

Wednesday, 25th February 2015, Hayes Barton with Brian Turnbull

"First Timers Reflections"

Our welcome as 'first timers' on an OVA walk was so warm that I was 'persuaded' to write this report - how could I refuse?!

Fourteen of us set off from Knowle via Shortwood Common and Hayes Wood to Hayes Barton where Brian Turnbull, our leader, entertained us with some interesting details about Sir Walter Raleigh who was born here in 1552. The pigs we passed were happily wallowing in the mud but some of us were slipping and sliding as it was very messy underfoot after recent rain. However we all made it to the area at Wheathill used as a Royal Marine camp during WW2 and it was fascinating to make out reminders of that time and to see one of the original buildings still having a useful purpose as a bat hibernaculum.

Our route then took us past Squabmoor Reservoir where the fishermen looked very cosy in their shelters. A beautiful bank of snowdrops greeted us on the last lap of this 5 1/2 mile walk before we passed Lily Farm Vineyard and were back in Knowle just as the drizzle began.

I had previously noticed several buildings in the area with my initials prominently displayed and when we were given a brief history of Mark Rolle and his legacy in this part of the world, I decided that I must read the relevant OVA book on this subject.

This walk was a great introduction to the OVA with great walking, scenery and company. The regular brief stops for information and explanation from Brian brought the area to life and helped us understand how the use of this land has evolved. Thanks to him and the rest of the group, and we hope to walk with you again soon.

Maggie Rumsey
25th February 2015