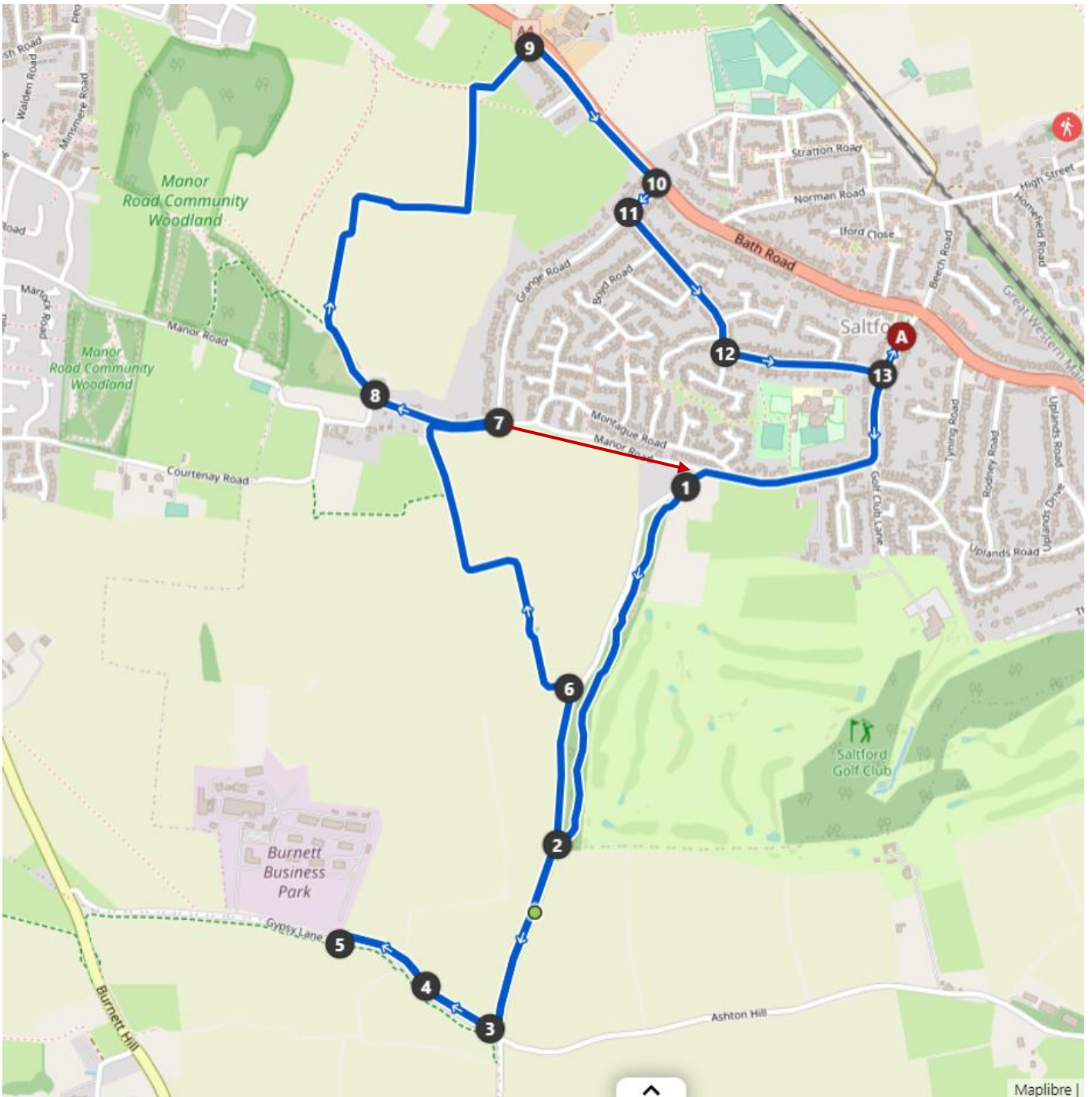


Distance: 4.76m Time: 2.00hrs @ 2.3 mph Elevation: 250ft

This outing explores 'Saltford South', the Green Belt area of Saltford outside the housing boundary and south of the Bath Road (A4). Due to the high value of this landscape to the local community, Saltford Parish Council formally applied to B&NES Council for a landscape designation for 'Saltford South' in January 2023.

This walk explores most of the beautiful southern slopes of Saltford, with a pleasant walk through a wood and then on up through fields with wonderful surrounding views – including the ability to see the Cotswolds, the Forest of Dean and the Welsh Hills from one vantage point. It includes a downhill walk through the heart of an area which was once farmed by the Romans.

Bring binoculars with you for the birdlife and the views!



WILDLIFE NOTE (i)

Most of the field hedges in 'Saltford South' are several centuries old, composed entirely of native species, and this is the only part of Saltford with lengthy, exposed ancient agricultural dry-stone walls. The high wildlife value of those dry-stone walls for invertebrates is noteworthy. These fields and the adjoining woodland provide a habitat for a variety of wildlife, including many bird species that are regularly observed, including Green Woodpecker, Tawny Owl, Barn Owl, Little Owl, Golden Plover (large winter flocks), Buzzard, Sparrowhawk, Red Kite, Peregrine, Hobby, Merlin, Skylark, and Snipe. The full lists of birds regularly observed in Saltford can be found on the [wildlife page](#) of SEG's website; each bird listed has a link to its own RSPB web page.

*On leaving the Little Coffee Shop **(A)**, walk up Manor Road, and follow it round to the right. When you come to the 'Manor Lawns' sign, take the left fork, and turn left after 50m or so up Longwood Lane (no road name sign). Almost immediately turn into a gateway on your left labelled 'Saltford Golf Club Private No Parking **(1)**', and follow the path round the gate and into the wood. Note that this is a 'permissive path' courtesy of Saltford Golf Club.*

Longwood dates back to the mid-19th century and is one of only two long-standing areas of woodland in the parish, the other being Folly Wood to the east of the golf course. Longwood provides excellent habitat for a rich invertebrate fauna due to the relatively large proportion of large old trees and the woodland understorey. It is also home to a large number of bird species (see *Wildlife Note above*). If you can't spot them, try downloading the *Merlin* bird identification app which will tell you the names of all the birds that are singing and help with identification if you do see them!

*Walk up through the wood (**please be aware** that Sooty Bark Disease is killing Sycamore trees in this woodland, and they can fall without warning), crossing the golf course access track on the way. Eventually the footpath brings you out onto Longwood Lane again. Cross straight over into the field and turn immediately left **(2)**. This too is a permissive path as are all the field paths from now on during this walk. Please keep your dog on a lead to ensure that birds, other wildlife, and crops are not disturbed (**please note** that the landowner's permission for public use of these permissive footpaths is on the understanding that dogs are kept on leads). Walk uphill beside the hedgerow.*

All the fields in this part of the parish of Saltford are strewn with Lower Jurassic Blue Lias limestone rocks, which have presented a challenge for the farmers working here for centuries. As you make your way up this field there are fine views over to the right overlooking Bristol. Look out for the Clifton Suspension Bridge and the Brecon Beacons (aka Bannau Brycheiniog) in the distance.

*When you reach the top beside the crossroads road junction **(3)** follow the path round to the right keeping to the field boundary. This marks the southern extremity of 'Saltford South'. Continue until you reach the end of the permissive footpath as it reaches the boundary of the Burnett Business Park. Turn round and return on the same short route back to the crossroads **(3)** – this will provide a view east towards Bath and described later in this guide.*

WILDLIFE NOTE (ii)

STOP AND WONDER! Being a ridge, this is a relatively good location to spot passage migrants, birds that neither breed nor winter here in the UK, and among them the Wheatear is among the most conspicuous. Some of the birds are stopping off on migration between breeding in Greenland and wintering in southern-hemisphere Africa, one of the longest migrations of any small bird.

Before walking north back down to Saltford, you might like to walk a short way along Ashton Lane, taking advantage of pull-ins to avoid passing cars as there is no footpath here, to observe the eastern flank of 'Saltford South' with Kelston Tump and the ridge of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) on the north-east horizon (see the following Note).

Note. The sequence of fields on the opposite side of Longwood Lane to your right, running away from you right down Ashton Lane to the A4 at Dryleaze, are also part of 'Saltford South', as is Folly Wood (a private woodland) below them and the golf course with its magnificent steep-sided wooded valley and stream. The mixed tree, drystone wall and hedge line along the southern edge of the golf course that connects Folly Wood with Longwood acts as a wildlife corridor and provides an attractive setting of mixed deciduous and coniferous trees and vegetation of differing heights, shades of green, and shapes.

The crossroads **(3)** where Longwood Lane meets Gypsy Lane is on the southern boundary of Saltford and is also a high viewpoint. West NorthWest from here you can see the peaks of the Brecon Beacons (aka Bannau Brycheiniog) 54 miles away. To the north and 35 miles away the Forest of Dean and its outpost, May Hill, can be seen; and to the east, much nearer, are the southern slopes of the Cotswolds AONB.

Straight ahead as you look southwards across the field you can see the tree-covered Stantonbury Hill, site of an iron-age hill fort which is crossed by the much later Wansdyke. Further to the right is the broad expanse of the Chew Valley with the Mendip Hills behind.

*Walk back the way you came through the fields to the crossroads **(3)**.*

*At the crossroads turn left to retrace your steps in the direction of Saltford. Continuing your walk back north-wards down the permissive path in the field on the west side of Longwood Lane. Keep on until the end of the field where the path swings round to the left, and then move into the next field down at the opening **(6)**. Turn left here – i.e. walk away from the road – into the next field and turn immediately right with the hedgerow on your right. After a little way you pass a clump of trees on your right which surround a stone-lined pond.*

This pond is probably 19th century. It has been carefully constructed and was no doubt used to provide water for cattle; there is an easy slope down to the water on either side. Importantly, it indicates some sort of a spring and a ready source of water.

Continue down the field path, swinging round to the left when you reach the hedgerow, and then round to the right into the next field. Continue down to the bottom of this field and swing to the right parallel to Manor Road.

As you walk down the field, the parish boundary, and also the western boundary of 'Saltford South', is two or three fields over to your left. When you reach Manor Road, you get a good idea of the landscape value of 'Saltford South' as you look back up the hillside.

*Move onto the road at the junction with Grange Road **(7)**.*

If you want to shorten your walk you can return directly to the Little Coffee Shop from this point as indicated by the red arrow on the map, using the old Manor Road (now a narrow tree and hedge-lined lane) that runs parallel with Montague Road and joins the bottom of Longwood Lane. Keep going in the same direction along Manor Road (lane), keeping straight on along the lane. This brings you to the 'Manor Lawns' sign again where Montague Road becomes Manor Road that will lead you down to the Little Coffee Shop.

*To continue with the longer walk, turn left at point **(7)** along the narrow section of Manor Road, past Keynsham Manor, to the sharp left-hand bend, where you turn right through a gate onto a footpath **(8)**. The footpath heads off diagonally left, keeping close to the wood on your left.*

When you reach the first hedgerow turn right, keeping it on your left, and follow down the side of the field. Follow the hedgerow round to the right, and then turn left down a concrete track. Follow this until you reach the A4.

*Turn right along the A4 until you reach Grange Road **(10)**. Turn up here and then first left onto Claverton Road West **(11)**. Follow this and then left into Claverton Road **(12)**, and this will take you back to Manor Road close to the Little Coffee Shop **(A)**.*

Written by Andrew Stainer (2023)

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