



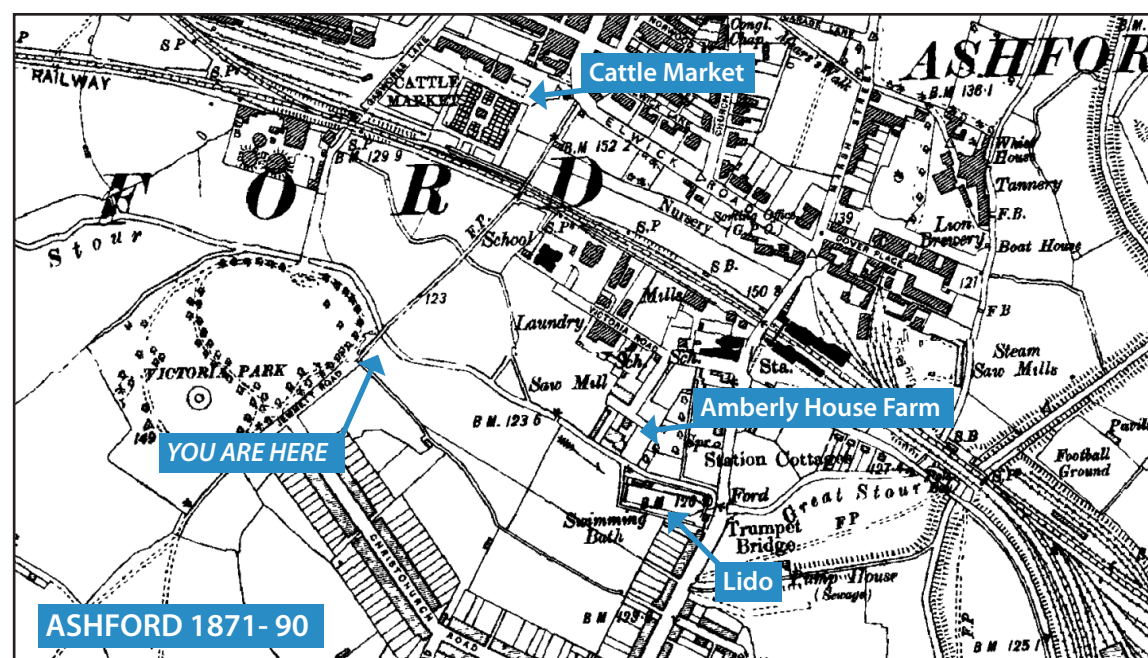
BOWEN'S FIELD

From livestock to lido and more

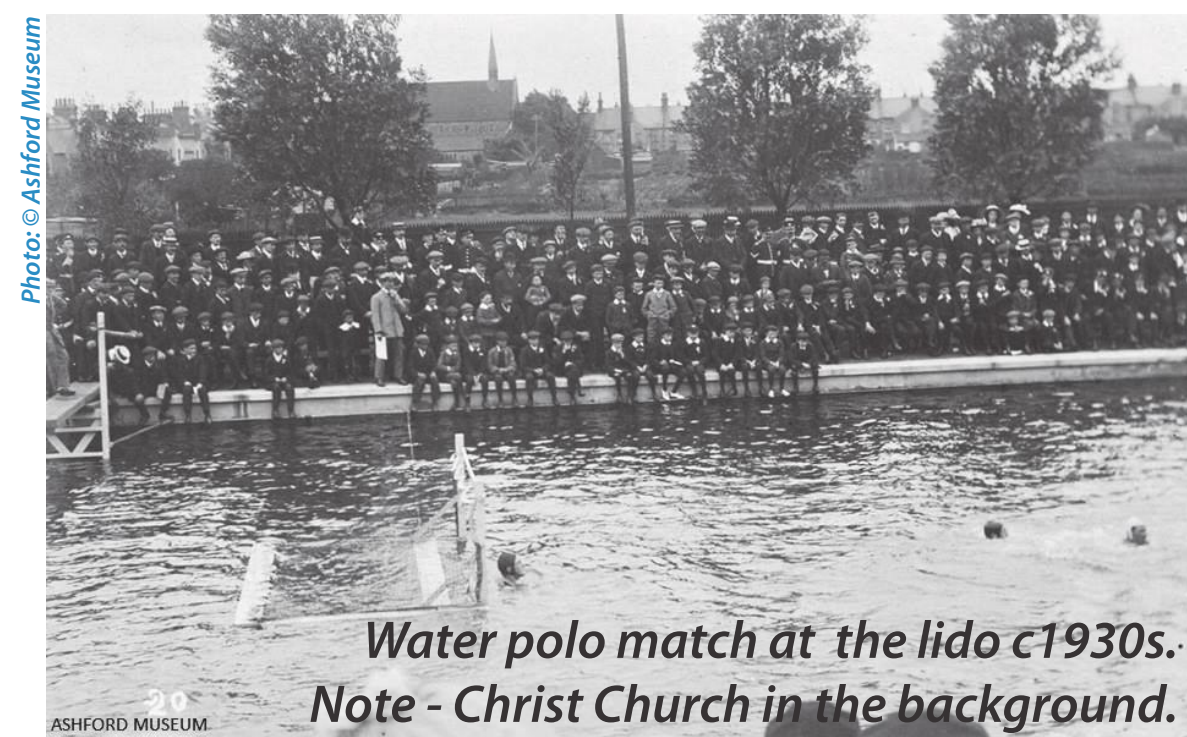
Here and there, among Ashford's industrial estates and busy roads, are little pieces of its much more agricultural past. Bowen's Field, named after the man who owned it - Sidney Bowen - is one such place.



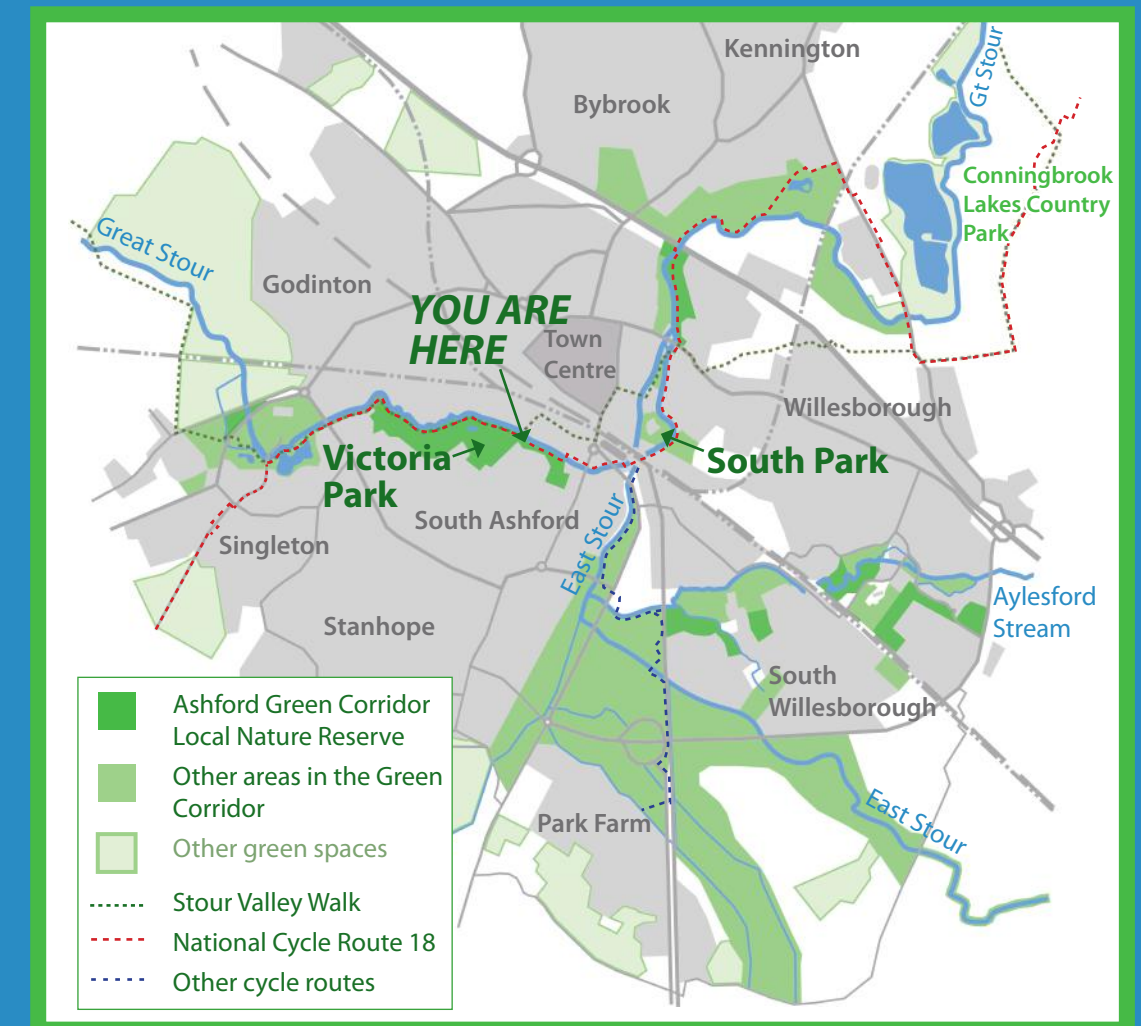
For much of its history, Ashford was best known for its livestock market, situated close to Elwick Road. Being near the market, Bowen's Field often became an overnight grazing ground for cattle or sheep in transit. Sidney Bowen would charge a fee for this agricultural pit-stop, but his main source of income was in trading and transporting animals, particularly horses. Bowen was based at Amberley House Farm, which once stood just across the river from here. When he passed away, Ashford Borough Council bought this land and erected the nearby memorial stone.



The old map shows the Victorian open air swimming bath or lido that once stood next to the river. When it opened in 1867 it was the largest in Britain. A local resident recalled that the water for the lido was pumped from the Great Stour and "...you often found yourself swimming with frogs and grass snakes!"



The latest chapter in the story of Bowen's Field sees it take on the role of a home for wildlife as the Bowen's Field Wetland Park. Making the most of its tendency to flood, and indeed to act as flood storage, wetland features have been created here – a large pond, reedbeds, willow carr and a network of ditches. They provide habitats for insects, newts, frogs, water-loving plants like cuckoo flower, and birds such as willow warbler.



The Ashford Green Corridor

Discover one of Ashford's greatest assets!

Since the middle of the 19th century Ashford has expanded but land close to the rivers has not been built on, due to the risk of flooding and because the Borough Council has protected it as green space. Some areas are designated as Local Nature Reserves.

The resulting undeveloped 'fingers' of land, around the rivers Great Stour, East Stour and Aylesford Stream, reach right into the heart of Ashford. Collectively they connect to form the Ashford Green Corridor, which provides both people and wildlife with routes through the town and to the countryside beyond.

South Park

Victoria Park

An **Ashford Green Corridor leaflet**, which includes walking maps and information on other areas of the Corridor, can be downloaded as a PDF from www.kentishstour.org.uk or by scanning the QR code.

