

oaks and bluebell glades, Grove Piece, a newly planted wood and Malster's Little Field, all managed by the Blyth Woods Group.

Continue along the footpath crossing Bramfield Road following the route via Church Farm across the field to Black Heath, the largest of Wenhaston's commons. It's criss-crossed by many paths and tracks. Listen for nightingales in spring. There is a pond called 'Black Deek' and a cliff with nest holes, home to visiting sand martins.

Continue in a southerly direction crossing Blackheath Road to the south side of the heath along the track passing 'Heathside Holidays' to the marshes, delightful in spring with many wild flowers.

Follow the route around the marshes – this area can be muddy after rain. Cross over the packhorse bridge and continue up the track alongside Merton Wood (managed by Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Wenhaston Commons Group volunteers) with its fruit and nut orchard planted by Blyth Woods and Wenhaston Primary School Children.

At Blackheath Road turn left and then right, back onto Black Heath exiting by a track to the road. Cross over to Peggy's Stile at the top of Star Hill. On clear days there are views of Southwold Lighthouse and Blythburgh Church.

Continue on the footpath passing alongside the allotments and left up Narrow Way back to the Village Hall.

Wenhaston is a large village 2 miles east of Halesworth. It is signposted from the A12. It has a Church and a village hall at its centre, a primary school, pub and a shop at Heathside Holidays park site.

The Church has a 'Doom' or Last Judgment painting made in about 1480 by a monk from Blythburgh Priory. In 1545 it was whitewashed. In 1892 it was taken down and left in the churchyard overnight, when rain washed off the whitewash and exposed the painting.

Wenhaston has a project to encourage swifts to nest in house roofs and nest boxes. A 'swift flag' is hoisted at the flagpole at the church when swifts are present in the village.

Wenhaston's commons are some of the remaining fragments of Suffolk Sandlings lowland heathland which used to stretch from Ipswich to Lowestoft. They are managed by Wenhaston Commons Group volunteers, Wenhaston Parish Council and Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

Heathland species to look out for: heather, gorse, bracken, slow worm, silver studded blue butterfly, dragonflies, nightingale, hobby, sand martin, woodlark and otter in streams on the marshes.

The Star Inn: www.wenhastonstar.co.uk

Village Hall Café open: Saturdays 10-12 noon

Post Office open: Mondays-Thursdays 9-1 pm

Advice for countryside visitors:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code

For more information about Wenhaston:

www.wenhaston.onesuffolk.net

For general information about the Blyth Valley:

www.blythweb.co.uk

Blyth Woods: www.blythwoods.org



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Wenhaston Commons Group
A five mile circular footpath walk
around Wenhaston's Commons



This leaflet has been prepared by
Wenhaston Commons Group



Start at Wenhaston Village Hall. Walk to Church Common which has a central rabbit-grazed area of short grass with gorse, birch and oak trees marking the boundary. Views across open farm land towards the former Blythburgh Hospital at Bulcamp built in 1766 as a workhouse.

Back on Narrow Way pass Blower's Common, a tiny remnant of heathland scrub. Continue along the track ahead passing the new cemetery and turn left through the gate at the bottom of the hill to join the line of the old Southwold Railway. Opened in 1879 it closed just 50 years later in 1929, competing buses being faster. Here is a view of Blythburgh Church (the 'Cathedral of the Marshes'). This path passes between native Black Poplars planted by Wenhaston Commons Group volunteers.

Turn left through the gate and follow the waymarks for the walk across open fields and Blyford Lane up to Bicker's Heath. From the path there are wonderful views of the Blyth Valley and Blyford Church. As you walk across the heath you will see areas with heather, gorse and some broom.

Join the road to Mill Heath – a small common of dips and hollows and plenty of gorse in chunky sculptures grazed by rabbits. Half way in, turn left and then right at the clearing, following the waymark, downhill to the road.

Leave Mill Heath turning right onto Bartholomew's Lane. Just past Bartholomew's Farm take the footpath left to Grove Woods comprising Vicarage Grove, an ancient wood with coppiced hornbeams,