Walk 1 Nowhere Wood and Golden Valley Meadows Walk (Descriptive)

Summary

A pleasant walk starting and ending in Chelvey Rise by the Old Farm House public house passing through woods and meadows. Not suitable for pushchairs or wheelchair users.

Walk Information

Distance: 2 km (1.25 miles), Gradients: gentle mostly level, Surfaces: metalled, hard surface and unsurfaced.

How To Get There

By Car: Park in Chelvey Rise, or any nearby street. Always be considerate of the residents, do not obstruct their access.

By Bus: Use the X7 or X7A bus and alight at the Bibury Close or Winchcombe Close Bus Stops.

By Train: Walk northwards from Nailsea and Backwell Train Station along Station Road passing Backwell Lake, up the hill and turn right into Trendlewood Way. Chelvey Rise is second turning on the right. Distance from the station 1 km.

Safety

We want you to enjoy your walk in Trendlewood Community Park and the park is very safe. However, you should be aware of the potential hazards you may encounter on your journey.

Trip and Fall Hazards

Some paths are unsurfaced and can become muddy and slippery during and after damp weather.

Some paths are uneven with small rocks protruding through them.

Some paths have roots breaking through them.

Risk of Drowning

Do not enter the water.

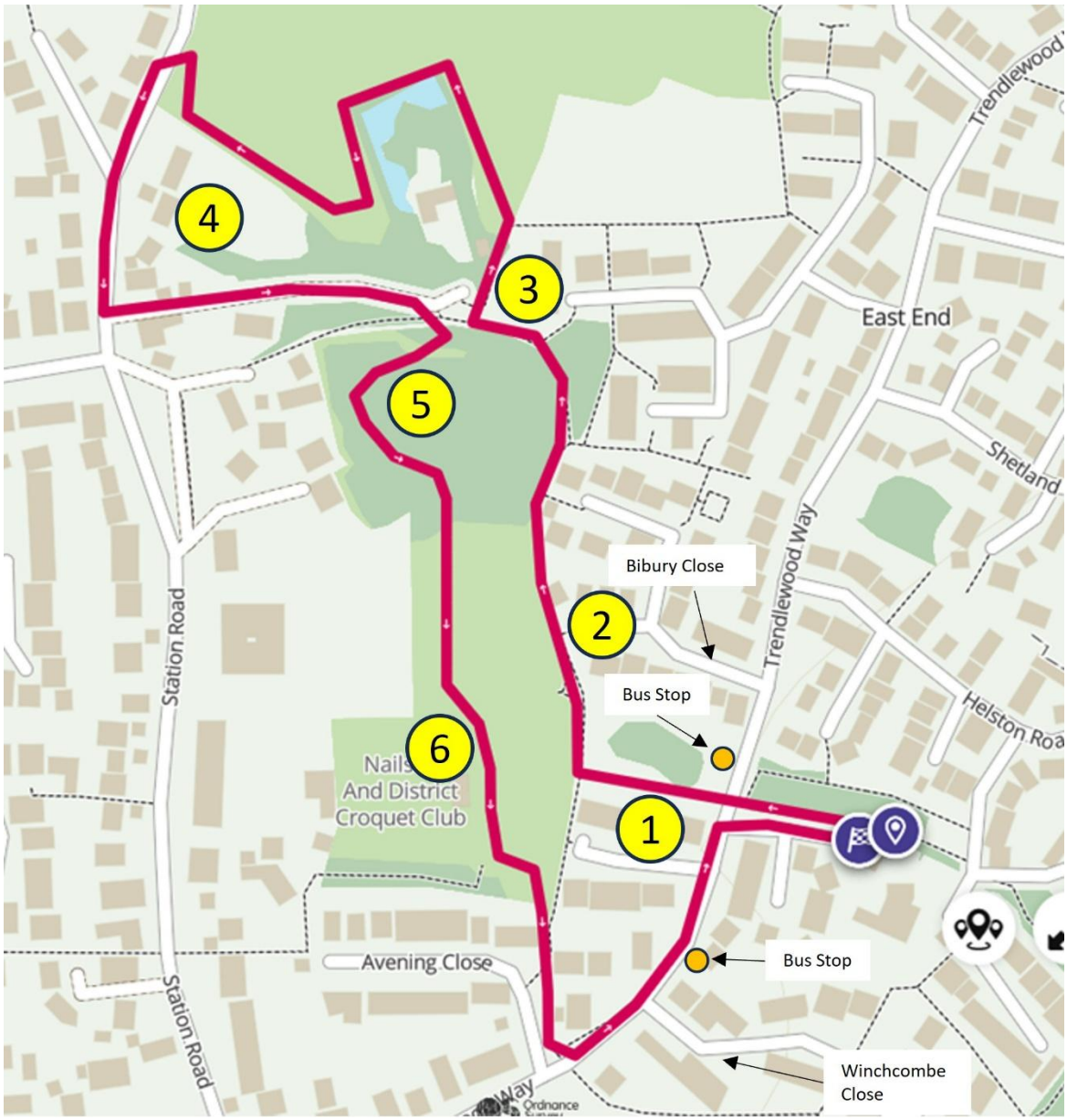
The areas of water in the park are typically shallow and often dry out during droughts. However, in periods of extended wet weather they can fill to depths of 2m or more. The bottoms are very muddy and present a risk to children who could get trapped.

Falling Trees

Do not enter the wooded areas during high winds.

There is a potential risk from falling branches and trees. Many trees have Ash Die Back and the history of quarrying can result in poor root holding.

The Route



©Crown copyright 2024 Ordnance Survey. Media 041/24.

The Route

The route to be followed is shown in red on the maps. The numbers refer to the sketch maps in the text.



Map 1 - The Old Farm House Public House to the Wetland Area



The Old Farm House Public House

Standing in Chelvey Rise with the public house behind you walk towards Trendlewood Way.

The pub was the farm house for East End Farm until the land was sold for the development of the Trendlewood estate in the 1960s.

The shallow valley on your right was created by stream that is now buried in a culvert. The valley is part of the park that connects parkland on Nailsea's eastern boundary with the rest of the park.



The Park Alongside Chelvey Rise

It is managed to encourage wildlife to move between the open farmland to the east and the central park areas. There are Ash, Oak and Elm trees in this area. The Elm trees are unlikely to survive to maturity due to Dutch Elm Disease.

Taking care cross Trendlewood Way and follow the public footpath, indicated by the small concrete sign on the left of the open area, up a slight rise to the open grassy area.



The Small Concrete Sign

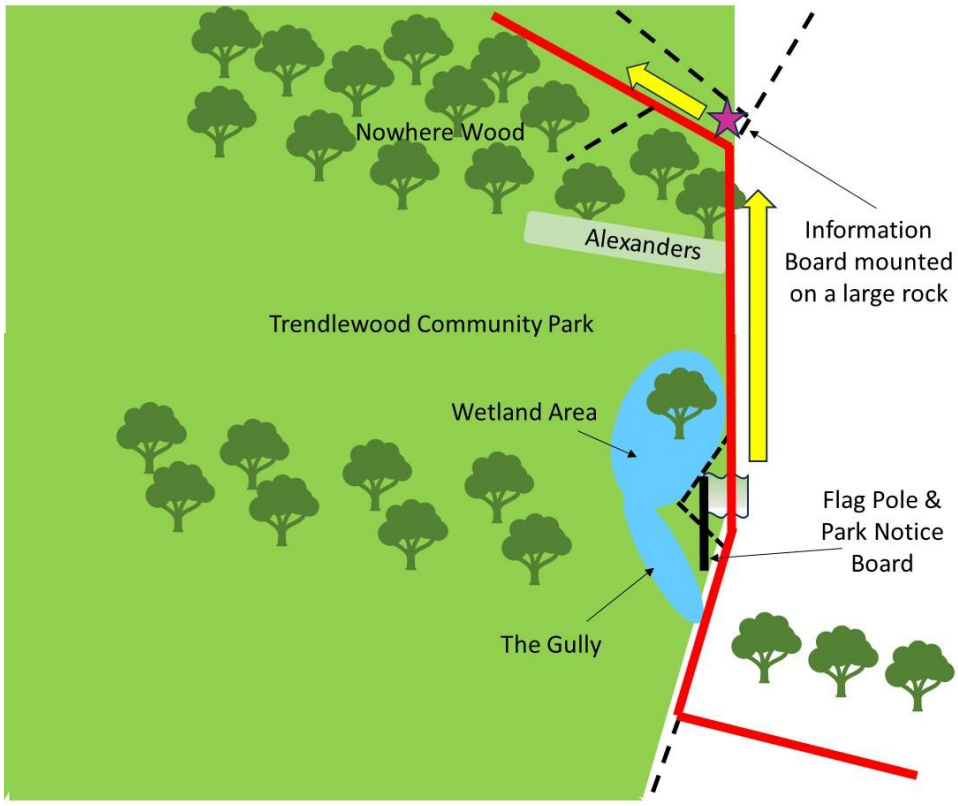
This part of the path is unsurfaced and can be slippery in wet weather. Turn right on to the tarmac path and walk ahead. On your left you will pass the wetland area. In periods of damp weather this area fills with water from a spring that flows for several months each year.



©Copyright 2024 Andrew Town.

The Wetland Area in Flood

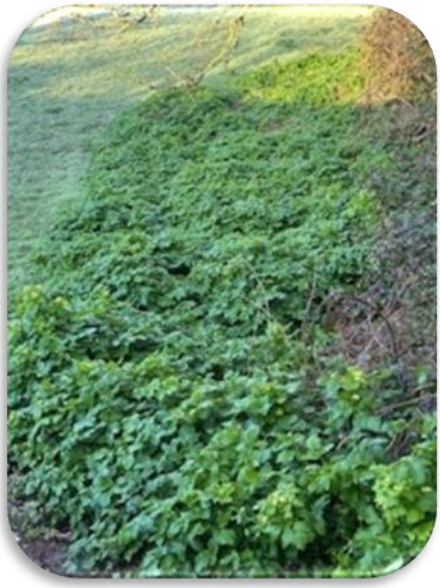
During droughts the whole area can dry out. The small gully close to the park notice board and flag pole was cleaned out a few years ago and water marginal plants placed there. The larger wetland area is being developed to create an ephemeral pond, slow the flow of flood water into the Gully and to encourage amphibians and aquatic insects to establish. This area was once a cattle pond.



Map 2 - Wetland Area to Nowhere Wood

Carry on towards the woods. As you enter the wood there is a carpet of green plants to your left running along the boundary of the wood down the grass slope, these are plants known as Alexanders or Alisanders. Alexanders are an edible flowering plant, which grows on waste ground and in hedges

around the Mediterranean and Atlantic coastal regions of Europe. It was formerly widely grown as a pot herb. In Britain Alexanders are usually confined to with a few miles of the coast.



The Carpet of Alexanders

The woods have grown in a former quarry. After a short distance you will see an information board mounted in a large rock. This board tells you about the quarry and natural life that now lives in the former industrial site. Leave the information board on your right and walk straight on. In the spring the woodland floor has an array of flowers including Snow Drops, Lesser Celandines, Blue Bells and Cow Parsley.

There is an excavation from quarrying on the left protected by a wooden fence, continue straight on.

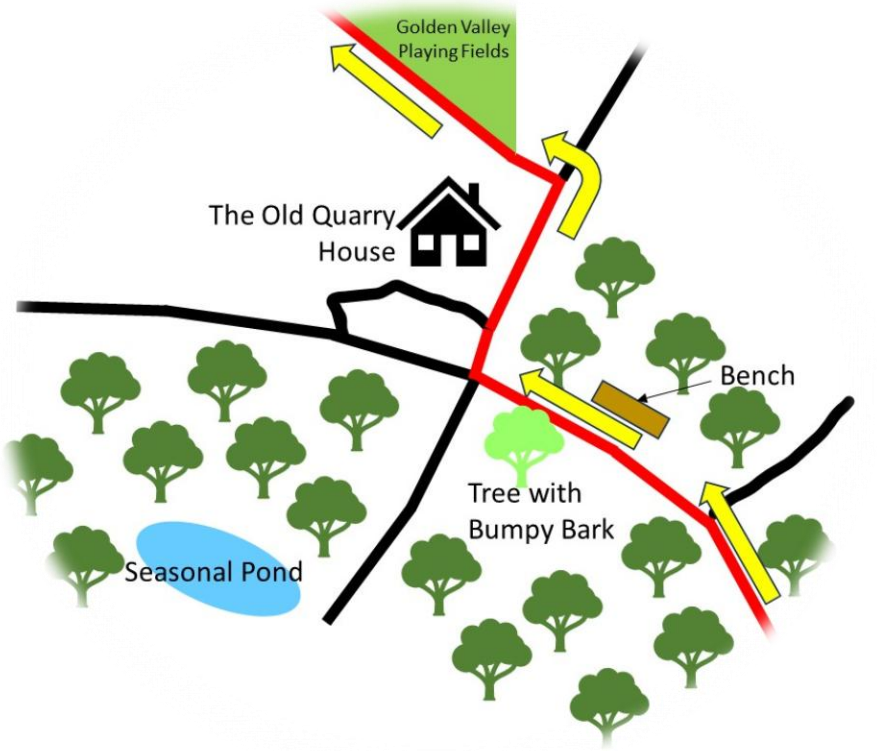
After passing a bench on your right take the path to the right at the footpath cross roads. Before you turn at the footpath cross roads notice the tree with bumpy bark on the corner of the path that goes downhill. We will use this tree as a landmark. The bumps are tree burrs which are a reaction to damage to the tree from stress injury, virus damage or fungal infection. The grain of the tree grows in a deformed manner.



©Copyright 2024 Andrew Town.

Tree Trunk with Burrs

After about 60m (65 yards), where The Old Quarry house garden boundary ends, turn sharp left and taking care, go up the short slope. There are some rocks here and the ground can be muddy in wet weather. This part of the walk is not suitable for pushchairs or wheelchair users.



Map 3 - Nowhere Woods to Golden Valley Playing Fields

You have now left Trendlewood Community Park and have entered the Golden Valley Playing Fields.

These fields are managed by Nailsea School but the public are allowed, as a gesture of goodwill, to access them provided they do not carry out activities likely to endanger others, that dogs are kept under control, no mess is left behind and the environment is respected.

The Friends of Trendlewood Park were asked by Nailsea School to maintain and improve, for nature, two areas of the playing fields that were not well suited for sports activities. The triangular shaped area you are standing is one of those areas.

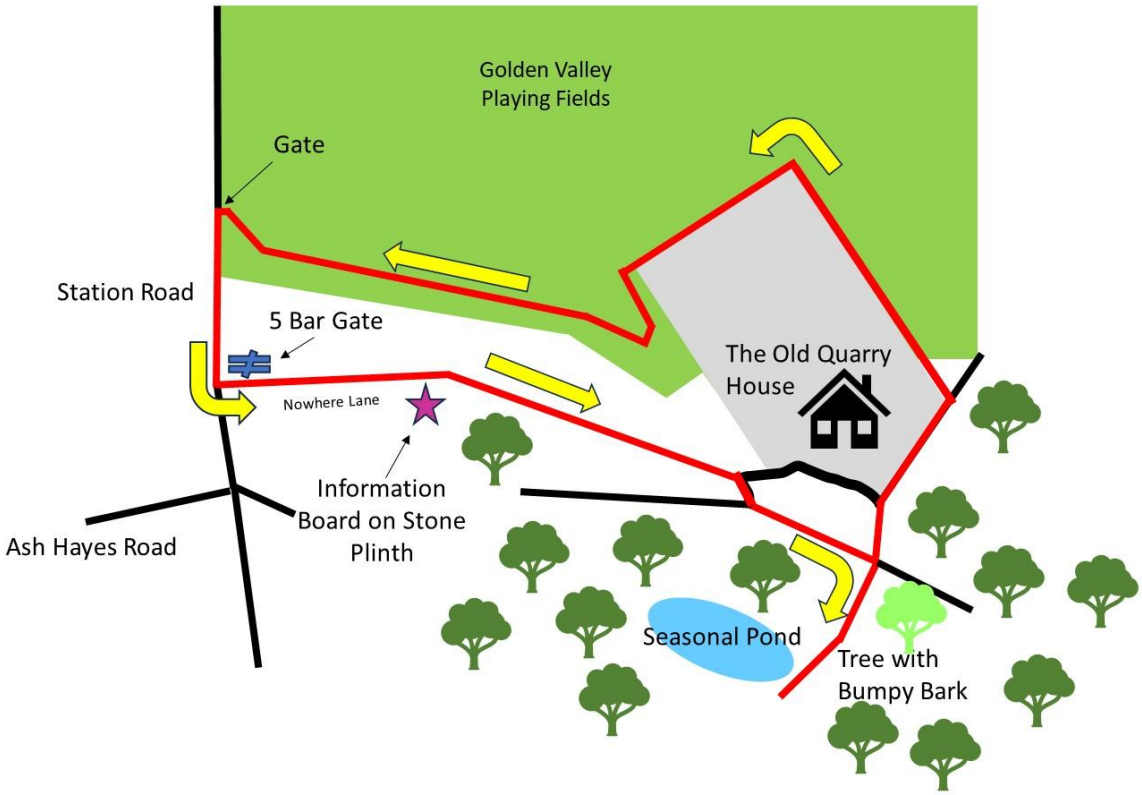
In this area the grass is only cut once a year to encourage the growth of wild flowers. One of the consequences of this change in land management has been the young trees you see growing in the middle of this area. Most of these trees are self-set and were not planted by humans.

Snowdrop blubs have been planted around the boundary of this area and are becoming established putting on a good show in January and February.

There is no path here but go forwards keeping the boundary of The Old Quarry house garden to your left, leave the triangular plot of land but keep The Old Quarry house garden boundary on your left and then turn left again descending down the shallow slope.

The land here, which is lower than the rest of the playing fields, is the other area being managed by the Friends of Trendlewood Park.

This area had previously been partially covered in concrete and tarmac. Where possible the artificial surfaces were removed and those parts that could not be taken away were buried. In their place we now have a developing meadow with a good array of wild flowers.



Map 4 - Golden Valley Playing Fields to Nowhere Wood

Some areas of scrub are being allowed to develop and again there are self-set trees growing. The disturbed ground by the side of the track are Badger Sets while the grassy bumps on the south facing slope at the edge of the main field are ant colonies.

Continue to walk along the edge of this area and then up the slope near Station Road, go through the gate on the left closing it behind you and turn left.

Walk along the Station Road footpath until you get to a lane on the left. The entrance to the lane has a five-bar wooden gate that is usually open, on the gate post is a small circular yellow public footpath sign and larger Whittlestone Way sign. Take the turning and proceed along the lane, which is called Nowhere Lane.

As you re-enter Nowhere Wood there is stone plinth on your right with an information board mounted on it. The information board tells you about the local area and some of its history.

The vegetation alongside Nowhere Lane suggests longer term tree cover. Field Maple, Spindle and Oak are prevalent. The size and maturity of the trees are different to that of the vegetation within the quarry.

Continue along Nowhere Lane. After a while, looking closely to your right, a shallow ditch becomes visible. This is the remains of a boundary ditch with oak trees, known as Boundary Oaks, growing along it.

The boundary ditch can be traced for some distance. It is thought that this boundary predates the quarrying and originally protected an area of woodland, probably the 'trendle', or round, wood that would have been a valuable resource. Trendle is Old English for round.

Shortly before the entrance to The Old Quarry house turn right, crossing the boundary ditch and then immediately turn left.

You are now back at the footpath cross roads and the tree with the bumpy bark.



©Copyright 2024 Andrew Town.

The Tree Trunk with Bumpy Bark (Burrs)

This time turn right and descend down the incline.

The path leads into the main Pennant Sandstone quarry workings which operated until the 1930's.

On the right in one of the excavations is a seasonal pond, which as the name suggest can dry out during periods of drought.

The pond is fed by the water table, rain water and in very wet periods by an overflow pipe from The Old Quarry house garden. It is very shallow and shaded, and provides a wet woodland habitat containing rotting logs.

The area surrounding it consists of open areas of mud with sedges. It is an important area for rare species of snails and leeches.

The majority of the trees in the wood have grown since the quarrying ceased in the 1930's and now provide habits for birds, plants, insects and fungi. Great Spotted Woodpeckers can be heard in the spring drumming on the trees and for those out early or late listen for the Tawny Owls calling.

Many of the trees are of similar age, having grown since the quarry closed, they are closely spaced and compete for light resulting in straightish trunks with few branches low down, this is typical of long-term unmanaged woodland.

Ash, Sycamore, Oak, Hawthorn and Field Maple trees grow in the wood. Ash trees are particularly common in the woods, but most of the Ash trees are infected with Ash Die Back and many have been felled, while others allowed decay naturally. Holly is also plentiful and has to be cut back to allow other plants thrive. There are also a few specimens of Willow and Beech trees.

A range of plants cover the ground in the quarry, including Periwinkle and Winter Heliotrope which are both invasive species.



Periwinkle

At the bottom of the path is the sandstone quarry face; keep away from the quarry face to avoid the risk from falling rocks.

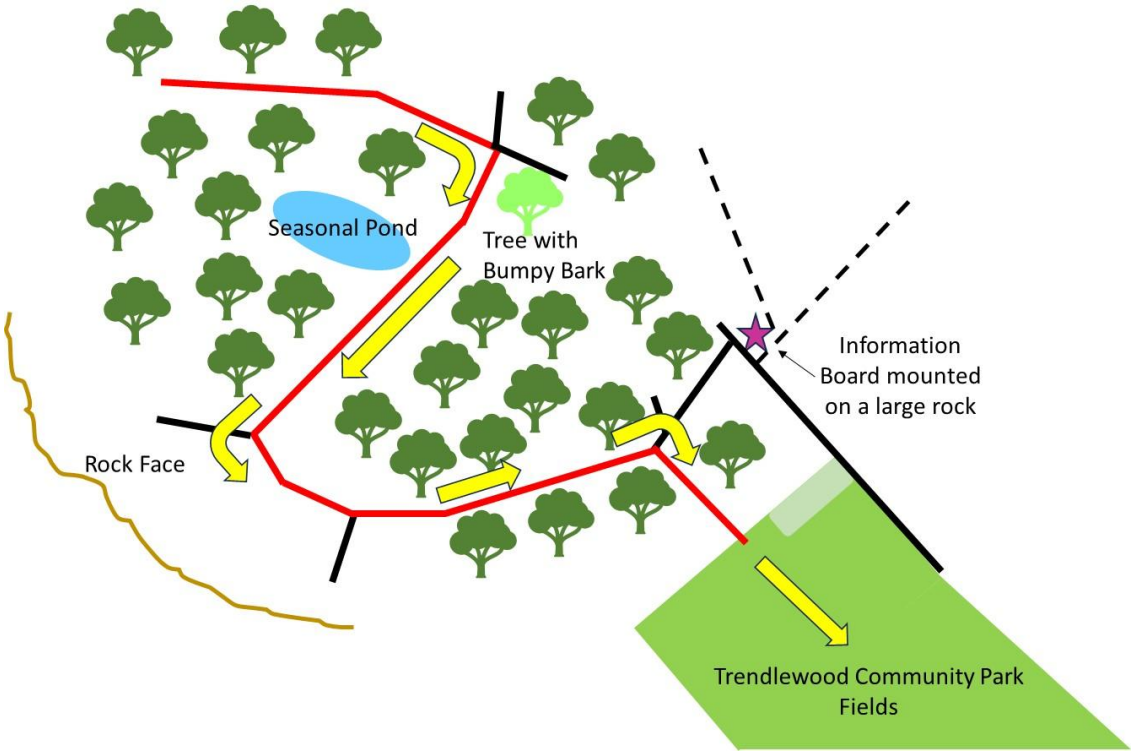
Trendlewood Quary was opened by the Hobbs family in the 1850's. The Hobbs were a quarrying dynasty in Wales and South West England. Part of the Hobb's empire was sold to the house building group Wimpey. Kelly's directories give dates and companies working Pennant sandstone which continued into the 1960s in the Bristol region, but not in Nailsea. The resulting features of this quarrying activity are still evident in the woodland today, the mounds are stone spoil heaps and retaining dry stone walls are hidden in the vegetation.

The quarry face is a Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS). The sandstone here was formed around 300 million years ago from the erosion of mountains. The sand was deposited by a river system with the material coming from a south easterly direction. The colours of the rock face are partly due to soil downwash from above and partly Haematite - red and Goethite - black, which are iron oxides. The Sandstone is part of the Downend Formation which is up to 660m thick in the Somerset Coalfield - of which Nailsea is a part. Downend Formation consists mainly of sandstone with some mudstone. Some coals appear in the lower part including the seams found in Nailsea Coalfield.

There are a number of exotic species within the quarry floor such as Walnut (Juglans regia), Snowberry (Symphoricarpos spp) and Shrubby Honeysuckle (Lonicera nitida). Japanese Knotweed is also present, but is activity removed by specialists when it appears. After the quarry closed the wood was purchased by a local family who used it as their garden and they probably introduced these exotic plants.

The path now turns away from the rock face and climbs up out of the quarry.

This incline was used by horses to drag the stone out of the quarry to an embankment at the top where the stone was loaded into tubs which were then pushed along rails to Station Road.



Map 5 –Nowhere Wood and Quarry Rock Face to Open Field

Near the top of the incline the path divides, take the smaller path on the right.

Where the path enters the open field the remains of the embankment is to your right under the brambles but not really visible.

Cross the open field of amenity grass passing the children's play area and picnic tables. There are some benches to sit on near the large climbing frame with netting.

Continue on pass the Zip Wire and go through the line of trees.

Keep the boundary with the Croquet Club on your right. You will then be in the area managed as an orchard.



Map 6 - Open Field, Orchard and Back to the Start

The larger trees in the orchard are ornamental Turkish Hazel or Turkish Filbert trees. They are natives of southeast Europe and southwest Asia. This species of tree was first introduced to the UK in 1582. A relative of the English Hazel they produce ornate nut clusters. Around these trees the Friends of Trendlewood Park have planted a number of fruit trees, wild flowers and native Daffodil bulbs. To encourage the wild flowers the grass is allow grow, only being cut infrequently.

The fruit trees have been planted to create an area of orchard. Orchards, once common around Nailsea, when mature offer a very rich habitat for a wide range of species and it is hoped that in time this area will benefit wildlife as well as providing some fruit for passersby.

At the end of the orchard area follow the track from the croquet club and exit the park via Avening Close. Turn left into Trendlewood Way before crossing Trendlewood Way back to Chelvey Rise returning to The Old Farmhouse pub for a well-earned rest.