



## Walk 12: Riverside Walk at Portrack by Martin Allen and Helen Herring

Following the riverside path from the Tees Barrage to the Newport Bridge looking both at wildflowers characteristic of local industrial heritage and some that are relics of the areas past.

Leave the car park at the ring of metal flags and go left along the tarmac path following the flagpoles along the left of the path to the bottom of the hill. Turn left and left again onto the riverside footpath heading east along the side of the River Tees to the Portrack Marsh Nature Reserve.

**Upright Hedge Parsley** (1) can be found on the right hand side of the path just after the Nature Reserve sign. The white and pale pink flowers of **Yarrow** (2) grow with patches of Lady's Bedstraw (see walk 3) followed by Common Knapweed (see walk 9) just after the public footpath sign. Follow the riverside path watching out for the tall spikes of **Teasel** (3) on the right and pass the viewing point on the left from where it is possible to look across the Portrack Marsh Nature Reserve.

Further along the path look out for the blue-violet flowers of the clambering **Tufted Vetch** (4) on the left and then **Red Clover** (5) lining both sides of the path, more Upright Hedge Parsley and occasional clumps of Golden Melilot (see walk 9).

A chance to sit and enjoy the river, watching for seals or salmon can be taken at the viewing point on the right. A little further along the small delicate **Red Bartsia** (6) appears on both sides of the path.

An old jetty appears on the right. Walk carefully to the end and look down to the right to see four salt tolerant plants characteristic of the once widespread saltmarshes of the Lower Tees, **Sea Aster** (7), **Sea Arrowgrass** (8), **Scurvy Grass** (9) and **Sea beet** (10), all growing along the waters edge.

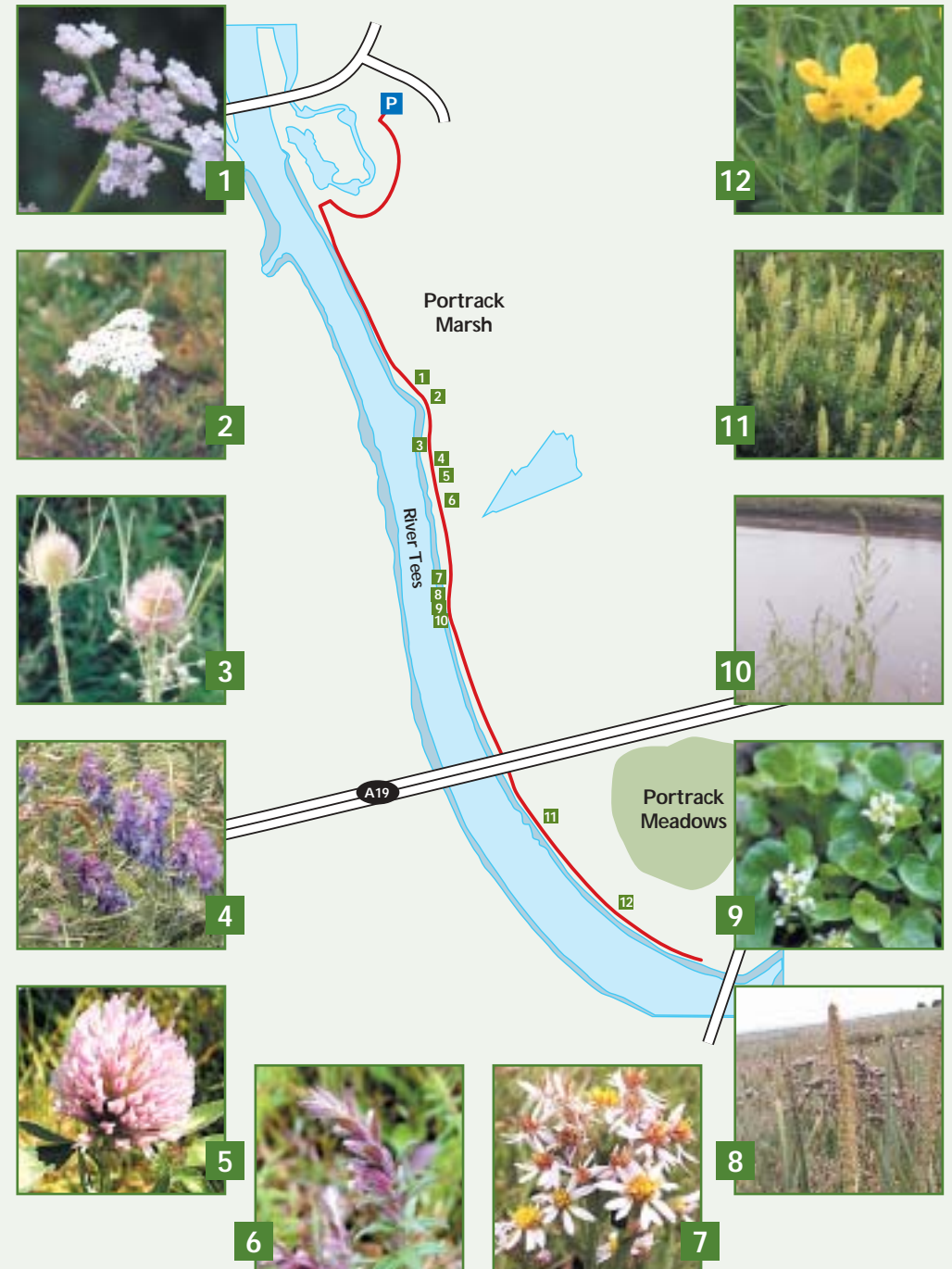
After the jetty follow the path underneath the A19 flyover and across Lustrum Beck. As the path passes between two fences look for **Wild Mignonette** (11) growing on the left and then Wild Carrot (see Walk 5) on the right. The path runs along the riverside towards Newport Bridge with Portrack Meadows (another Nature Reserve managed by Tees Valley Wildlife Trust) on the left. The path has many wildflowers along it's edges. Look for the bright yellow flowers of **Meadow Vetchling** (12).

Eventually the path reaches a gate below Newport Bridge that marks the end of the walk. From here retrace the outgoing route to the start.

The walk can be extended to take a look around Portrack Meadows. On the return route take the footpath sign-posted to the right before the A19 flyover and follow the nature reserve signs, eventually returning to the riverside path and car park.

### fact file

Season	July	Parking	Car Park off White Water Way
Distance	2.5 miles	Paths	Suitable for wheelchairs
Time	1.30mins - 2 hours	Toilets	Not available
Start	Car park off White Water Way	Public Transport	Arriva NE Service 20
Grid Ref.	NZ462193		





## Walk 13: North Gare

by Jessica Harrison

A short walk along the bottom of the dunes at North Gare looking at the rich and varied grassland wildflowers. The area is within the Natural England Teasmouth National Nature Reserve.

From the car park take the track signed for North Gare. Take care crossing the Golf Links and follow the footpath towards the beach, passing a red waste bin. Just after a path branches to the left look out for a small path that takes a sharp cut to the right with a short sharp descent to a footpath leading along the base of the sand dunes. Take this footpath. Red Clover lines the path with the tiny white flowers of **Fairy Flax** (1) in amongst and the short-stemmed purple-flowered **Selfheal** (2) also. In the stretch of flowering grassland to the right of the path the tall flowering spikes of **Marsh Thistle** (3) are easily seen as are the pink spikes of **Common Spotted-orchid** (4) and the purple-flowered **Northern Marsh-orchid** (5).

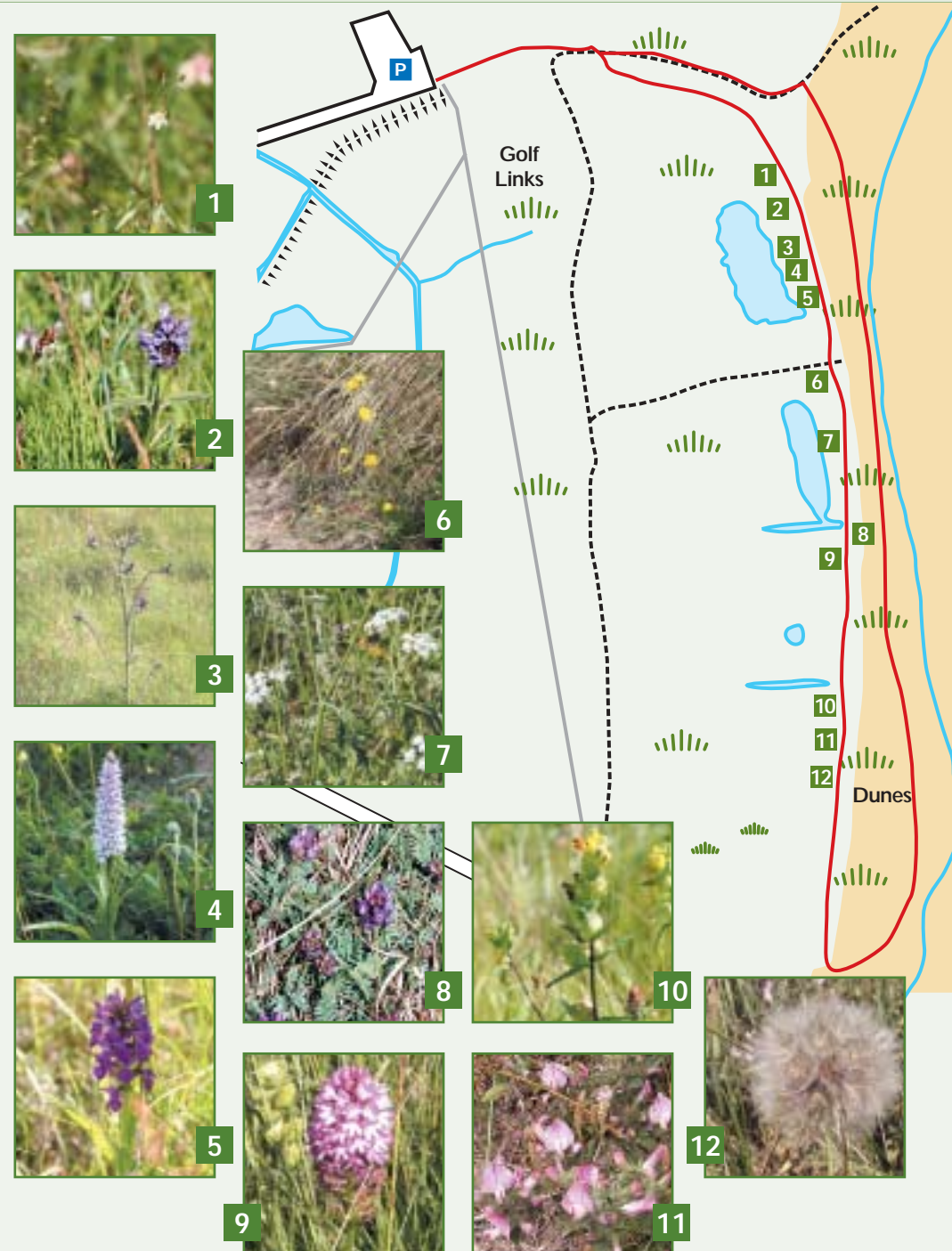
The path passes over a shallow ridge with the yellow dandelion-like flowers of **Cat's Ear** (6) on the left and a large patch of sweet scented Lady's Bedstraw (see walk 3) on the right just as the path descends again. Follow the path along the side of the fence that appears on the right and watch for a clump of **Upright Hedge Parsley** (7) growing with Tufted vetch (see walk 9). On reaching a gate in the fence, look to the left of the path to find a small patch of the sprawling **Purple Milk-vetch** (8). Look over the gate to see a few spikes of **Fragrant Orchid** (9).

Follow the path to the end of the fence. All along this stretch are large areas of wildflowers with **Yellow Rattle** (10) and **Common Restharrow** (11) and the distinctive seed-head of **Goat's Beard** (12) here and there. Just after the end of the fence on the right is an open area covered in Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (see walk no 3).

Keep to the path until it joins a wide track and turn left towards the beach. Wild Carrot (see walk 5) grows on the left-hand side just before the Nature reserve sign. Turn left and return along the beach to the North Gare. Once on the North Gare track turn left and return to the car park.

### fact file

Season	End June/early July	Parking	North Gare Car Park (off A178)
Distance	1.5 miles	Paths	Mostly even, some steep slope
Time	2 hours	Toilets	Not available
Start	North Gare Car Park	Public Transport	Stagecoach Service1 from Middlesbrough
Grid Ref.	NZ533282		





## 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		

