

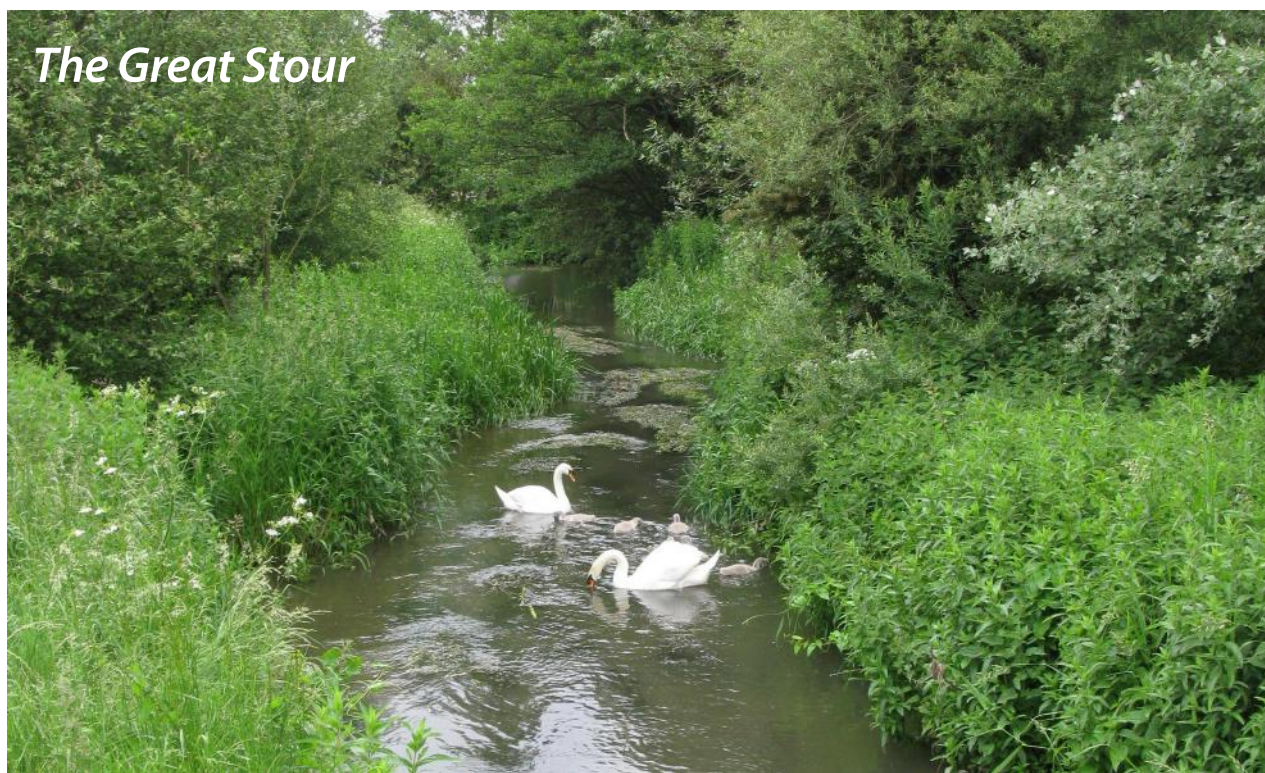


# WATERCRESS FIELDS

*A river runs through it*

With its blocks of flats and light industry, this part of Ashford could hardly be more urban. However, the green space of Watercress Fields has habitats for all sorts of plants and animals – native trees and shrubs, meadows and, perhaps most importantly, the Great Stour River.

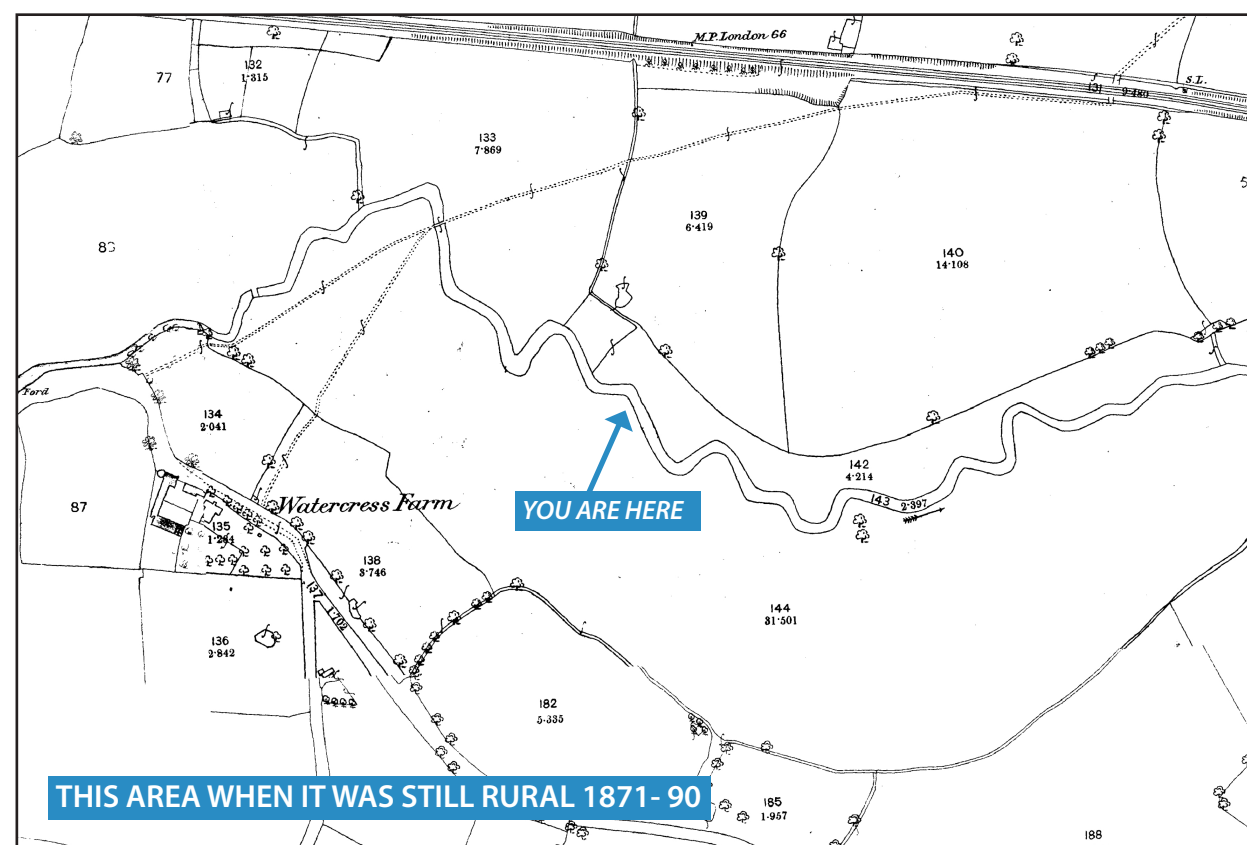
The Great Stour



The river is a ribbon of wildness snaking through the landscape in a series of bends. Natural processes lead to these 'meanders' and create habitats for fish, aquatic insects and birds. The banks, with their wild plant communities are also good habitats. In fact, the Stour has more wildlife value here in town than in some rural areas, where the river has been straightened and riverside vegetation has been lost in favour of agricultural crops.



Meadow



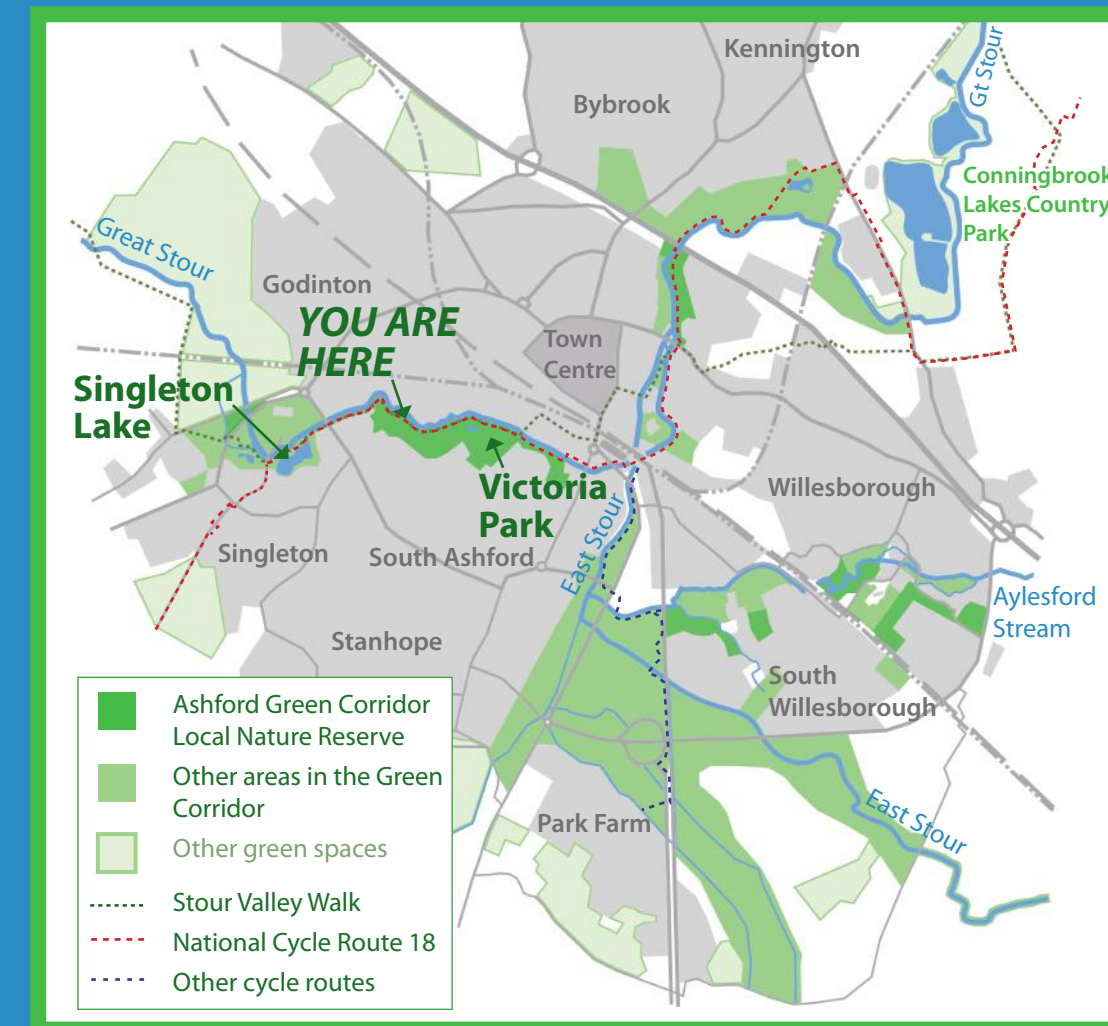
The area takes its name from its history of watercress growing. This wild plant was grown commercially in clear chalk streams like the Stour and then transported to London markets in the 19th century. Maps from this time show a Watercress Farm nearby, now lost to urban development.



Watercress



There were also orchards at the Farm, and in 2012 a new community orchard was planted here by volunteers and local schoolchildren. It is a special traditional orchard with mostly Kentish apple varieties that grow into large trees, and also plum and cherry. People that live nearby can enjoy visiting the orchard and picking the fruit!



## 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.

Singleton Lake

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](http://www.kentishstour.org.uk) or by scanning the QR code.

