

## Local Nature Reserves

### Spion Kop

This historic cemetery designed by the renowned architect John Dobson in 1856 was formed from a combination of sand dune and ships ballast and became the final resting place for some 26,300 souls, including many of the Headlands most famous sons and daughters. The cemetery is still receiving burials on a restricted basis and is now managed in a sensitive manner to promote the site's natural flora and fauna.

Spion Kop Cemetery Local Nature Reserve provides an unusual mix of coastal, limestone and industrial heritage habitats. The majority of the site has a dry, alkaline, nutrient-poor, sandy soil with low humus content. This has led to the development of coastal grassland vegetation that is unique in Hartlepool, and uncommon over the Tees Valley area. Notable flowers include thrift, pyramidal orchid and lesser meadow rue. The natural sward is relatively low, up to about 30cm, and is characterised by fine-leaved grasses. The site is also important for invertebrates and birds and skylarks, breed on the site.

Since 2003 the majority of the site, other than the paths, has just been cut at the end of the flowering season, with the arisings being collected and removed. In 2004 it was granted Local Nature Reserve status and has continued to be managed for nature conservation.

The site is located on Old Cemetery Road in Hartlepool's Headland.

