsh Brook as it emerges from the Heineken works after flowing over the splitting weir at point 2. Turn right along Widemarsh Way, following the right bank of the Brook with a security fence close on your right. At the end of Widemarsh Way the Brook turns sharp right to pass under your path and you should turn right – across the abandoned railway line – and follow the alley ahead that leads to Prior Street (**point 5**). Before continuing straight down Prior Street to Edgar Street it is worth taking a short detour left down Millbrook Street to reach a bridge and view the Widemarsh Brook passing between back gardens. Millbrook Street may well take its name from Widemarsh Mill, one of four powered by the flow of the Widemarsh/Eign Brook on its short journey to the Wye.

Return to Prior Street and continue straight down it to Edgar Street and turn left along this to the next bridge over the Widemarsh Brook, just before the large church building. View the Brook approaching the bridge with back gardens on the left and the church on the right. Carefully cross Edgar Street and view the Brook flowing in an attractive, narrow green strip into Merton Meadow. Turn right towards

**Distance:** 4 miles

**Terrain:** Easy paths but one steep flight of steps.

**Start point:** Whitecross School on Three Elms Road

**OS Map:** Explorer 189

*This is a point-to-point walk that requires logistics to return to the start. Suggestions include:*

- Retrace your steps to the start
- Take two cars and drivers and leave car 1 near point 14 before driving car 2 back to the start, parking it, completing the walk and then driving back in car 1 to pick up car 2.
- Use the City's buses. For example, the 72 bus service connects Hereford City bus station (behind Tesco) to the bus stop on Kempton Avenue, opposite Bobblestock Co-op (which is a short walk from the walk start).

the new City Link Road junction and then turn left along this until you reach the turning left into the far end of Merton Meadow car park.

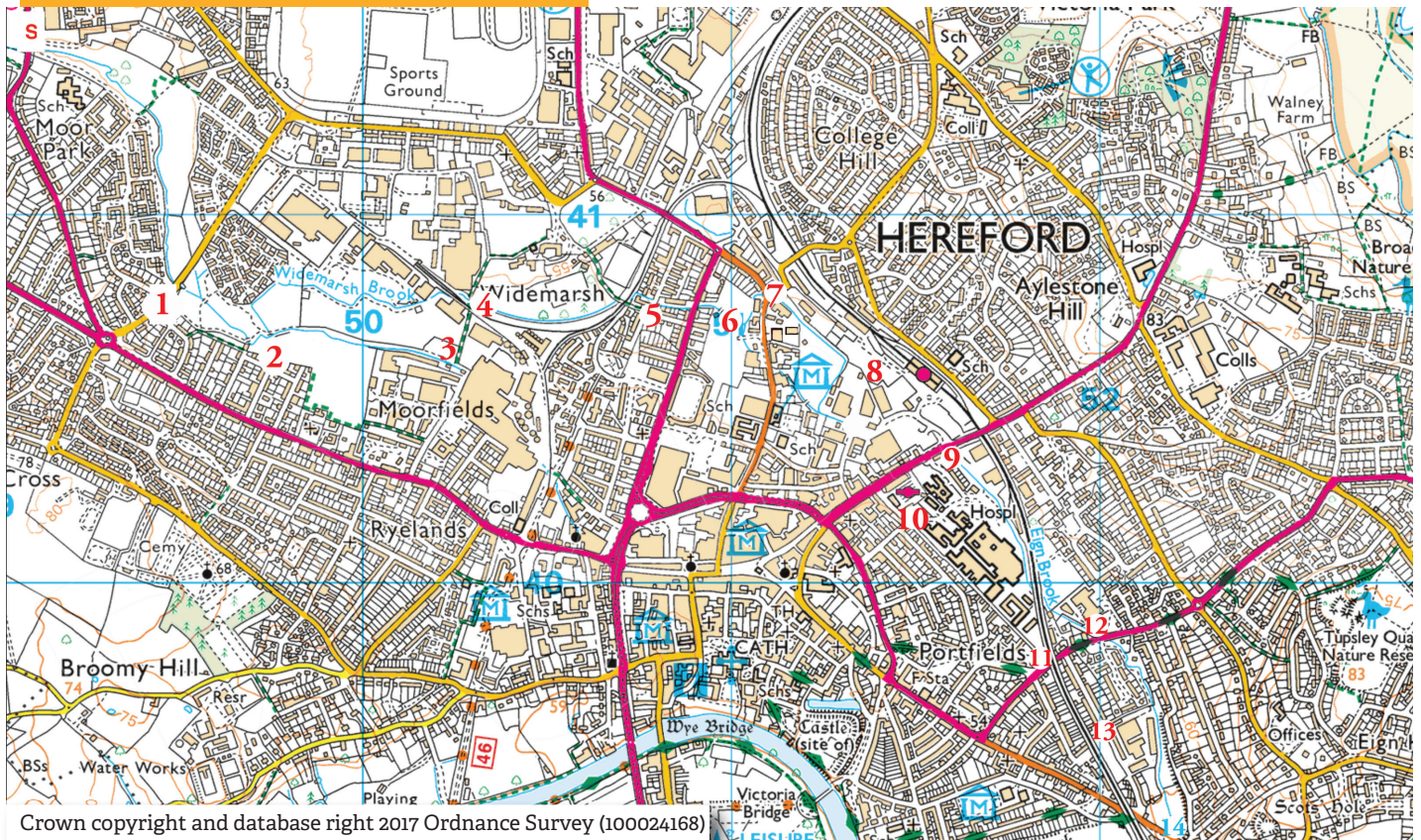
This area is part of the Edgar Street Grid and is scheduled for redevelopment. The extent to which you can explore the Brook here will depend on what form the redevelopment takes and how far it has progressed when you visit. You may be able to view a short willow-lined section of the Brook which is pleasantly incongruous amidst acres of tarmac (**point 6**); you may also be able to view the Brook as it flows close to the back of a large brick building that started life after the 1930s as a pub. A



A willow-lined stretch of the brook through Merton Meadow car park



# Wild Walks



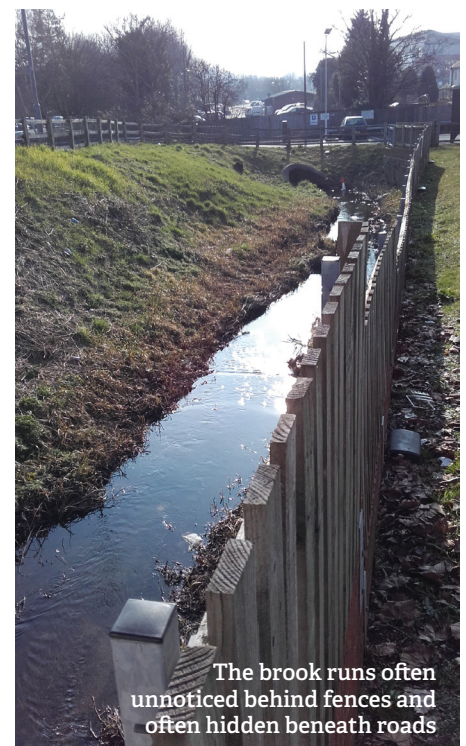
kingfisher was seen flying along the Brook in this area in the summer of 2017.

Return to the City Link Road and continue along it to where it crosses Widemarsh Street. Turn left down Widemarsh Street until you reach an old bridge with a stone parapet, immediately before a car wash site; this is the ancient crossing point of Widemarsh Brook (point 7). Turn back up Widemarsh Street, go straight across the City Link Road and continue to Coningsby Street, where you should turn left. At the end of Coningsby Street turn left along Canal Street and pause at the entrance to Jewson's yard; flowing towards you on your left is the Widemarsh Brook that enters a concrete culvert to travel beneath your feet (point 8).

The culvert takes the Brook underneath Morrisons supermarket and you should follow it at surface level by taking the pedestrian and cycle path to the right for a short distance to emerge near the front door of the supermarket. Carefully traverse the car park to the pedestrian exit that gives access to a pedestrian crossing over Commercial Road to KFC. Cross Commercial Road and turn left towards Aylestone Hill; you will soon cross Eign Brook beneath a brick parapet as it emerges from the culvert under Morrisons (point 9). Turn right into Brook Retail Park and recross Eign Brook via the vehicle entrance to KFC.

Cross the KFC car park and access Stonebow Road via the gap in the car park wall. Turn left and continue past the terrace of cottages, take first exit from the roundabout and locate the line of the Brook at the lower edge of the Hospital car park.

The Brook cannot be followed out of the car park, so it is necessary to retrace your steps to the roundabout and take the second exit (i.e. straight ahead) to access the Union Walk entrance/exit barriers to the County Hospital site (point 10). Turn left along Union Walk and follow it to eventually descend steps onto Ledbury Road (point 11). Turn left under the railway bridge and along Ledbury Road, past the site of Scutt's Mill just before the Texaco filling station forecourt and onto the bridge over the Eign Brook. You may wish to explore the Rose Garden amenity area beside the Brook (point 12) before crossing Ledbury Road to view another interpretation board. Follow the footpath on the right bank of the Brook with back gardens on your right. At the end of this grassy strip you have to turn right up a narrow footpath that emerges onto Foley Street at the entrance to Foley Trading Estate (point 13). Turn left and follow the access road through to Eign Mill Road and continue straight along this to the T junction with Eign Road. Turn left and continue along Eign Road to cross the last bridge over the Eign Brook (point 14). Upstream is the site of Eign Mill, Brookfield Veterinary Practice is on the



site of the Whalebone Inn and you may wish to explore the short footpath on the other side of Eign Road that leads to the Brook's confluence with the Wye.

Hereford Yazor Brooks Restoration Project (HYBRP) is keen to recruit citizens to join in with monitoring, planning, interpreting and managing the City Brooks. Please contact **Andrew Nixon** for details: 01432 356872 / a.nixon@herefordshirewt.co.uk