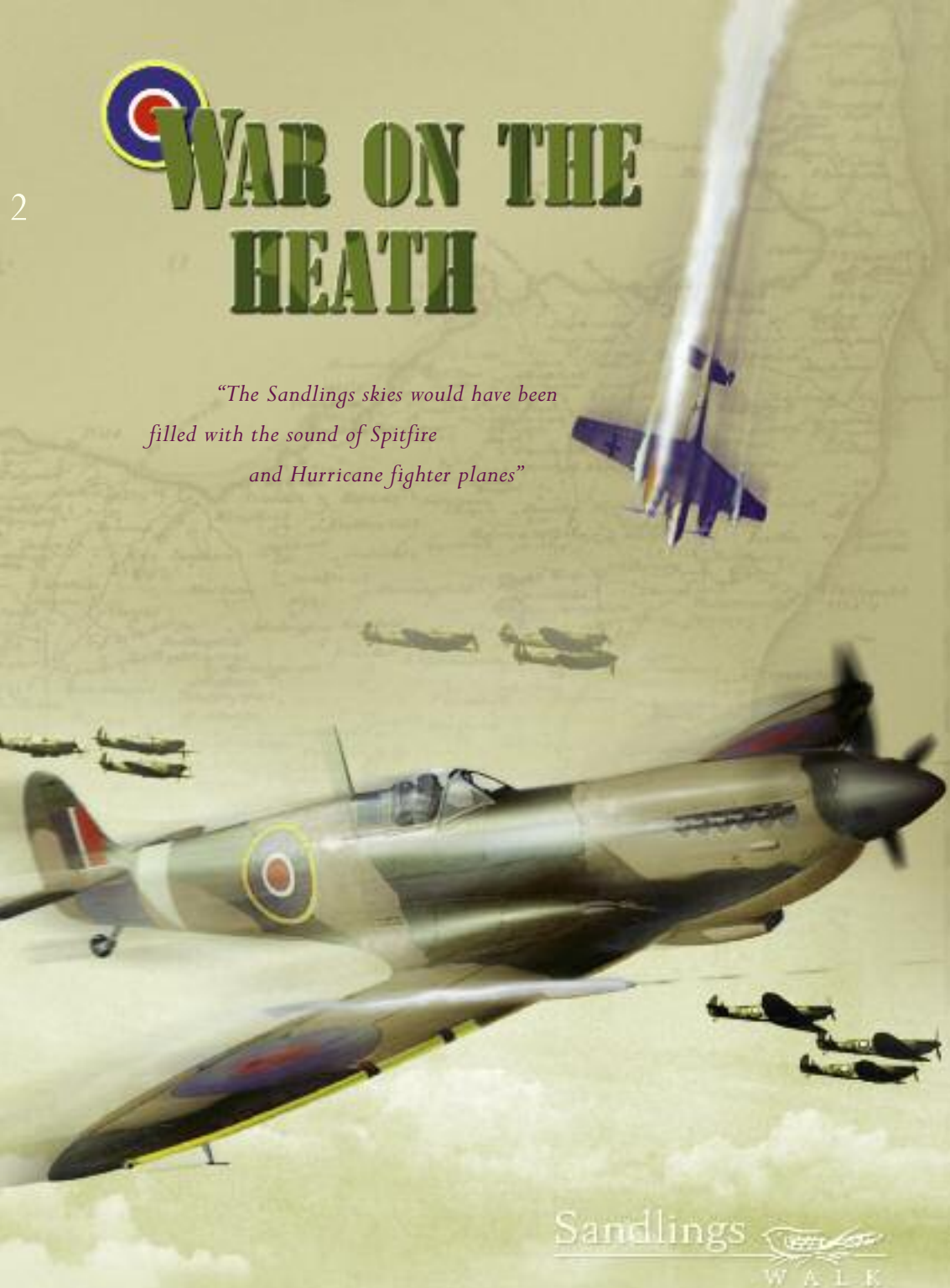


# WAR ON THE HEATH

*"The Sandlings skies would have been filled with the sound of Spitfire and Hurricane fighter planes"*



Sandlings WALK

## Walk 2



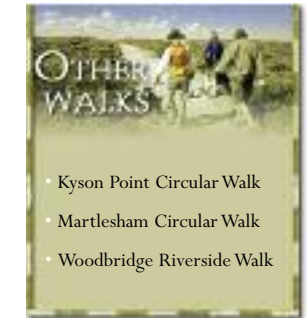
### MARTLESHAM HEATH TO WOODBRIDGE TIDE MILL

#### The Route – path terrain and conditions

- A – B Compacted dirt/grass/gravel paths. Flat. Dry.
- B – C Tarmac/concrete path leading to minor road (access for Police Headquarters) – no pavement – then tarmac/concrete path. Flat.
- C – D Compacted stone/dirt/grass paths. Flat, sometimes uneven, especially through 'Walk Farm Wood'.
- D – E Minor roads link paths between arable fields where route either crosses fields or passes along field edge. Mainly flat, but undulating alongside 'Martlesham Hall'. Raised verges/banks at roadsides & narrow gaps in hedges.



- SANDLINGS WALK
- SANDLINGS WALK (ON ROAD)
- SANDLINGS WALK (PERMISSIVE)
- ROAD
- RAILWAY LINE
- RAILWAY STATION
- PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY
- 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
- ADNAMS PUB
- POST OFFICE
- SHOPS
- TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE
- VISITOR CENTRE
- TOILETS
- TELEPHONE
- BUS STOP



- Kyson Point Circular Walk
- Martlesham Circular Walk
- Woodbridge Riverside Walk

# WAR ON THE HEATH



uring the last century, two World Wars and the Cold War that followed had a great effect on the Sandlings that is still visible today.

In 1916, part of Martlesham Heath became a site to test military aircraft and their weapons. This became an active



A HANDLEY PAGE V1500 MARTLESHAM HEATH 1918

Martlesham Heath Aviation Society

airfield during the Second World War.

The Sandlings skies would have been filled with the sound of Spitfire and Hurricane fighter planes, and later on American fighters, as they sped out to sea to assist convoys of merchant ships or chase enemy planes. An air sea rescue squadron was also based here, which saved many pilots who ditched their planes into the North Sea. Douglas Bader was stationed at Martlesham for part of the war. He became famous because, even with two artificial legs, he flew planes and escaped on three occasions from a prisoner of war camp.



A HAWKER HURRICANE

Martlesham Heath Aviation Society

If you want to know more about Martlesham airfield, visit the museum in the control tower, which you will pass on your way.

When the Second World War began in 1939, the Sandlings was declared 'A Defence Area'. All signposts were removed and



DOUGLAS BADER  
Martlesham Heath Aviation Society

restrictions were placed on people's movement. If you had walked the Sandlings Walk then, the Auxiliary Units would have monitored your every movement. These were a secret army of highly trained men who moved unseen through the countryside. They would have become our resistance forces if we had been invaded. Their secret hideouts still exist, but are now overgrown.

Many heaths played an important part in the war effort. On Hollesley Heath you can still find a long narrow strip of heather where a crash landing strip was created. Petrol and paraffin fires dispersed the mist so that crippled and lost planes could land. A decoy aerodrome was created at Nacton. This was one of several that were lit with flare paths to deceive the enemy. Ditches were dug across many flat heaths to stop enemy glider

planes from landing. You can still find these ditches today, but some are now in woodland. A sign of how a heath can quickly change.



LT. PAUL COCHRAN CRASH-LANDS A 'P51 MUSTANG' IN DEBEN AVE, MARTLESHAM, FEBRUARY 1945

Martlesham Heath Aviation Society

CHURCHILL TANK, DUNWICH HEATH 1943  
Imperial War Museum (Ref: H 29038)



Some local people were encouraged to move out of the Sandlings during the war. Places such as Sudbourne were compulsorily cleared so that the 79th Armoured Division could carry out exercises in preparation for D-Day. Dunwich Heath was another very active tank training area and on Sutton Heath several stands of birch tree can be dated back to about 1945; a legacy of the end of the military training that took place there.

CAPTAIN RAYMOND WITHER LANDING BACK AT MARTLESHAM IN 1944, IN A 'P47-D THUNDERBOLT'  
Martlesham Heath Aviation Society



As the Second World War ended, the 'Cold War' with Eastern Europe began. Martlesham airfield became redundant, but Woodbridge and Bentwaters airbases were home to the United States Airforce until the 1990s. Parachuting, American airmen and A10 'Tankbuster' planes were a common sight during this period. Look out for the runways, aircraft hangars and bomb stores. Bentwaters is no longer a military base, but helicopters from the Army Air Corps use Woodbridge airbase.



REDUNDANT HANGAR AT BENTWATERS

SOLDIER WITH FLAMETHROWER,  
DUNWICH HEATH 1943  
Imperial War Museum (Ref: H 29062)