



Walk 14: Hart to Haswell Railway by Martin Allen and Helen Herring

A short linear walk along the dismantled railway track in the Hart to Haswell Railway Local Nature Reserve. The reserve has an abundance of wildflowers, and butterflies associated with them.

Pass through the gateway on Ocean Road and enter the Hart to Haswell Railway Local Nature Reserve. Bird's-foot-trefoil, Red Clover and Lady's Bedstraw (see Booklet) can be found growing on the verge to the right of the notice board. Follow the tarmac path to the left passing alongside the footbridge over the railway. Just before the footbridge look for **Restharrow** (1) growing along the fence and **St. John's Wort** (2) amongst the grass. Scrambling along the bank on the left hand side of the path, opposite the footbridge, is Meadow Vetchling and then, as the bank flattens into an area of sparse grassland, the tall pale-yellow flowers of Mignonette can be seen (see booklet). Also here are two low growing sprawling plants with a clover-like (trefoil) leaf - **Black Medic** (3) with small bright yellow flowers, and the larger but paler yellow **Hop Trefoil** (4).

Follow the path and look to the right, next to a railway signal, to find the delicate mauve flowers of **Field Scabious** (5) just beginning to come out. From here to the green bridge visible ahead there are areas of lovely flowering grassland with many spikes of **Common Spotted-orchid** (6) growing with Red Clover, Bird's-foot-trefoil, Golden Melilot and Yellow-rattle (see Booklet). Approximately 100 yards before the bridge look out for **Hemp Agrimony** (7) on the left, a tall plant with raspberry-pink flowers just opening. Also on the left is the first of three ponds and the high bank opposite is covered with the cerise-pink flowers of **Bloody Crane's-bill** (8), a plant characteristic of the Hartlepool area.

Between the two bridges the small single cerise flowers of the Common Vetch (see Booklet) are visible and after the second bridge, covering the bank on the right, is **Wild Marjoram** (9) just coming into flower. Watch out for a rough steep path going up the bank to the right, and immediately after it is a clump of **Hedge Woundwort** (10) with deep purple flower spikes. This is a foul smelling plant if rubbed, but was used in the past to help stem bleeding from wounds.

The path now goes into a less open more wooded habitat. The last two plants of the walk are found about 500metres further along the track. After passing the third pond on the left there is a kink in the path followed by a tunnel of trees. These open up to a much lighter straight stretch of path and about halfway along this stretch there are large numbers of **Common Twayblade** (11) with two large round flat leaves at the base of the flower stem and flowers just finishing, and also **Broad-leaved Helleborine** (12) about to come into flower.

This marks the end of the walk. To return retrace the route to the beginning.

fact file

Season	Early July	Parking	No public car park available
Distance	2 miles	Paths	Suitable for wheelchairs
Time	1 hr 30 mins - 2 hours	Toilets	Not available
Start	Hart Station	Public Transport	Arriva NE Service 22, 33 from Hartlepool
Grid Ref.	NZ484362		

