

Hebburn Riverside

Nature Trail



South Tyneside Council

Hebburn Riverside Nature Trail

The upper areas of the trail provide extensive views up and down the River Tyne and to the north. The northern section of the park is a grassed area with landscaping and planted trees such as willow, cherry, field maple and hawthorn.

At the river edge you may be lucky enough to glimpse a cormorant. They fly along the river, which acts as a wildlife corridor, linking the sea to their roosting habitat upstream. You may even see wading birds, such as redshank, probing in the mud when the tide is low.

Further south, you will come to an area of rough grassland and less formal scrub planting, where cowslips and orchids can be found in spring and early summer. Other flowers you may see on your journey include rose bay willowherb, common knapweed, toadflax and tansy.

You can also see butterflies if the sun is shining, spot a kestrel hovering overhead, or hear the sharp squawk of grey partridges taking flight. Foxes are also known to live in this area, taking cover in the plantations. To help you identify the wildlife, why not bring along a bird and flowers guide?

Accessibility

The main path running from Prince Consort Road to Bill Quay is tarmac, but some sections of the path are quite steep.

The southern section of the trail where it leaves the main tarmac path is earth/grass and parts of

it are quite steep. The northern section, where it leaves the main path going towards the works, is a mixture of grass and gravel paths that are also very steep.

Hebburn Riverside history

Hebburn Riverside Park lies on the south bank of the River Tyne at Hebburn. It is a large area of open space with an abundance of wildlife. The Nature Trail offers the opportunity to witness the range of wildlife available within the Riverside Park, which also offers spectacular views up and down the river. Visitors can walk along the banks of the Tyne from Hebburn to Bill Quay.

This area has a rich industrial history, which helped shape the development of Hebburn and its surrounding district.

The first mention of Hebburn dates back to the 8th century when it was described as a settlement of fishermen's huts that were burnt by the Vikings. Since that time the area has seen huge changes to its landscape. Coal mining was the first large-scale non-agricultural industry to arrive and by 1794 the Hebburn Colliery was in operation. Coal mining remained in this area, where Sir Humphrey Davy tested his safety lamp, until the closure of the last pit in 1931.

The Riverside Park and Marina development has been ongoing since the 1970's. Now the area is given over to parkland with trees and wild flowers growing and flourishing on reclaimed industrial land.

The route

Your starting point

The Nature Trail can be accessed from either Hebburn Metro Station or the riverside car park at the bottom of Prince Consort Road.

To access the Trail from Hebburn Metro station:

Walk westwards along Station Road down towards the River Tyne. At the roundabout continue straight ahead down Prince Consort Road. The road will bend sharply to the left and where it turns sharp right you need to continue straight ahead onto the riverside footpath to the information board.

To access the Trail from the riverside car park:

Walk back up Prince Consort Road for a short way to where the riverside footpath meets the road, turn right onto the footpath where there is an information board – this is the start of the trail.

To find your way easily around the trail follow the brown circular waymarkers.

The trail begins by following the tarmac riverside footpath up the slope to the first wooden carving of an acorn, which illustrates one of the many tree seeds to be found in the Riverside Park.

From this point continue along the tarmac path as it runs parallel to the river. Walking along here you will pass a number of fascinating sculptures created by the local community a number of years ago, along with the more

recent Flash@Hebburn. Keep following this tarmac path to discover the second wooden carving, which represents the history of boating on the river.

Continue towards Bill Quay for about 250 yards until you reach the third wooden carving which represents one of the numerous wild birds that live and feed along the river. Proceed along the tarmac path to the junction of four paths near the fourth wooden carving. It illustrates the wild mushrooms that emerge through the grassland in autumn. Please note many mushrooms are poisonous and are not suitable to eat.

From this junction continue to walk along the tarmac path adjacent to the river until you reach the fifth wooden carving of a horse, representing horse grazing which remains a common land-use. Here the tarmac path bends to your left, but the trail continues straight ahead across the grassy slope towards the bend in the river. Here you will discover the sixth wooden carving of a maple leaf.



From here continue walking along the grass path adjacent to the river for about 200 yards until you reach the seventh wooden carving of fish, which represents the river's wildlife. There are some outstanding views from this area of the park northwards across the river.

From this point you need to proceed up the bank towards the tarmac path near the plantation, to find the eighth wooden carving of an alder leaf and seeds, illustrating another of the various tree species visible.

From this sculpture you could choose to venture into Bill Quay to visit their Town Farm (telephone 0191 433 5780 for further information and opening times).

However, to continue along the trail, which now turns back towards Hebburn, you need to follow the grass path across the slope towards the junction of the metro line and the large hedgerow. At this place you will discover the ninth wooden carving, which represents the range of snails to be found wandering along the floor of the Riverside Park.

From this point continue along the grass track next to the Metro line until you reach the allotments at the far end. Here stands the tenth wooden carving of a daisy, depicting the variety of wild flowers that can be seen all over the grassland here.

The trail now turns left back towards the riverside along the tarmac path between the

allotments and the horse paddocks. When you once again reach the junction of the four paths you will rediscover the fourth wooden carving (of a mushroom). Here you need to turn right and double back along the original tarmac path towards Hebburn.

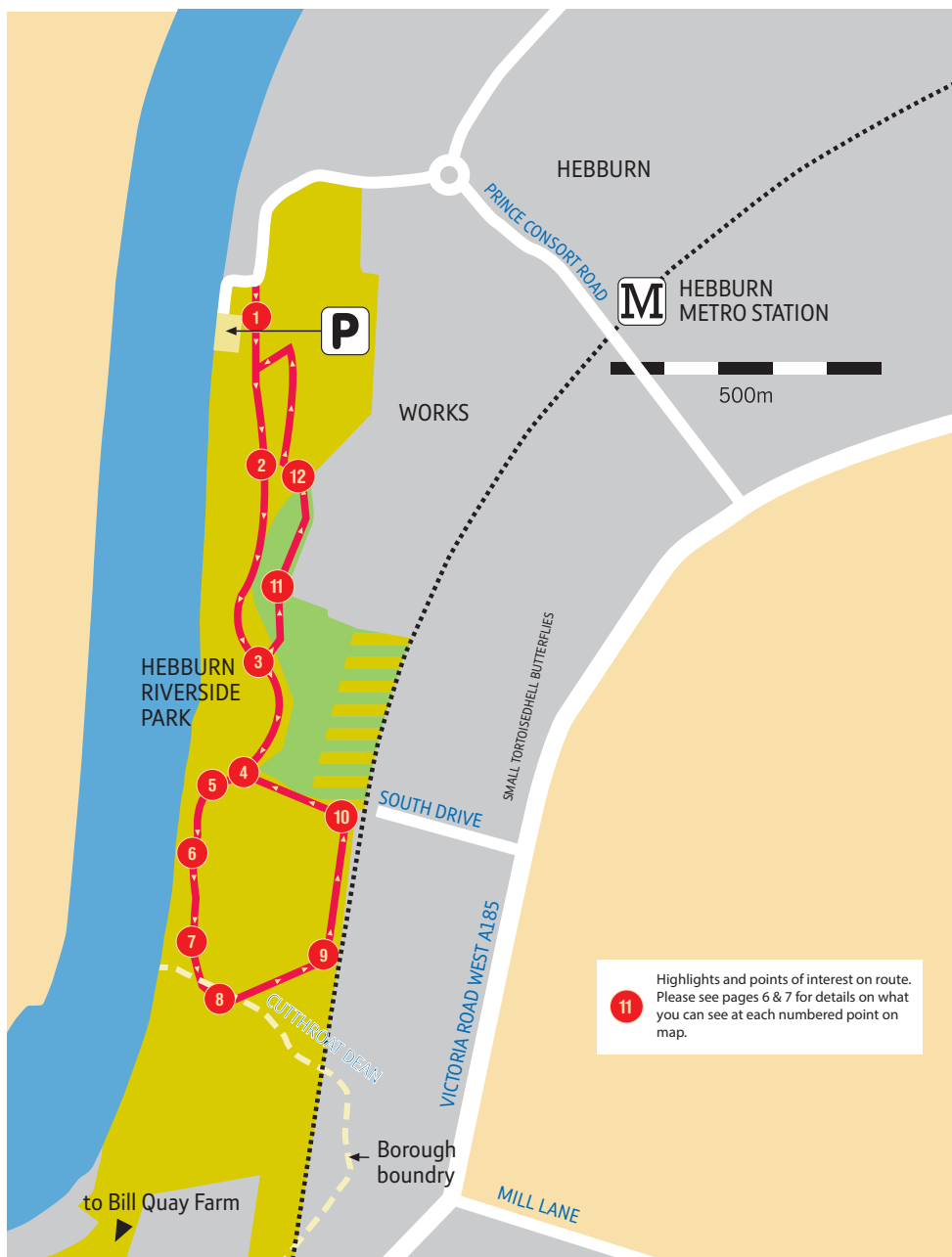
When you again reach the third wooden carving (of a bird) you should turn right along the gravel path through the trees and up the steep bank to the top. At this point you will find the eleventh wooden carving of a spider.

From here walk straight ahead along the path (running adjacent to the fence) back towards Hebburn. When you reach the opening of the trees, you will discover the twelfth and final wooden carving depicting the range of wild butterflies that can be seen flying around the Riverside Park and River Tyne.

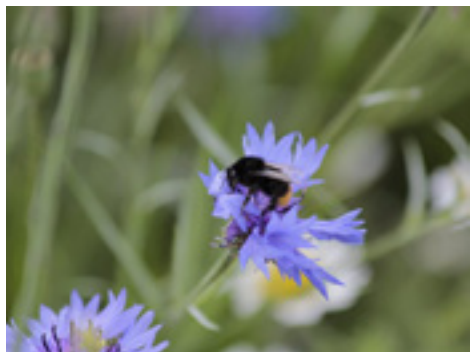
The trail continues straight ahead along a grass path through the trees in front of you. Once through these, go down the slope to the tarmac path, then turn left down the steps back to the main tarmac path. Turn right and continue along the path past the first wooden carving once more and back to where you began at the start of the Nature Trail.



Map



Highlights



- 1 The acorn is the seed of the oak tree, the “king” of British trees and one of the most valuable to wildlife. It provides food and a home for a wide range of insects, birds and mammals throughout the year.
- 2 In the 8th century Hebburn was described as a settlement of fisherman’s huts. By the mid 18th century various ship building and repair yards existed here and a ferry across to North Tyneside. The current marina was established in 1970’s.
- 3 Many different birds can be seen in the Riverside Park such as the colourful goldfinch and yellowhammer. Look out for kestrels hunting for small mammals in the long grass and redshank and lapwing feeding in the riverside mud during the winter months.
- 4 Shaggy ink caps can be found throughout the summer and autumn. Field mushrooms may occur in the grassland but beware because other similar looking fungi are deadly poisonous!

5 Parts of the Park are managed by horse grazing. If this was not done the grasslands, together with the wildflowers and insects, would eventually all be lost beneath scrub and trees.

6 The plantations contain numerous types of scrub. Look out for sea buckthorn with its golden berries and vicious spines, dogwood with its colourful winter stems, and elder with its creamy white flowers followed by purple berries.

7 There are at least seven different types of fish here in the River Tyne, including migrating salmon and sea trout. During the autumn, terns can be seen “dive bombing” for sprats. Cormorants catch flounders throughout the year and apparently struggle to swallow them without choking.

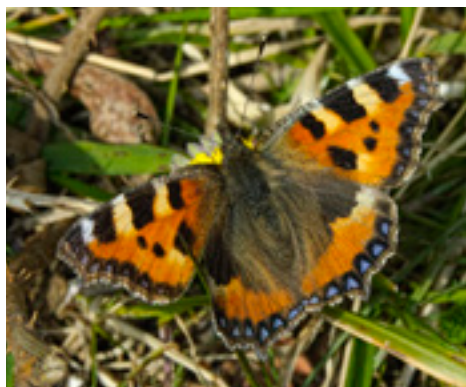
8 Alder trees manage to thrive on the damp ground and poor soils here. Their wood is still used for making clogs and broom handles. You can recognise alders by their rounded leaves, spring catkins and cones throughout the year.





9 Damp summer weather brings out many black slugs to feed and mate. You may even spot a song thrush using a rock as an “anvil” on which to break a snail’s shell to reach the soft mollusc within.

10 A wide range of wildflowers can be found within the Park. Goatsbeard is like a dandelion but has an enormous “clock” of seeds. Bird foot trefoil has leaflets in threes and seedpods like birds feet. The white trumpet-shaped blooms of great bindweed are the biggest wild flowers in Britain.



11 Early morning is often the best time to see spiders when their webs are hung with dew, but the bright orange spider beetles are best spotted on a sunny day.

12 Many attractive butterflies can be seen during fine weather. Look for the tiny common blue and others including the small tortoiseshell (with its striped forewing), the peacock (named after the “eyes” on its wings) and the red admiral (which is black and white with vivid red markings).





Additional countryside information

For further information and leaflets please visit www.southtyneside.info

Flash at Hebburn

The artist Charles Quick was invited to design a piece of artwork for Hebburn Riverside Park as part of the Tyne and Wear Art on the Riverside programme.

Historically, Hebburn had been an important industrial centre with a large number of heavy industries including coal mining, ship building, steel works, chemical works, coke production and high voltage electrical engineering along with many others. Flashes of light could be associated with all of these industries. This was to inspire Flash@Hebburn that echoes the proud industrial heritage of Hebburn, which is

contemporary in its use of new technologies and renewable energy to create a range of flash sequences for the artwork.

Light sequences explained

One of eight different fifteen-minute sequences comes on automatically at dusk each night. The piece activates for a 30 second sequence every 15 minutes throughout the day.

Visible from as far as Newcastle, Gateshead and Wallsend, the artwork gives Hebburn a distinct identity from other riverside communities along the Tyne.

Contacts for further information

Countryside Officer/ Public Rights of Way Officer

South Tyneside Council
Town Hall and Civic Offices
Westoe Road,
South Shields
NE33 2RL
Telephone (0191) 427 7000

Additional countryside information

For further information and leaflets please see
www.southtyneside.info

Visitor Information Centre South Shields

Telephone (0191) 424 7788

Public transport information – Travel Line

Telephone 0871 200 2233 for all local public transport enquiries.



Countryside Code

Respect other people

- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

Protect the natural environment

- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under effective control

Enjoy the outdoors

- Plan ahead and be prepared
- Follow advice and local signs



