

NIGHTJAR

THE GOATSUCKER!

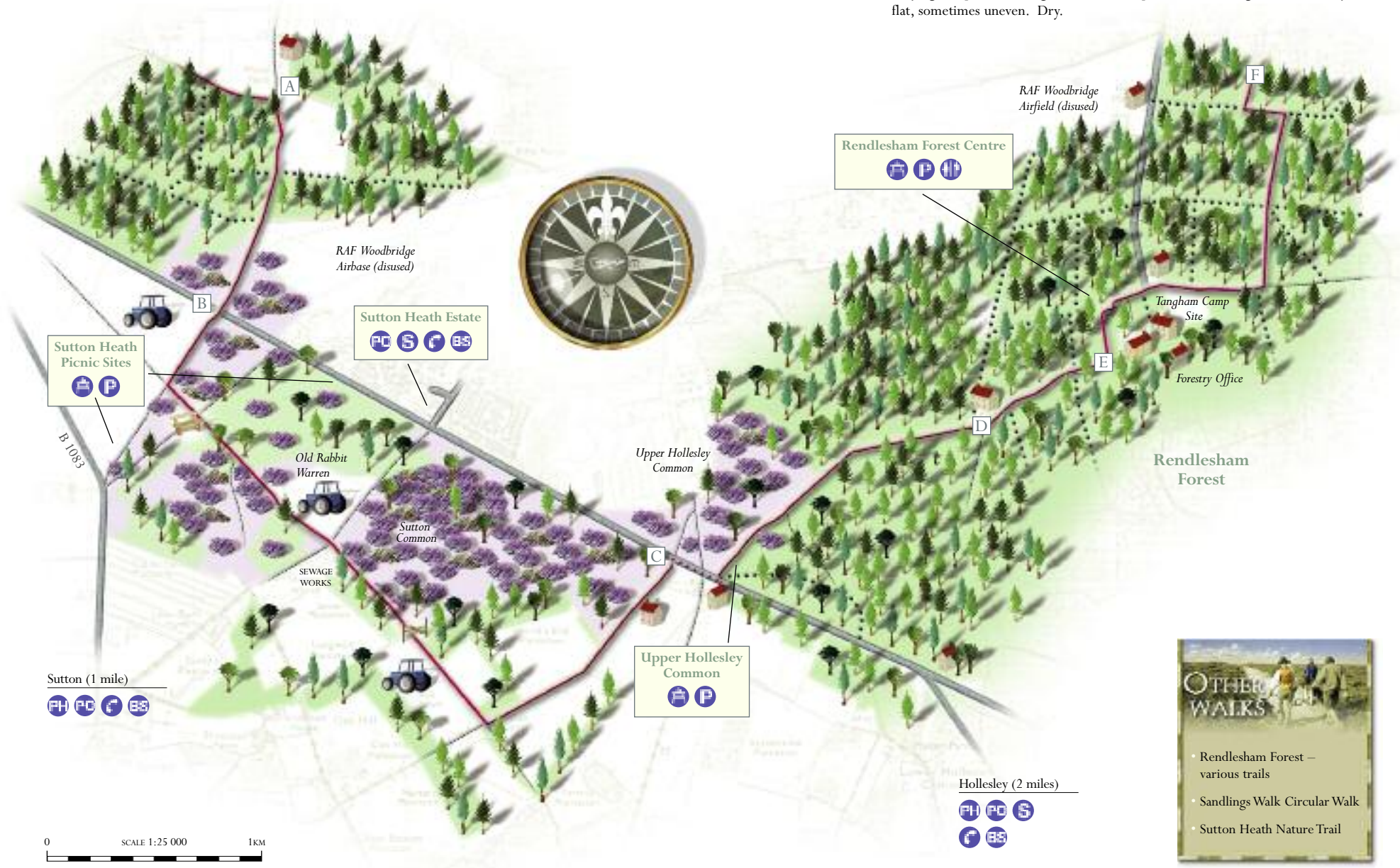
"Of all the wonderful and special animals and flowers you will find on heathland, the nightjar is probably the most mysterious and memorable once seen and heard."

ANON.
































Walk 4

SUTTON COMMON – RENDLESHAM FOREST CENTRE



The Route – path terrain and conditions

- A – B Roughly surfaced track – stones & rubble. Flat but very uneven.
- B – C Varying loose sand/grass tracks/paths. Mainly flat but undulating leading to & alongside Sewage Works. Sometimes uneven & muddy.
- C – D Verges at road. Varying sand/grass path/tracks. Compacted & mainly flat, but occasionally undulating. Uneven. Dry.
- D – E Tarmac track. Flat.
- E – F Varying compacted sand/grass/dirt/stone path/tracks through forest. Mainly flat, sometimes uneven. Dry.

	SANDLINGS WALK (ON ROAD)
	SANDLINGS WALK (PERMISSIVE)
	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

- Rendlesham Forest – various trails
- Sandlings Walk Circular Walk
- Sutton Heath Nature Trail

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NIGHTJAR THE GOATSUCKER!



Illustration by M. Beesley

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ightjars make an amazing and hazardous journey to spend the summer on the Sandlings. To get here, they fly all the way from Africa across the Sahara desert. They arrive in the middle of May to breed, before returning to Africa in September. The Sandlings are very important to nightjars. 5% of the British population nest here.



Illustration by D. Perrett



Sculpture by Henry Tebbutt

As their name suggests, nightjars are only active between dusk and dawn. This is when they are more likely to be seen. During the day they either sit on the branch of a tree or on the nest, which is just a patch of bare ground. Their brown, mottled feathers are good camouflage. They prefer forest clearings or heath with scattered trees.

As dusk arrives, the haunting 'churr' of nightjars can be heard across the heaths. It is a sound that is hard to describe, but is a bit like trying to whistle and rolling your rrr's at the same time. The churring from one bird can last for several minutes. Nightjars also make other sounds, including a clap created by slapping its wings together over its back. Flying is also accompanied by a 'coo-ic' call.

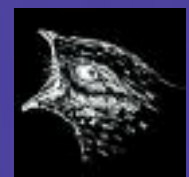


RSPB

To help them catch insects whilst flying, they have whiskers either side of their wide opening mouth. When stock and cattle were common on the heaths, nightjars would be seen flying around the animal enclosures, where insects were plentiful. It was believed they were taking milk from goats' udders. This earned them the name 'goatsuckers'.

Nightjars will usually rear 2 broods of young during the summer. The female leaves her first batch of young 12 days after hatching. The male will then look after them whilst she lays a second batch of eggs.

Illustrations by M. Beesley



Nightjars appear just as the light gets frustratingly dim, flying low, jerkily, like a puppet. It is hard to mistake them for any other bird even though they will be little more than a silhouette. The males are easier to spot as they have white patches on their wings and tails. Once you have located some nightjars keep fairly still, they will be keen to come and give you a look. If you wear something white they will often be more curious.

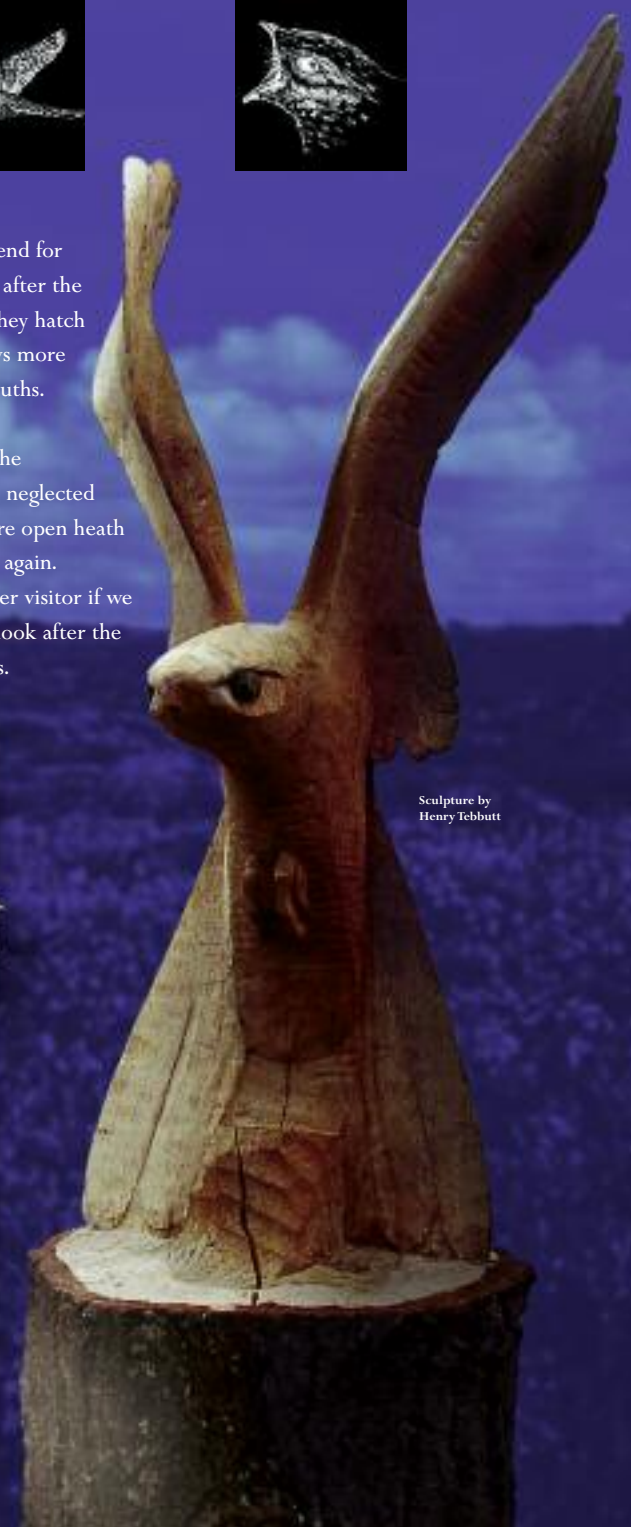
Nightjars spend the night hunting moths and other

As these hatch the first brood are ready to fend for themselves. The male then joins her to look after the second brood. Eggs are usually laid so that they hatch during a full moon. The good visibility allows more insects to be caught to feed tiny, hungry mouths.

Until recently, Sandlings nightjars were on the decline. The ongoing removal of scrub from neglected heaths and the 1987 storm have created more open heath and forest clearings and numbers have risen again. Nightjars will continue to return as a summer visitor if we continue to look after the Sandlings.



Illustration by D. Perrett



Sculpture by Henry Tebbutt