

We surveyed a disused railway line between Coundon and Binchester adjacent to the A688 near Bishop Auckland in County Durham. This area is now colonised by hedgerow plants. The route started at GR 229 302 and ended at 226 318.

Location	Family name	Botanical name	Common name
Plants on site with identified medicinal uses	Amaryllidaceae	<i>Galanthus nivalis</i>	Snowdrop
	Araliaceae	<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy
	Aspleniaceae	<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i>	Hart's tongue fern
	Asteraceae	<i>Primula veris</i>	Yarrow
	Asteraceae	<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	Coltsfoot
	Asteraceae	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Ox eye daisy
	Boraginaceae	<i>Symphytum officinale</i>	Comfrey
	Caprifoliaceae	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Honeysuckle
	Caryophyllaceae	<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red campion
	Caryophyllaceae	<i>Stellaria graminca</i>	Lesser stitchwort
	Caryophyllaceae	<i>Stellaria media</i>	Chick weed
	Equisetaceae	<i>Equisetum arvensis</i>	Horsetail
	Fabaceae	<i>Hippocrepis comosa</i>	Horseshoe vetch
	Fabaceae	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White clover
	Fabaceae	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red clover
	Fabaceae	<i>Vicia sativa</i>	Common vetch
	Geraniaceae	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert
	Geraniaceae	<i>Geranium pratense</i>	Meadow cranesbill
	Lamiaceae	<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Wood woundwort
	Lamiaceae	<i>Lamium album</i>	White dead nettle
	Onagraceae	<i>Epilobium angustifolium</i>	Rose bay willow
	Plantaginaceae	<i>Plantago major</i>	Great plantain
Primulaceae	<i>Primula veris</i>	Cowslip	
Ranunculaceae	<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	Lesser celandine	

Location	Family name	Botanical name	Common name
Plants on site with identified medicinal uses	Rosaceae	Rubus fruticosus	Raspberry
	Rosaceae	Fragaria vesca	Strawberry
	Rosaceae	Alchemilla filicaulis	Lady's mantle
	Rosaceae	Geum rivale	Water avens
	Rosaceae	Geum urbanum	Wood avens
	Rubiaceae	Galium aparine	Cleavers
	Urticaceae	Urtica dioica	Common nettle
	Violaceae	Viola riviniana	Common violet [culinary use]
Plants on site with no identified medicinal uses	Araceae	Arum maculatum	Lords and ladies
	Euphorbiaceae	Mercurialis perennis	Dog's mercury
	Fabaceae	Vicia sepium	Bush vetch
	Fabaceae	Lathyrus filicaulis	Meadow vetchling
	Fabaceae	Lotus corniculatus	Bird's foot trefoil
	Geraniaceae	Geranium sylvaticum	Wood cranesbill
	Papilionaceae	Ulex europeous	Gorse
	Ranunculeae	Ranunculus acris	Buttercup
	Rosaceae	Rubus fruticosus	Bramble/blackberry
Shrubs and trees found on site			Ash
			Beech
			Blackthorn
			Broom
			Elm
			Hawthorn
			Hazel

Location	Family name	Botanical name	Common name
Shrubs and trees found on site			Lime
			OakApple
			Rowan
			Silver birch
			Sycamore

Walk location/info at <https://www.durham.gov.uk/media/4400/Railway-Path-Auckland-Way/pdf/RailwayPathAucklandWay.pdf?m=635902713802570000>

These are more data on some of the plants identified by Wear Tees U3A, walking along part of the Auckland Way Railway Path.

Common Name (s)	Botanical Name and Family	Medicinal Uses
Red Campion	<i>Silene dioica</i> (Caryophyllaceae)	Simmering the root in hot water can provide a soapy liquid which can be used for washing. Other than that, there is little medicinal use for this charming woodland plant.
Horseshoe vetch	<i>Hippocrepis comosa</i> (Fabaceae)	A member of the pea (Fabaceae) family, Horseshoe vetch is little history of medicinal use. On the other hand, the root of bitter vetch (<i>Lathyrus linifolius</i>) has had a long traditional use as an appetite suppressant – used in the past in times of famine and scarcity, but now has been investigated (but failed) as a slimming aid!
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i> (Fabaceae)	Not really used in Western herbal medicine, white clover has been used in the Middle East and Turkey to treat rheumatic pains and swelling glands (such as in mumps)
Red Clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i> (Fabaceae)	This is the main clover used in Western Europe. It is an important herb in modern herbal medicine, used for its oestrogenic effects in balancing oestrogen hormone deficiencies (such as in the menopause) or excesses (as in period problems, sore breasts etc.). Red Clover is also used for coughs, including in bronchitis. A tea made with the flowers can be used as a gargle or mouthwash in cases of mouth ulcers or sore throat.
Common vetch	<i>Vicia sativa</i> (Fabaceae)	

Herb Robert	Geranium robertianum (Geraniaceae)	<p>Death come quickly, Red robin. Stinky Bob – just some of the common names given to this plant. The name 'Robert' or 'robertianum' is thought to come from Father Robert, a monk herbalist. In the 1950's Geoffrey Grigson recorded more than 110 local names. As a member of the geranium family it joins 300 other species in this family.</p> <p>The leaves of this plant rubbed onto skin act as an insect repellent. But it is the root that it used medicinally as it is a powerful astringent. Its traditional uses include stopping bleeding after tooth extraction, and as a mouthwash for sore gums and sore throats.</p>
Cleavers	Galium aparine (Rubiaceae)	<p>Related to sweet woodruff, lady's bedstraw, and madder, means that Cleavers is part of the Rubiaceae, or coffee, family.</p> <p>Small, hairy, clinging seeds of this weed are produced in large quantities, of 300-400 seeds per plant, are easily distributed and can persist in the soil for 6 years.</p> <p>Cleavers is a herb that is rich in minerals and worth eating when very young and fresh; it contains silica which strengthens hair and teeth. Medicinally, Cleavers has a very valuable role as a lymphatic cleanser, and diuretic. As such it is used medicinally for conditions such as lymphoedema, cystitis, and skin conditions (eczema, psoriasis, acne)</p> <p>The seeds can be roasted for coffee if you have the patience to collect them.</p>
Common Nettle	Urtica dioica (Urticaceae)	<p>Nettle leaf is a prime herb for treating <u>allergic conditions</u> such as eczema, asthma and hayfever. It is especially suitable if eczema worsens in the Spring and Summer and where the reaction is related to the seasons. Although the stinging hairs contain histamine, the leaf itself acts as an anti-histamine, reducing the release of histamine from cells (histamine is responsible for many of the symptoms of hayfever, including blocked or runny nose, tickly mouth, throat and/or eyes, wheezy chest). The Vitamin C content will also add to its antihistamine effects. Nettle is especially helpful for childhood eczema. An infusion of the leaf is used to control and eliminate dandruff and cradle cap.</p> <p>With its nutrient profile of vitamins and minerals, Nettle leaf is an important Spring tonic as well as an easily digestible source of iron for those with iron-deficiency anaemia. As an herb that stops bleeding, it is used, internally, for moderating heavy periods.</p> <p>Nettle has a stimulating action, particularly on the kidneys and bladder, helping cleanse toxins and waste. Its diuretic action also helps bladder infections such as cystitis and removal of uric acid from the body. It is this that can help in relieving inflammation in arthritis and gout.</p> <p>The root is used to treat enlarged prostate in men.</p>

Lords and Ladies	Arum maculatum (Araceae)	Lords and Ladies, Devils and Angels, Adam and Eve are just 3 of the common names for this poisonous plant, which thrives in shady hedgerows and woodland. In early Spring, only the leaves of this plant are apparent and because Cuckoo pint often grows in woodland areas where wild garlic/ransoms grow, it is important to be able to distinguish Cuckoo Pint by its leaf. The plant head turns a bright, tomato red – dangerously attractive to young children. The leaves too can cause problems with burning and blistering if picked. In the past, the dried and roasted root was ground to a powder called Portland sago (and used in a similar way to arrowroot).
Wood cranesbill	Geranium sylvaticum (Geraniaceae)	Not commonly used as a medicinal herb, although another cranesbill – American cranesbill (Geranium maculatum) – is a modern herbal medicine used mainly to treat diarrhoea. It is a powerful astringent herb for this action.
Bramble/Blackberry	Rubus fruticosus (Rosaceae)	Whilst the fruit makes a tasty tart or crumble and provides some vitamin C, the root and leaves are the medicinal parts of this hedgerow plant. Both root and leaf are excellent astringents for diarrhoea , although the root is stronger than the leaf.
Ash	Fraxinus spp. (Oleaceae)	The Ancient Greeks believed in the use of the leaves to treat snake bites (although a lot of plants were offered for that function too!). Ash bark has traditionally been used as a substitute for Peruvian bark (quinine source). The bitterness of a decoction of the bark also makes it a good laxative. The leaves are also strongly laxative as well as being diuretic – an all-round ‘cleaner-outer’. Ash is not a commonly used herbal treatment today.
Beech	Fagus sylvatica (Fagaceae)	Not used in modern herbal medicine but the oil from beech nuts produces a tar which has been used as a stimulating expectorant.
Blackthorn	Prunus spinose (Rosaceae)	The flowers appear at the same time as the hawthorn flowers, and are used as cleansers (laxative and diuretic) as well as being anti-inflammatory. Like most bushes and trees, the bark is strongly astringent. The fruit (sloes) marinade nicely in gin and offer both vitamin C but, more importantly, flavonoids which are important in cardiovascular health.
Broom	Cytisus scoparius (Fabaceae)	Formerly called Genista scoparius, it is linked to the Plantagenet family from the nickname of Geoffrey of Anjou in the 12 th century (planta genista). Broom is a member of the pea family and the chemical ‘sparteine, from its flowering tops have been a

		<p>valuable medicine, used for centuries for heart conditions where it is a diuretic and heart stimulant. During WW2, local groups were urged to collect herbs including Broom, and in Suffolk 6 tons of Broom tops were collected in May 1942.</p> <p>Care needs to be taken not to confuse this plant with Spanish Broom whose leaves are like pine needles – Broom leaves are small and oval – and it flowers later. The flowers of Spanish Broom are poisonous.</p>
Elm	Ulmus spp. (Ulmaceae)	<p>Traditionally used as an astringent and diuretic, the leaves sometimes produce galls which contain a liquid recommended by Culpeper ‘to clean the skin and make it fair’.</p> <p>Common elm should not be confused with Slippery Elm (<i>Ulmus fulva</i>) which is widely available nowadays and is a superb herb to sooth irritation and inflammation in the digestive system.</p>
Hawthorn	Crataegus spp. (Rosaceae)	<p>The flowers and leaves are a major modern herbal treatment for the cardiovascular system, particularly strengthening the heartbeat. It is a very safe herb to use alongside blood pressure lowering drugs.</p> <p>The berries, in the autumn, make a tasty syrup which is full of flavonoids – chemicals which strengthen blood vessel walls.</p>
Hazel	Corylus avellana (Betulaceae)	<p>The only part of this shrub/tree that is used is the nut. The nut is a valuable source of beneficial fats – monounsaturates and essential fatty acids – as well as minerals and some vitamins.</p>
Holly	Ilex aquifolium (Aquifoliaceae)	<p>A traditional remedy not used in modern herbal medicine. The leaves were used to encourage sweating in a fever, used in pleurisy and smallpox. They were also used, like Ash bark, as an alternative to quinine. And let us not forget, holly wood makes a terrific wand (for Harry Potter fans).</p>
Lime	Tilia europea (Malvaceae)	<p>Also known as Linden tree, Grinling Gibbons (1648-1721) used lime wood for most of his flower and figure carvings in St Pauls, Windsor Castle and Chatsworth.</p> <p>The flowers are used medicinally to calm, relax and restore, especially useful for cases of high blood pressure and palpitations due to stress, nervousness, and excitability.</p> <p>It’s a useful herb for those with headaches, or migraines brought on by stress or anxiety.</p> <p>Lime flower infusion works well for fevers where sweating is not happening or where there is chills and shivering. It is also very effective and gentle herb for children especially where there is tension e.g. tummy aches from stress, or exam stresses.</p>
Oak Apple	Quercus spp.	<p>Oak apples are a gall that grows on oak leaves. Whilst not used medicinally, the oak galls are used in material dyeing to provide tannins as a mordant.</p>

Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i> (Rosaceae)	The bark was traditionally used as an astringent for diarrhoea. The berries are also astringent and used as a gargle for sore throats, including providing a good amount of vitamin C.
Silver Birch	<i>Betula pendula</i> (Betulaceae)	Like the willow tree, silver birch leaves contain salicylates which have an aspirin-like effect as well as being diuretic. It is traditionally used to treat rheumatism and gout, kidney and bladder problems.
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> (Sapindaceae)	Also has a common name of Maple Tree or Great Maple and it is under this name that Culpeper wrote of its use to 'strengthen the liver' and increase bile flow. But it has little use beyond Culpeper's book (1653), and none in modern herbal medicine.