



## See it for Free!

BWAS site guides provide information on free and accessible archaeological sites in Birmingham and Warwickshire



### WAPPENBURY CAMP

Nearby postcode - CV33 9DW

Village built within the ramparts of an iron-age camp near Leamington Spa



Earthworks   
Start of walk 

Parking - With care on the roadside in the village.

Public transport – Nearest Railway station Leamington Spa. Distance approximately 7 miles. Nearest regular bus services are from Leamington Spa to Cubbington and from there a 4km walk most of which can be done on public footpaths through fields (see OS maps). For bus numbers and times see

<https://bustimes.org.uk/localities/E0052027>

Access - The site is in farmland around the village. There are a number of public footpaths that cross the earthworks at various places. The paths can be muddy and pass nearby open ponds and watercourses. There are no facilities in Wappenbury. Facilities in Leamington Spa and Cubbington and public houses in nearby villages.

Ordnance Survey

Landranger Map – 151  
Explorer Map – 221

Grid reference

SP 378693

## What you can see

Wappenbury is an example of a slight univallate hillfort which are relatively small prehistoric enclosures of various shapes with a single line of earthworks. There are only about 150 known examples in England, mainly in the south, so this is a relatively rare site type in the Midlands. Their uses may vary from mere stock enclosures through to temporary places of safety in unsettled times or even small permanent settlements. Wappenbury was probably a settlement site and the ramparts enclose an area of approximately 8ha.

Although the eastern parts of the site have been damaged by ploughing in the past Wappenbury camp survives well and is a good example of this type of monument.

Partial excavation undertaken by the society in the 1950s showed the northern rampart to have been originally 3m high and with a ditch up to 4m deep and 12 m wide. It was composed of gravel held in place or revetted with clay and contained finds dated to the Iron Age through to the early Roman period. The excavation also revealed the presence of deposits pre-dating the construction of Wappenbury camp and these will survive beneath the rampart.

A medieval settlement grew up inside the fort ramparts with the Church of St John the Baptist being the most prominent survivor today.



Take the footpath going west from near the letter box (not marked but there is a gap in the hedge) and as you cross the field look to your right and note how the ground falls away down a fairly steep slope (visibility may depend on the crop in the field or time of year), this is the northern rampart of the monument and would have also had a ditch but this has been levelled. Make for the telegraph pole at the far side of the field (about 300m from the road) and stop before going downhill towards the stream.



The bank you are standing on is the western rampart. Looking to your left note how the earthwork continues into the neighbouring field through grassland. Go down the slope and cross the wooden bridge over a stream..



There are ponds here so take care, then proceed up-hill directly across the next field from where you can look back at the fort. From here you can see how the site was chosen by the people who built the fort to take advantage of the valleys created by the natural watercourses to provide extra security.



Continue straight on to the far side of the field and go left along the hedge until you reach a well-used footpath which turns left back towards the village. In around 250m you will cross back over the stream through a small area of scrub and woodland and climb upwards keeping the hedge to your right.



The ground rises steeply under grass on your left and this is the southern corner of the rampart. Eventually the church tower will come into view over the rampart and you cross a stile.



Turn right through a gate onto a bridleway leading down a holloway to a footbridge over the River Leam. Looking back from the bridge you can appreciate the scale of the rampart on the southern side of the fort. Here you will have passed through what was probably the original entrance to the fort. This being the case the people living in the fort probably had close connections with the river possibly for trading purposes.





Take time to cross the bridge into the field beyond and look back towards the fort then re-trace your steps back to the gate and turn right onto the track back to the church.



At the church turn to your right and enter the corner of the churchyard through a metal kissing gate. Take the path through the churchyard noting the rather dilapidated preaching cross on your way. The church is rarely open but has a fine early 14<sup>th</sup> century tower. Pass through the kissing gate on the other side of the churchyard and then turn left and carry on until you reach the letter box where you started.



Looking over the metal estate fencing on the opposite side of the road you can see the slight earthworks of the eastern rampart and the remains of platforms associated with medieval houses.

**The site is a scheduled monument which means it is protected by law. This means metal detecting and unauthorised digging at the site is not allowed.**

Find out more:

- M and B. Stanley, The defences of the Iron Age Camp at Wappenbury. TBAS 76 (1958)
- T Darvill, P Stamper and J Timby. England an archaeological guide (2002)
- J Dyer, The Penguin guide to prehistoric England and Wales (1981)
- RCHME, , Wappenbury Camp, (1967)
- P Booth, Late Iron Age pottery and the date of Wappenbury Camp. (TBAS) Vol 96 (1991)

Links: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1106276> - church  
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1009817> - fort  
<http://timetrail.warwickshire.gov.uk/detail.aspx?monuid=WA1840>

Birmingham and Warwickshire Society aims to support and raise the profile of the region's archaeological heritage, providing a monthly lecture series, annual transactions and many other benefits to members. Membership is only £20 per year for individuals, and each subscription contributes to supporting the archaeology of Birmingham and Warwickshire. Find out more at <http://bwas-online.co.uk/>

(c) The Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society Registered Charity No.X81677