

## Local Nature Reserves

### Hart to Haswell Walkway

The Hart to Haswell Walkway follows the course of the former Hartlepool to Sunderland Railway designed by George Stephenson to take coal from the Durham coal fields to the docks in Hartlepool, where the coal was then distributed throughout the world. The line stretches from Hart Station in the south to Haswell in the North with the Walkway forming the first mile of the line. Thirty years after its closure it has been reclaimed by nature and has developed into a valuable wildlife corridor containing a mosaic of habitats that supports many important and rare species.

A visit to the Walkway in summer will reveal it at its best. The thin lime-rich soil enables a species rich meadow to flourish. The former railway cuttings provide sheltered environments and to that have been developed into grassland glades containing plants such as bird's foot trefoil, wild marjoram and bloody cranesbill which attract many species of butterfly including the common blue and dingy skipper.

The Walkway contains several ponds and some of the most substantial mature deciduous woodland in Hartlepool which provide a home to many insects, amphibians, birds and mammals.

This wildlife haven is a magnet for cyclists and walkers and is an important link in the Sustrans National Cycle Network which provides cyclists with a safe off-road travel route through beautiful countryside to South Shields. The site provides a flat surfaced track suitable for wheelchairs and for those on foot, Nesbitt and Castle Eden Denes and the hamlet of Monk Hesleden invite diversions to explore their charms.

Directions: Limited on- road parking is available on Ocean Road in Hart Station which is located just off the A1086 as you travel north out of Hartlepool. Visitors are asked to park with respect for local residents.

