



BOYS HALL MOAT

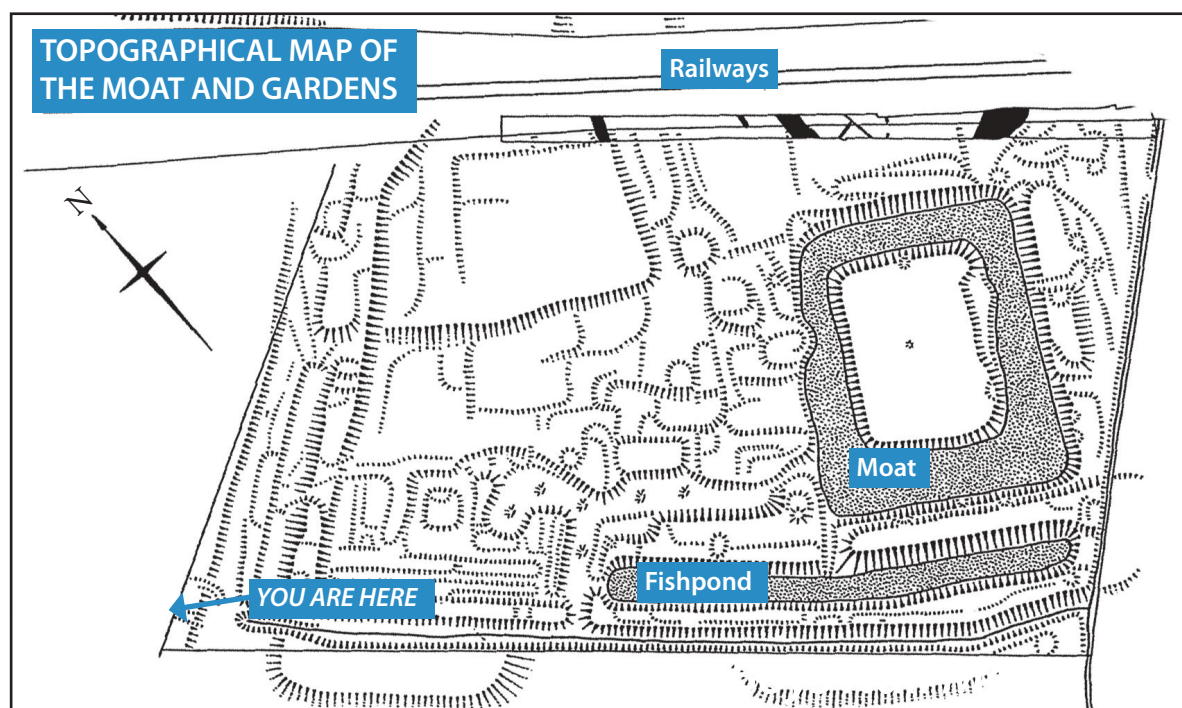
Land with a long history

Abandoned for almost 400 years, this 13th century moated settlement is one of the most important historic sites in Ashford. The moat is the most obvious historic feature here - it is well preserved and holds water all year round.



The moat

A house once occupied the island at its centre. It was the residence of an important Kent family, the Barrys. The moat was created around it as a sign of their status, rather than for defence. The Barrys left in 1588 and the house was bought by Thomas Boys. In the 1620s he demolished the house, supposedly after a child drowned in the moat, and the materials were used to extend his main residence – nearby Boys Hall. Nothing remains of the old house except fragments of roof, floor tiles and building mortar.



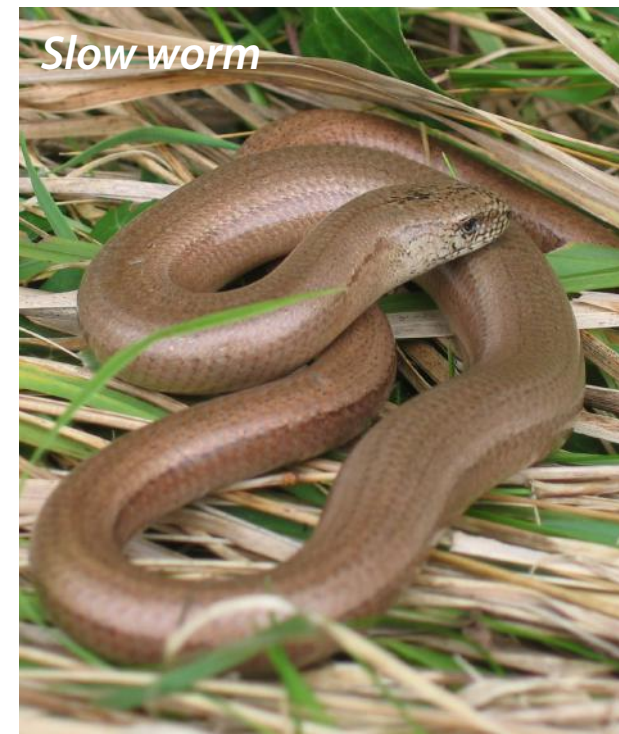
The surrounding area is also important. A long, narrow pond, possibly once a fish pond, and the ditches and terraces visible to the west of the moat are also protected. These are the remains of a water garden, the layout of which is suggested by the topographical map. It was created later than the house and moat, in the 15th or early 16th century, and it too was a sign of the wealth and high standing of the owners.

Excavations carried out when the High Speed 1 railway was constructed, uncovered signs that there may have been an even older settlement underlying the area, dating back to the Iron Age.



Photo: Tony Hisgett

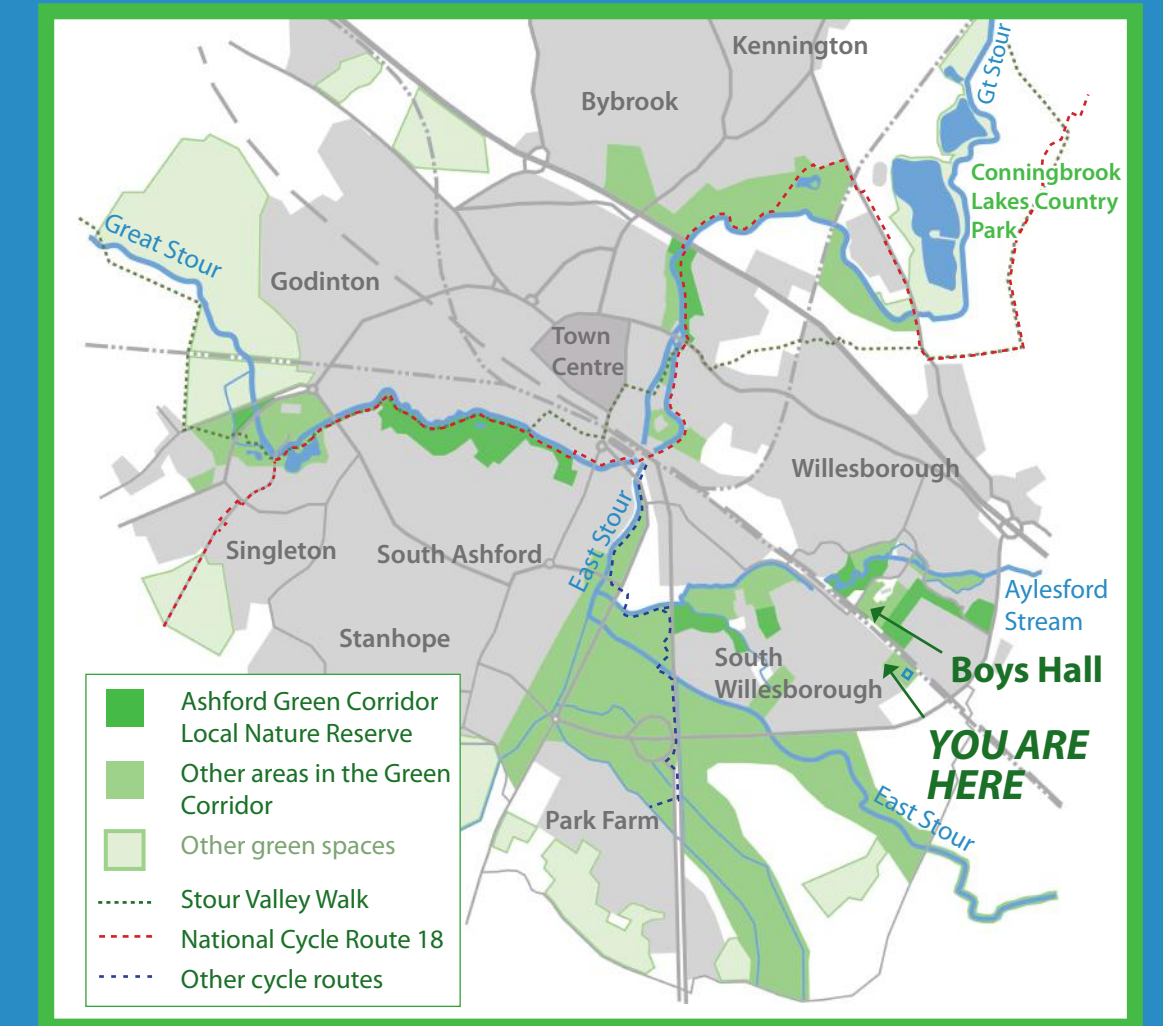
Blackcap



Slow worm

This long-abandoned place is now an excellent wildlife area, with many wetland plants in the moat itself and a good combination of wet and dry grassland habitats. The island in the moat is occupied by nesting birds such as chiffchaff and blackcap, who are no doubt trying to avoid the sparrowhawk that has been sighted here. There is a healthy grass snake population and lizards and slow-worms also thrive here.

This site is protected by law as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.



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.



Boys Hall

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.

