

Marline Valley

A very rich wooded valley above a gill stream with meadows, ponds and scrub

Close to the town of Hastings lies a deep wooded valley, or gill. At the bottom of this valley runs a stream, babbling over sandstone. Mosses, liverworts and ferns found here are the main reason why this is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. In spring Marline Valley Local Nature Reserve boasts rafts of wild garlic that fill the air with their pungent scent as the bright green leaves of hornbeam burst out — trees originally managed for making charcoal to support the local iron industry. The woodland floor boasts a vivid carpet of bluebells, wood anemones, primroses and violets. Where the hornbeam starts to thicken up, together with other species, such as hazel, ash and sweet chestnut, it provides a home for dormice and warblers.

Highlights

Woodland flowers,
mosses, ferns, orchids,
adder's-tongue fern,
wasp spiders, and
various warblers.



whitethroat

Elsewhere the hornbeam has grown to its full stature and here the unusual violet helleborine and the occasional hawfinch may be found. Above the woodland towards the main road there is a series of meadows, rich with flowers, including common spotted orchid, dyer's greenweed and adder's-tongue fern. Butterflies, such as the green hairstreak dance over the meadow in search of nectar, while in the taller grasses the huge brightly-coloured wasp spider lurks in readiness. Patches of hawthorn and bramble scrub provide homes for whitethroat, blackcap and other warblers. With so much variety there is something to see at any time of year, but April to September are the best months.



Clockwise green woodpecker, wild garlic, british white cattle