

**Main Walk**

1. With back to Nursery go left 100m, thro' p/g (in f/g) on left. **Fwd** along road & thro' fenced quarry workings until near boundary of wood, then **H/R** to wood. **V/L**, wood on right into enclosed path. **Fwd** into wood. **Fwd** up thro' wood to its end. **T/R** fc-left to reach and descend steps. **T/L** to reach field, **T/R** hg-right to corner. **T/L** along enclosed path to end, **T/R** thro' gap. **Fc**-right, passing pools to reach electric pole. **T/L**, hg-right to reach & go over f/b on right. **H/L** cross-field to x-stile in field corner. **Hg**-left for 100m, cross footbridge on left, **fwd** cross-field to wood boundary. **V/R**, wood on left, to corner just past entrance to wood. **Fwd**, away from wood on same line cross-field (large) down to road & field corner (aim for houses).
2. Cross road & walk towards Wappenbury. 150m after village sign & as road bears right go thro' p/g in f/g on left. Brick wall & then fc-right almost up to field corner. **T/R** thro' k/g, **H/L** cross-field to corner. Thro' f/g, hg-left to end of large field. Thro' k/g to go over bridle track & **fwd** with hg-left to go thro' p/g in gate at end of field. **Fc**-left & follow round to right to go over stile & f/b on left. **H/R** cross-field uphill, aim midway between telegraph poles to outward hedge corner on top of hill. Thro' k/g & **fwd** hg-right to road.
3. **T/R** down road on far pavement to junction with main road. **Fwd** over main road to go up Sheep Dip Lane. Where road turns right, **fwd**, thro' k/g to start Coffin Walk. **Fwd** fenced path to end. Thro' k/g, **fwd** hg-right almost to field corner. Thro' k/g, **H/L** thro' wood (new memorial wood - 2003) to hedge line, **T/R** hg-left & thro' k/g. **Fwd** to reach gravel drive passing house on right to go over farm track & thro' k/g ahead. **Fwd** cross-field to start of hedge, **keep** hg-left, over track, **fwd** along an enclosed path. Over footbridge & thro' k/g at end, stream on right, hg-left thro' k/g. **T/R**, thro' p/g & follow round left between paddocks to k/g & over concrete bridge, **fwd** hg & brook left thro' to enter car park at rear of Shoulder of Mutton. **Fwd** to village green and brook (phone box). **T/sharpL** up Church Hill, past church and follow road round to left down to **T/R** into Fineacre Lane. (**Route A** see below).
4. Thro' k/g right after 100m. **Fwd** thro' p/g and **fwd** in enclosed

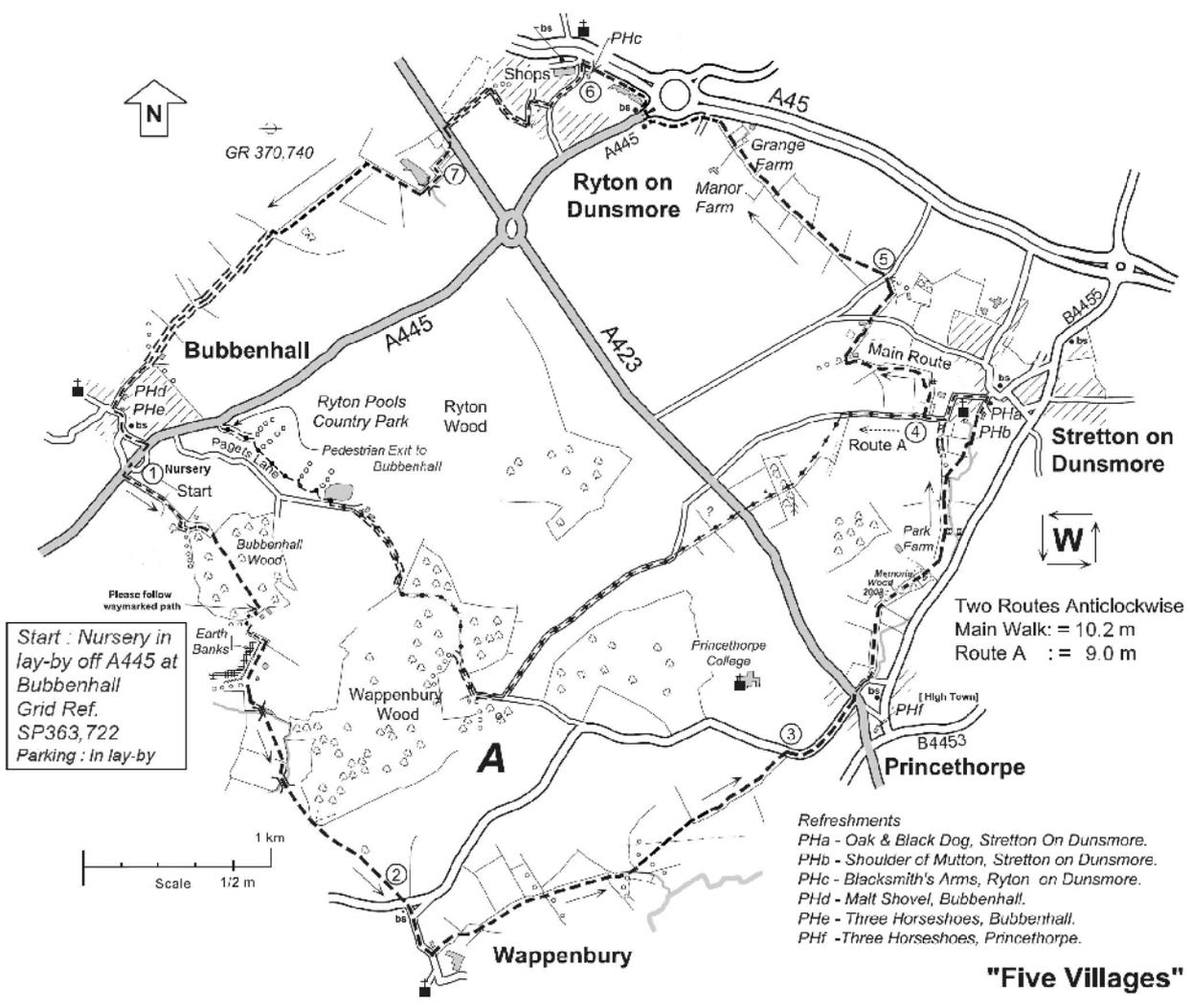
- walkway, to go thro' gap in hedge, **fwd** hg-right, **V/L** to pass silos & barn to cut across field corner & reach boundary hedge. **T/L**, hg-right to reach & go thro' k/g on right, **fwd** for 150m, **T/R** thro' gap & x-stile. **T/R** along enclosed path, follow round several bends & thro' f/g to road. Thro' p/g opposite, **Fwd** to follow enclosed path around field to reach road.
5. Thro' k/g opposite, **H/L** cross-field to go thro' hedge gap in far corner. **Hg**-left, thro' k/gs over 7 fields to reach A45. **V/L**, over private road, to reach pavement, **fwd** to roundabout. Cross A445. Continue on pavement adjacent to A45. **Fwd** for 500m, **T/L** into High Street.
  6. Down road for 300m, **T/R** into Warren Fields. At T-junction, **T/L** to end of road. **T/R** into enclosed path & thro' k/g. At junction of paths follow round to your left, & **fwd** to busy main road. Cross over to opposite pavement. **T/L** for 50m to x-stile on your right.
  7. **H/L** cross-field, thro' k/g into enclosed path. Follow round, left & right over pond bridge. **Fwd** hg-right, & then follow round right to farm track. X-stile, **T/R** along track hg-right/fc left for 400m, then **T/L** on grassy track & continue in same direction to Bubbenhall (Lower End). Up road to T-junction, **T/L** & then fork left to main road. The Nursery is along the road to your right.

**Route A** At end of Note 3: Along Fineacre Lane for 500m. X-stile on left, **fwd** cross-field to pick up hg-left. **Fwd** thro' wood, hg-left to busy main road. Opposite x-stile, hg-left over 2 fields to road. **Fwd** up road (1.2 km) to T-junction. **T/R**, wood left, at gate (Shady Acres), **T/R** along track to where it bends left just before entering Nature Reserve, **fwd** leaving track to enter wood on path. Continue for 1.2km to reach road/drive junction. Along road for 10m & **T/R** thro' hedge & k/g into enclosed path. **Fwd** to go thro' a p/g & **T/L** onto a wide gravel track. On reaching track junction keep left & continue down to next junction. Keep left and shortly left again to reach main road (Bubbenhall sign). Continue along grass verge for 350m to reach lay by and Nursery.

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**"Five Villages"**

## WALK 8 "FIVE VILLAGES"

**Start:** Lay-by adjacent to old school on A445

**Grid Ref:** SP 363,722

**Direction:** Anticlockwise

**Main Walk:** 10 miles

**Route A:** 8.5 miles

**OS Maps:** (p= part)

Landranger 140p  
Landranger 151p  
Pathfinder 955p  
Pathfinder 956p  
Explorer 221p  
Explorer 222p

**Parking:** Large lay-by

### Brief Information and Outline of the Route

Starting at the old school (now closed) in **Bubbenhall** walk down the drive past the now derelict Glebe Farm to meet the conveyor belts near the sand and gravel quarries. Turn south to Wappenbury (*Wapeberie* in the DB, stronghold of a man called Waeppa). Wappenbury Hall was the home of Sir William Lyons of Jaguar fame. Cross the fields to Princethorpe with fine views of Princethorpe College in the distance. It was built at the end of the 19th century using clay dug from the site for the bricks.

Cross the main road and join the Coffin Walk, restored by the local Scout Group, between **Princethorpe** (*Prandestorpe* in 1221, farmstead or a hamlet of a man called Praen or Pren old English) and the parish church at **Stretton on Dunsmore** (*Stratone* in the DB, farmstead or village on a Roman Road. *Dunesmore* 12th century is an old name meaning moor of a man called Dunn). This route veers right to enter the village at the rear of The Shoulder of Mutton, the oldest public house in the village.

Stretton on Dunsmore lies next to the Fosse Way and is thought to be of Anglo Saxon origin. A small brook runs through the village across its attractive green. A plastic duck race is held here annually in December, a maypole ceremony in May and morris-dancing at Whitsun. The most prominent black and white building by the green is Moor Farm. Although extended over the centuries, this played an important role in the village and is said to have been the location for the Manor Court.

The other public house, The Oak and Black Dog, was once just a terrace of three hundred year old cottages. The A45 north of the village hides the remains of the London to Holyhead road. Such was the importance of the road that the village once supported nine inns to provide hospitality to travellers over wild Dunsmore Heath. Perhaps the most significant claim to fame is the ceremony that dates back over 800 years and is held on the village boundary with **Ryton on Dunsmore**,

(*Rietone* in DB, usually a farm where Rye is grown, Dunsmore as above).

Representatives of villages in the "Knightlow Hundred" gather before sunrise on November 11th on Knightlow Hill for the payment of Wroth Silver. As dawn breaks pennies are cast into the hollow Knightlow Stone as payment to the Lord of the Hundred, currently the Duke of Buccleuch. Failure to pay led to a fine of a white bull. A substantial breakfast follows at a local hostelry. True to tradition clay pipes are offered for smoking after the loyal toast in rum and hot milk.

Turn up Church Hill past the old vicarage, now Stretton House, on the right. The present church of All Saints was consecrated in 1837. It was built on the site of the previous Norman church. The Manor House that stands on the corner is a combination of three older cottages and replaces a medieval Manor House near the village green.

Leaving the road to cross the fields on your right up to Plott Lane, the fields here were known as Pours Plot and the revenue used to support the village poor. There are still a number of allotments in cultivation.

Cross Freeboard Lane and fields to **Ryton on Dunsmore**, passing ponds on the left of the A45 that were used to water steam lorries years ago. Over the A45 can be seen St Leonard's Church, part Norman. Turn through the village past the Blacksmith's Arms to join A Coventry Way along the Peugeot walkway. Cross the Oxford Road and skirt round an old sand and gravel quarry, now a private lake behind high fences.

Cross Bubbenhall from an easterly direction in the footsteps of a local resident's grandfather (the local shoemaker) who walked into Coventry to collect leather from the tanneries in Tanners Lane.

Apparently Sir William Lyons would confirm the lines of any new or modified Jaguar body shape by having them parked on his drive at Wappenbury Hall.

The elegant setting enabled him to make a sound judgement before giving the nod for it to go into production.

Ryton Pools Country Park with its pools and woodland trails can be easily accessed by walking towards Coventry on the large verge for 300m from the junction of Paget's Lane and the A445 to a pedestrian gate.

*On Route A the path follows a ride in Wappenbury Wood that is very muddy. Ensure that you don't interfere with wildlife when you negotiate as dry a route as possible.*

## **Wildlife**

This walk encircles the largest area of semi-natural woodland in the county. Ryton Wood and Wappenbury Wood are both Warwickshire Wildlife Trust reserves but the area also includes Old Nun Wood, Bubbenhall Wood and Princethorpe Great Wood. All the woods are predominantly oak but species such as birch, holly and small leaved lime occur frequently.

The landscape of this area is described as Dunsmore Parkland although it is perhaps difficult to imagine Norman barons and nobles riding in hot pursuit of deer. Indeed, the fallow deer that can still be encountered in the area probably owe their presence to the Normans who first introduced them from mainland Europe to Britain.

Another non-native deer that occurs in large numbers within the woods is the muntjac. Introduced to Woburn Park in Bedfordshire from China, this species has spread considerably since their escape/release in the 1920s. About the size of a large dog, the deer is easily recognised by the erect, white triangular shaped tail, which is the last thing to be seen as the animal disappears into the undergrowth.