

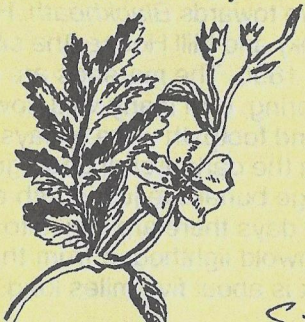
St Peter's Church, Wenhaston

Wenhaston Church is referred to in the Domesday Survey and has suffered much at the hands of time and man. It may be of Saxon origin. There are two Norman windows, but the building is mainly 14th and 16th century. The door has a 13th century Sanctuary knocker.

The 'Doom', or Last Judgment painting, was made about 1480 by a monk from Blythburgh Priory. In 1545 it was whitewashed and in 1892 it was taken down and left in the churchyard overnight, when rain washed off the covering. It is unique in that it was painted on boards and the great rood and its supporting figures were directly attached to it; their outlines can be clearly seen. The Doom shows Our Lord holding a scroll while St Michael weighs souls; the jaws of Hell, represented by a fish's head, await the unlucky ones. On the left, St Peter holds the keys of Heaven.

Outside are Nos 1-3 Church Cottages, formerly the Guildhall (16th century) which, in its time, was used as a school, the office of the Overseer of the Poor and a courtroom.

The Church Room is Georgian and became the Schoolroom until the Primary School was built in 1882.



Silene

THE WILDLIFE of WENHASTON abounds on its heaths and surrounding countryside. Take time to explore *Blackheath* with its rolling slopes, yellow with gorse, purple with bell heather and ling, criss-crossed by paths and tracks. Listen for the nightingale whose melodious song can be heard at any time of the day or night during the early summer months. Look for the gorse sculptures grazed by rabbits and the pond which dries out in summer, but still manages to support a variety of pond life.

Bicker's Heath is a common of views with open areas of heather with some gorse and broom — and a seat to rest upon.

Mill Heath is a place to linger on hot sunny days, with linnets twittering overhead and the smell of coconut from the yellow flowering gorse. Harebells, wild sage, heath bedstraw, toadflax and golden rod are just a few of the wildflowers you will find there. Watch for lizards sunning themselves on bare patches of earth, but no adders at Wenhaston (unless you can prove us wrong?)

Church Common is an area of short turf with gorse, silver birch and oak trees. Wildflowers such as milkwort, parsley piert and birdsfoot will only be found if you go down on your hands and knees to view this miniature world. Peep into *Vicarage Grove* as you pass by and see the smooth, twisted trunks of hornbeams which were once coppiced, and sanicle — an interesting woodland plant.

The Country Code

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work.
- Use gates & stiles to cross fences, hedges & walls.
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone.
- Keep to public paths across farmland.
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees.
- Keep your dogs under control.
- Make no unnecessary noise.
- Fasten all gates.
- Guard against all risk of fire.
- Help to keep all water clean.
- Take special care on country roads.
- Take your litter home.

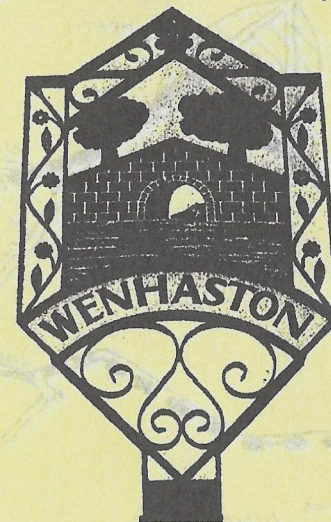


Harebell



Milkwort

FIVE COMMONS WALK



How to get there:

Wenhaston is a large village situated three miles southeast of Halesworth and one mile south of the B1123 from Blythford. It is just over one mile west of Blythburgh and is signposted from the A.12

Today, a heathland landscape will not remain the same without volunteers to carry out vital work.

This leaflet has been prepared by the **Wenhaston Commons Group**. To find out more about them and the work they do on conservation, please contact:

Heather Phillips

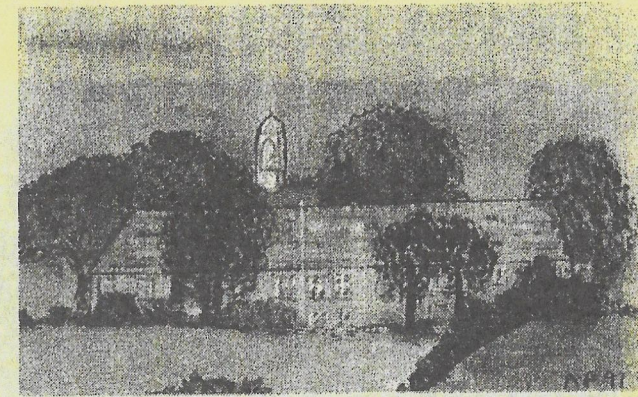
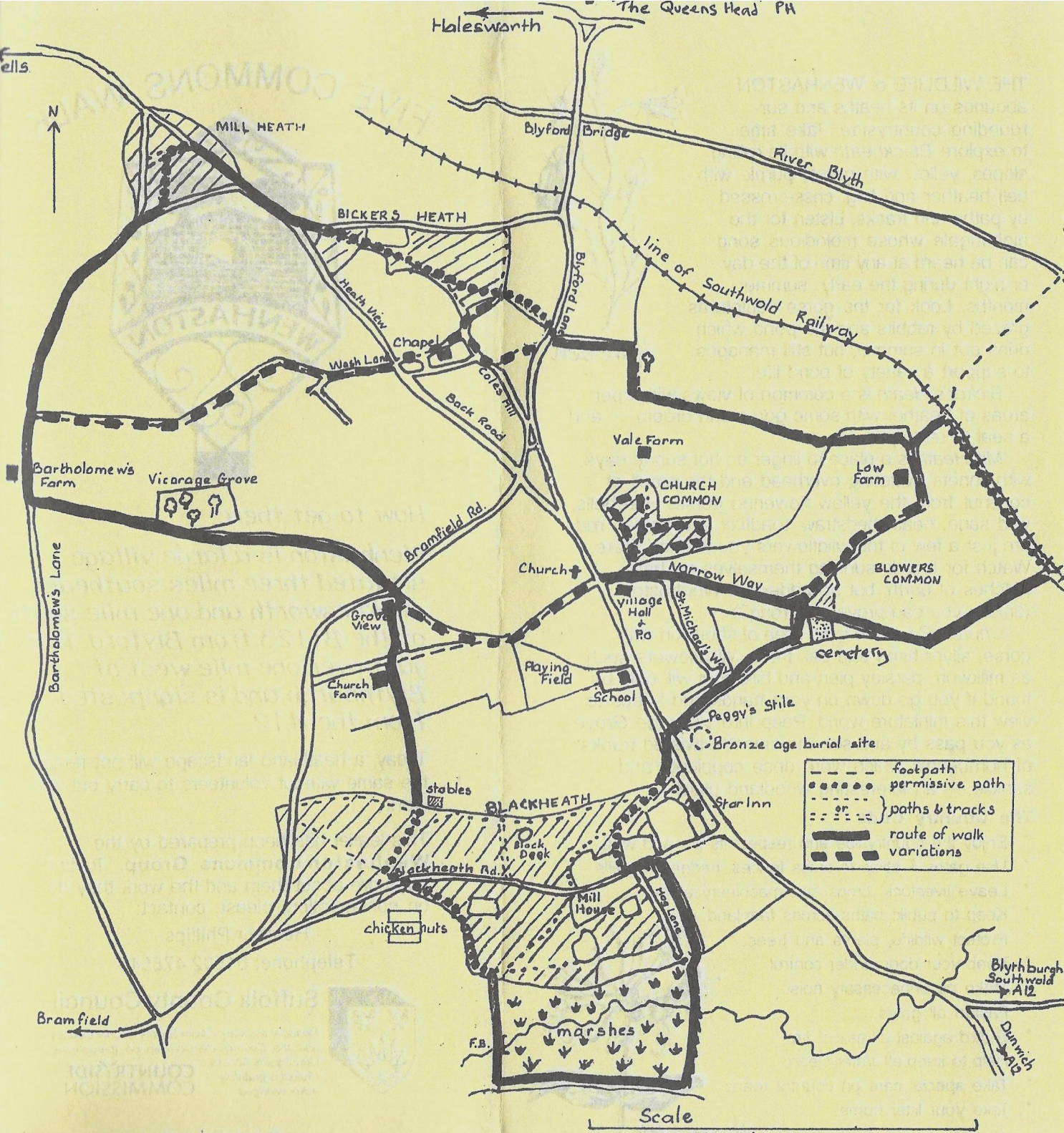
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Suffolk County Council

Financial assistance from Suffolk County Council and the Countryside Commission through the Countryside Access Project is gratefully acknowledged.

COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION



Blythburgh Hospital

WENHASTON HEATHS and COMMONS are fragments of the Suffolk Sandlings which stretched from Ipswich to Lowestoft. All are managed by the Suffolk Coastal District Council and Byelaws are in operation.

We begin at the Village Hall car park and go down Narrow Way to *Church Common* which has a fine boundary bank on the west side, topped by oak trees. To the northeast one sees Blythburgh Hospital, built 1766 as a Workhouse. Nearby is the site of the Battle of Bulcamp in 654.

Back on Narrow Way you will pass *Blowers Common* — a tiny remnant of heathland. Our path then follows for about quarter of a mile, the line of the old Halesworth/Southwold Railway. This was built to 3 ft gauge and was opened in 1879. It closed in 1929 — competing buses being faster!

Follow the waymarks from the track, crossing open fields and Blyford Lane up to *Bickers Heath*. This heath has a wonderful view of the Blyth Valley. Note Blyford Church tower and the 16th century Queen's Head, reputedly a smugglers' inn and haunted.

Mill Heath is a common of dips and hollows and plenty of gorse, which had many domestic uses in times past.

Take the footpath left, just past Bartholomew's Farm and Vicarage Grove towards *Blackheath*. Here there is a pond (Black Deek) and Mill House, the site of a windmill demolished in 1896. The marshes are especially delightful in the Spring, with many wild flowers.

Peggy's Stile and footpath were always eerie and few would use it in the dark. Aerial photographs have shown a bronze age burial site just south of the footpath. On clear days there are views to Blythburgh Church and Southwold lighthouse from this path.

The whole walk is about five miles long.