

# Blaxhall & Tunstall

## Explorer Guide



### Highlights of the walks

- 1 Blaxhall Common** is an ancient landscape with an Iron Age burial mound. The villagers of Blaxhall have a commoners' right to graze animals and take turf for fuel. Some of the ditches across the Common were dug during World War II to prevent enemy gliders from landing.



Today, Blaxhall Common is a Site of Special Scientific Interest managed by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. The Common provides a habitat for many species of plant, fungi and animal. Birds you might spot include woodlark, nightjar, nightingale and goldcrest. Reptiles such as common lizard and adder thrive on the dry sandy ground. The area is ideal for insects too. In 2007, the silver-studded blue butterfly was successfully re-introduced. This butterfly flourishes where bell heather grows.



Images: Front cover – Local paths – gateways to the landscape. A. Blaxhall Common – a rare lowland habitat – Tony Pick. B. Gorse flowers – coconut scented! C. Silver-studded blue butterfly – recently re-introduced. D. Tunstall Forest – a mix of woodland types. E. Birch trees – beautiful but invasive.

Explore Sandlings heath and woodland starting from Blaxhall Common.



Blaxhall and Tunstall Commons are areas of heathland and other important wildlife habitats. They are part of the Suffolk Sandlings and partially surrounded by the mixed woodland of Tunstall Forest.

- 2 Tunstall Forest** is a commercial forest planted by the Forestry Commission in the 1930s. The majority of the original trees have been felled, so today there is a mixture of new plantation, broadleaved trees and heathland. Many trees were lost in the great storm of October 1987, which allowed planting to be diversified. Although the dense areas of commercial pine forest are not very wildlife friendly, the more open areas are ideal for nightjar and woodlark. The 'rides' through the Forest are wildlife corridors linking the open heath of Blaxhall and Tunstall Commons. The forest is popular for recreation and you may meet walkers, mountain bikers or horse riders.



- 3 Tunstall Common** is another great habitat for plants and animals. Tunstall and Blaxhall Commons are rare examples of the Suffolk Sandlings, lowland heath that once covered much of east Suffolk. The plant species are distinctive, with bell heather, milkwort, speedwell and sheep's sorrel adding colour to the heath in summer. Some more invasive species, such as bracken and birch have to be controlled to prevent them smothering other plants.

### The Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

The Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of Britain's finest landscapes. It extends from the Stour Estuary in the south to the eastern fringe of Ipswich and then north to Kessingland. The AONB covers 403 square kilometres, including wildlife rich wetlands, ancient heaths, windswept shingle beaches and historic towns and villages.

### Visiting Blaxhall & Tunstall

- Ordnance Survey Map No. 212 (Woodbridge and Saxmundham)
- Access via the B1069 from the A1152/A12 (south) or A1094/A12 (north). Walks start from car park on E side of B1069.
- 64 bus from Ipswich to Wickham Market & transfer to Coastal Accessible Transport (Suffolk Links Alde) – must book day before travel. Tel: 0845 604 1802. Normally a wheelchair accessible vehicle. East Suffolk Line hourly train service between Ipswich and Lowestoft. Leave train at Wickham Market. Blaxhall is a 20 minute cycle ride. Public transport information: [www.suffolkonboard.com](http://www.suffolkonboard.com) or call 0845 606 6171

Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB  
01394 445225  
[www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org](http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org)

Tourist Information:  
Aldeburgh: 01728 453637  
Woodbridge: 01394 444400  
[www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/tourism/tics/](http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/tourism/tics/)



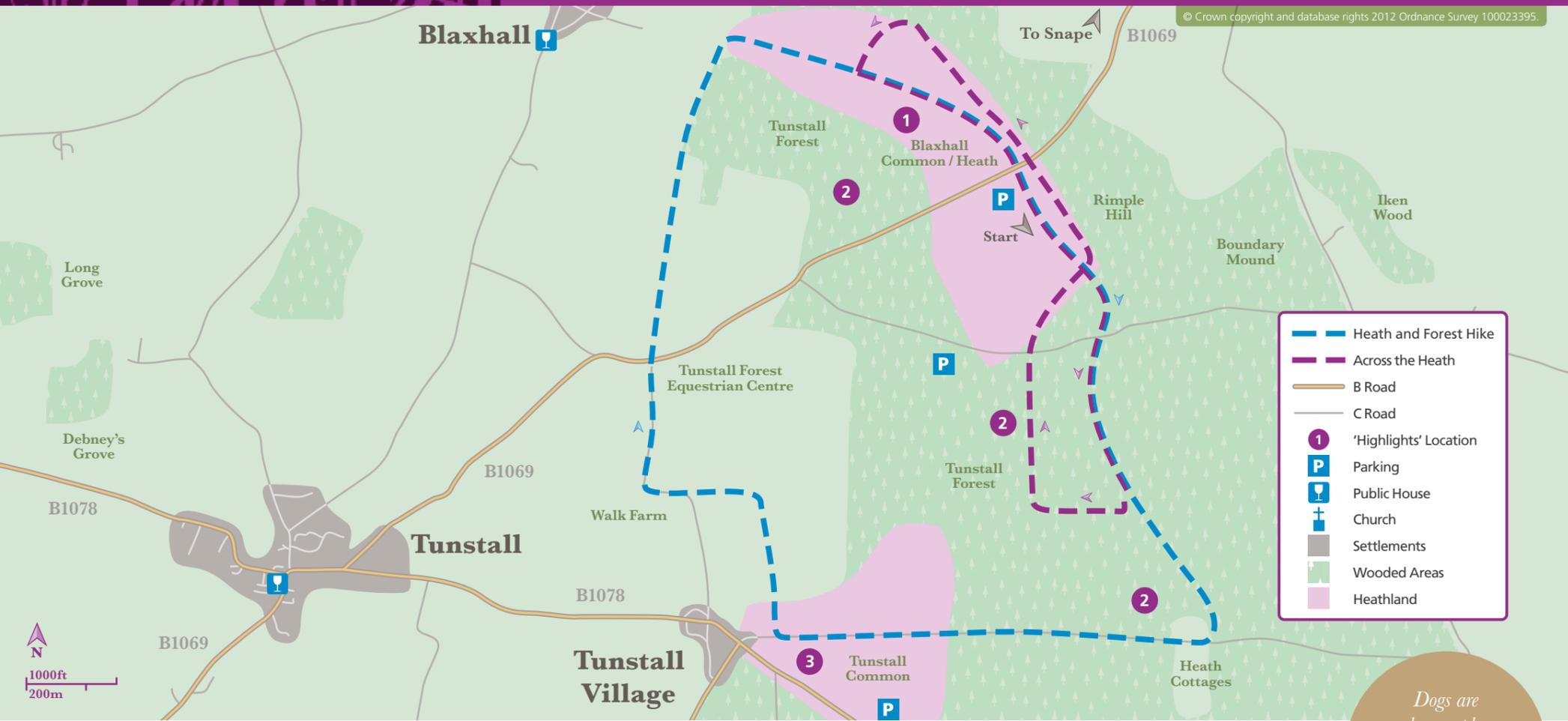
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# Blaxhall & Tunstall

Suffolk Coast & Heaths *Explorer Guide*

*These two walks follow paths across wild Suffolk heathland and through mysterious woodland. You will encounter ancient habitats, old twisted pine trees, hidden glades and commercial forestry.*



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*Dogs are welcome, please keep them under control and on lead as advised*

## 'Heath and Forest Hike'

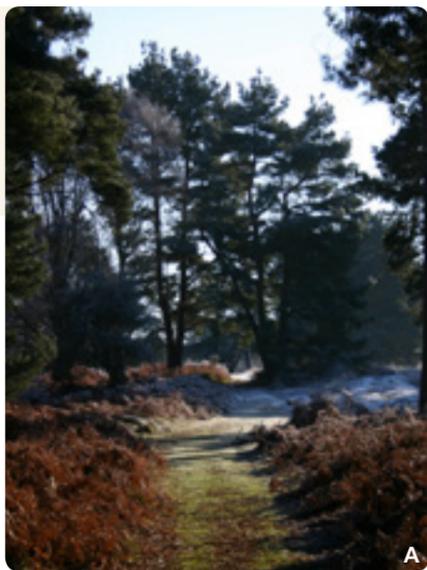
Distance  
4.25 miles (6.8 km)

**Time:** 2 hours

**Terrain:** Paths and tracks - can be very muddy after rain. Some sections on minor roads. We recommend high visibility clothing.

Stay on same side of road as car park (NGR:TM 383565). Follow path that leads away from car park and road across Blaxhall Common. Keep roughly straight. When path splits, keep left.

When you reach minor road, go straight across and continue on far side through forest. Keep on path, ignoring all exits and cross paths, until you come to cottage at cross tracks (turning left at cross tracks links to a longer walk to Alde estuary). Turn right and follow straight track through forest and across Tunstall Common.



When you reach power lines, turn right. Keep straight and follow path then track. Continue between hedges, then take first track on left. Keep straight until road. Follow road ahead and then around right bend.



When you reach main road, cross carefully and take track on opposite side. Follow straight track beside fields. When you reach end of second field, take path right and then left as it follows edge of woodland. When you reach junction with sunken path, turn right. Follow path across heath to road and car park.



## 'Across the Heath'

Distance  
2.6 miles (4.2 km)

**Time:** 1 hour 15 mins

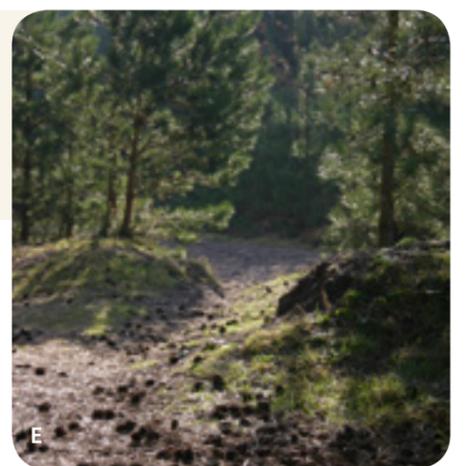
**Terrain:** Paths and tracks - can be very muddy after rain. Some sections on minor roads. We recommend high visibility clothing.

Follow 'Heath and Forest' route until junction with minor road.

Go straight across road and continue on far side through forest. When you reach track crossing obliquely from left to right, bear right. Continue straight for short distance, then turn right at cross tracks. Continue straight until next cross tracks, then turn right and follow path (with fence on left) to return to minor road.

Cross road and take unsigned path opposite that leads to right. Continue on path to junction. Cross path you followed earlier and take path opposite. Follow path, keeping forest on right. When you reach main road, cross and continue on far side.

**Images:** A. Pine Trees and Heath – great walking country. B. Nightjar – summer visitor to the heaths- David Tipling/FLPA. C. Goldcrest – nests and feeds in the conifers - Lesley van Loo/Minden Pictures/FLPA. D. Blaxhall Common – winter sunshine. E. The Forest Floor – pine cones and needles. F. Tunstall Forest – spectacular conifers.



Follow path uphill until you reach large hollow in ground on left.

Just before hollow, take path left as it leads around hollow.

On far side of hollow, take path left and continue straight. When you reach junction with sunken path, turn left and return to road and car park.

