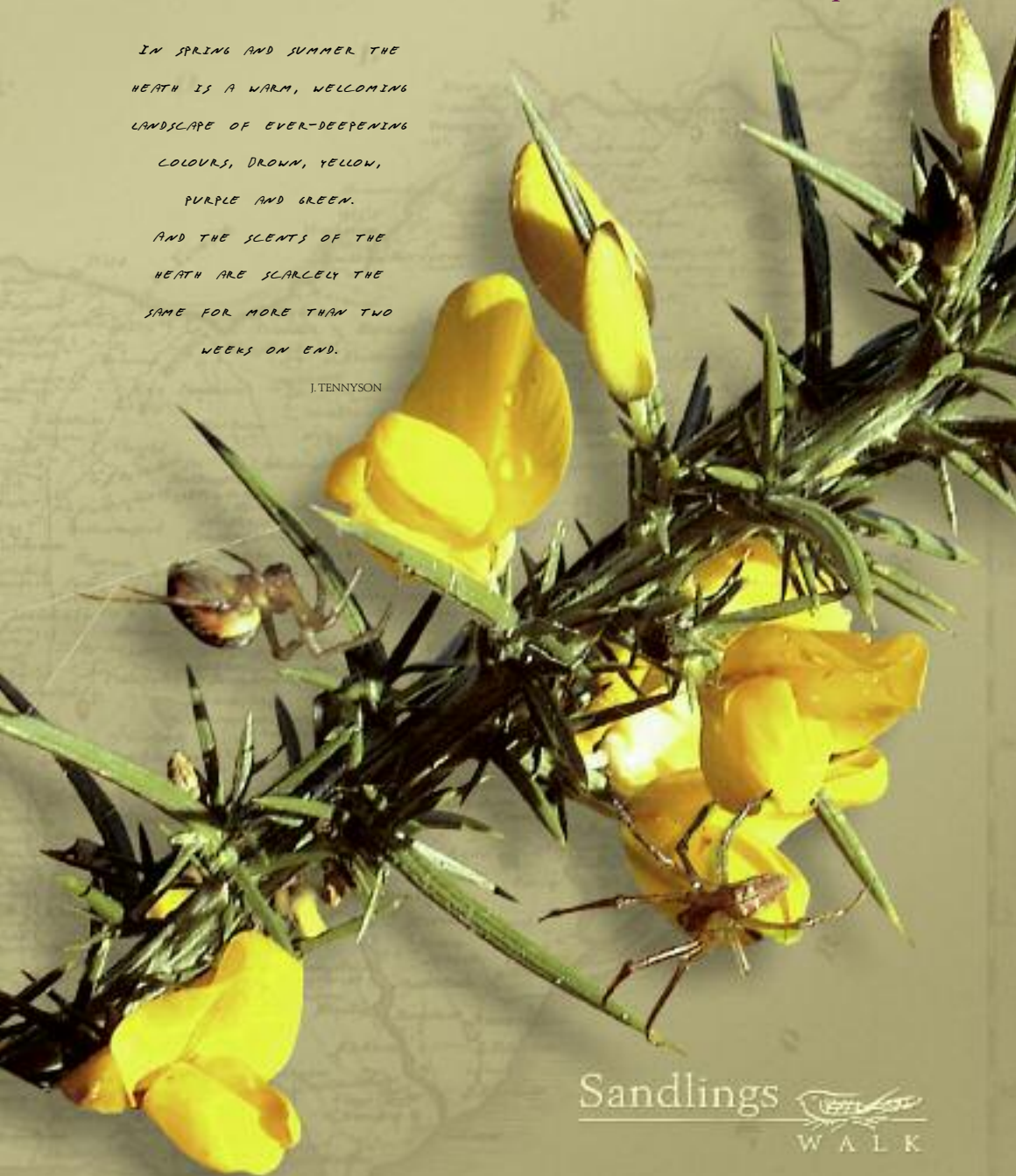


# Kissing time

some common heathland plants

IN SPRING AND SUMMER THE HEATH IS A WARM, WELCOMING LANDSCAPE OF EVER-DEEPENING COLOURS, BROWN, YELLOW, PURPLE AND GREEN. AND THE SCENTS OF THE HEATH ARE SCARCELY THE SAME FOR MORE THAN TWO WEEKS ON END.

J. TENNYSON



Sandlings WALK

## Walk 1



IPSWICH TO MARTLESHAM HEATH

### A1214 Route

- A – B Barrier at start: gap <1.2m. Dirt/stone/grass path across Golf Course. Basically flat. Dry.
- B – C Uneven dirt path under trees. Dry.



### Heath Road Route

- A<sup>1</sup> – B<sup>1</sup> Bollards at start: gap <1.2m. Sand/stone/grass path across Golf Course. Basically flat; steep slope at end. Dry.
- B<sup>1</sup> – C Uneven dirt path under trees. Dry.
- C – D Mainly flat, dirt/grass path. Dry.

### St. Augustine's Route

- A<sup>2</sup> – B<sup>2</sup> Dirt/stone path/track. Sometimes uneven & slightly undulating. Narrow between houses.
- B<sup>2</sup> – C<sup>2</sup> Bucklesham Road; pavement both sides. Flat.

- C<sup>2</sup> – D<sup>2</sup> Roughly surfaced private road. Mainly flat. Dry.
- D<sup>2</sup> – E<sup>2</sup> Mainly compacted dirt/sand/stone track; some patches of loose sand. Occasionally undulating. Steep slope at C2.
- E<sup>2</sup> – F<sup>2</sup> Mainly flat field edge.
- F<sup>2</sup> – G<sup>2</sup> Muddy path through woodland. Intermittent sections of boardwalk – parallel sleepers and a bridge: width <1.2m. Slope at start, otherwise basically flat but uneven.
- G<sup>2</sup> – D Pavements at Foxhall Road – slight incline. Compacted dirt/grass path & surfaced track. Flat. Dry. Few metres of road walking approaching D – no pavement.
- D – E Varying compacted sand/grass path/roughly surfaced track. Uneven but flat. Dry.
- E – F Compacted dirt/grass/gravel paths. Flat. Dry.
- F – G Tarmac/concrete path leading to minor road (access for Police Headquarters) – no pavement – then tarmac/concrete path. Flat.
- G – H Sand/stone path. Flat. Dry.

	SANDLINGS WALK (PERMISSIVE)		SANDLINGS WALK (ON ROAD)
	ROAD		RAILWAY LINE
	RAILWAY STATION		PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY (IN FOREST)
	PERMISSIVE PATH (IN FOREST)		HEATHLAND
	WOODLAND / TREES		FOREST PLANTATION
	MARSHLAND / REEDS		COAST / RIVER / PONDS
	GOLF COURSE		HOUSES / VILLAGES
	FARMLAND		BARRIER / GATE: GAP WIDTH <1.2m
	BENCH		BRIDGE
	STILE		STEPS
	CHURCH		TUMULI
	MAST		AMENITY SITE
	CAFÉ		PARKING
	PUBLIC HOUSE		ADNAM'S PUB
	POST OFFICE		SHOPS
	TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE		VISITOR CENTRE
	TOILETS		TELEPHONE
	BUS STOP		

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# Kissing time some common heathland plants

**C**ompared to some places, there are not a great variety of plants and flowers found on the Sandlings heaths. However, the ones you will see are nonetheless beautiful, in most cases rare and some have a useful past.

## Gorse

“When gorse is in flower, kissing is in season” so the old saying goes. Historically, it is no wonder that heaths and commons are places where lovers meet. On the Sandlings there are two types of gorse, common and dwarf.

Because of their differing and lengthy flowering seasons, there is rarely a time without gorse in flower, somewhere.

Common gorse is first to flower, sometimes as early as January. The flowers are coconut scented and bloom until early summer. Common gorse bushes are about 2 metres tall when fully-grown and form dense clumps. You rarely see them growing amongst heather. This is where you will find dwarf gorse, which is low growing and flowers from mid-summer until the late autumn.



COMMON GORSE

T. Hoops



DWARF GORSE FLOWERING WITH HEATHER

R. Godfrey

Like most heathland plants, there was a time when gorse was cherished and put to good use. It fuelled the bread oven, swept the chimney, was fed to cattle and was tied with heather into besom brooms.

## Heather

There are 3 types of heather found on the Sandlings. Ling is the most common and widespread as it grows well in the poor sandy soils and dry climate. Bell heather can also tolerate these dry conditions, but is not as common. Cross-leaved heath is occasionally found in wetter areas.



BELL HEATHER

BRACKEN



Heather was also put to good use for fuel, stuffing mattresses, animal feed and thatching.

Heathers are prolific seed producers. A mature bell heather plant can shed up to half a million seeds per square metre. These seeds can survive for up to forty years in the ground.

Bell heather flowers are very purple and come out in July, just before ling. Ling flowers are distinctly paler and smaller. Both flower through into September. Cross-leaved heath has greyish green leaves, growing in whorls of fours.

BELL HEATHER AND LING



impenetrable to anything else. Its only natural enemy is frost. Locally, bracken would have once been used instead of straw.

Today, thick layers of bracken litter are scraped off the heath and used in nurseries for growing azaleas. Although bracken is poisonous some people gather the young shoots in spring. They are then soaked, dried, fried and eaten.

## Acid grassland

There are areas on the Sandlings heaths where you will see grass. This grassland is very rare and has evolved to withstand the dry, sandy, acid soil. Growing amongst it you will discover small, delicate and beautiful flowers just as rare. Take a good guidebook and look out for flowers such as heath bedstraw, harebell and sheep sorrel.

Plant illustrations by D. Parrett, from far left to right LING, HAREBELL, SHEEP SORREL AND HEATH BEDSTRAW

SHEEP SORREL AND HEATH BEDSTRAW E. J. M. Kirby

