

Wednesday 7th February 2018 - Squabmoor and Dalditch Camp with Brian Turnbull

Nine of us met at Dalditch Farm in brilliant sunshine for what proved to be a very interesting and informative walk led by Brian Turnbull. We were very fortunate that Simon Fogg, who has written a book "Wartime Dalditch Camp and Finds on Woodbury Common" (available from Best Books in Exmouth, Littleham Post Office and the shop in Colaton Raleigh), had decided to join us as he was able to provide extra insight on the area.

Brian had helpfully supplied us with maps of the Dalditch Camp area taken from the OVA website – just put "Dalditch Camp" in the search box on the website and you will find it.

We walked up past Squabmoor reservoir – formerly the source of drinking water for Exmouth but now used for coarse fishing – and onto East Budleigh Common. We were soon in an area known as The Triangle, and enjoying the extensive views to the sea. At a point marked 01 on the map, we explored the graffitied building which was once a decontamination building, used by soldiers after they had been training with mustard gas. Now it is a bat hibernaculum!

It was hard to believe, looking around us, that during WW2 this wooded area was once the site of Nissen huts and the busy life of an army camp.

Further on Simon pointed out the site of the church (a rectangle next to YMCA on the map) and the cinema – there is no obvious trace of these buildings now.

More substantial was a second decontamination centre (03 on the map) and a couple of brick built ammunition stores.



Ammunition store

The most impressive remains were of a firing range: a trench for the riflemen and a tall, curved, brick wall for them to aim at (marked as an equals sign on the map).



Rifle range trench



Rifle range wall

A quick stop for coffee in the warming sun and we were soon walking down the hill and back to our cars. Simon hopes to be providing a talk for OVA members in the autumn – if today is anything to go by, it will be well worth attending.

Penny Kurowski