

## Thursday December 12<sup>th</sup> “Squabmoor and Dalditch Camp” with Brian Turnbull

Brian had arranged for Simon Fogg (passionate military historian and Dalditch camp expert) to join us for his walk. Brian knows the ruins of the camp well and had chosen a route that took in most of the interesting sites including a detour to the rifle range on Bicton Common, but Simon was able to show us some well-hidden ‘extras’ along the way.

It was fascinating to see how 75 years on, Nature has reclaimed its own and covered almost everything in vegetation, but you don’t have to dig very deep in many places to reveal hard evidence. The photo below show us standing in a former mess hall with recently cleared steps up to kitchens.



The camp was cleared of reusable buildings and kit at the end of the war, so most of what’s left are the concrete pads the buildings stood on. However, several brick-built structures are preserved including ammunition stores, rifle range butts and firing ditches, and three large decontamination shower blocks whose only permanent residents are bats but are also used as a canvas by accomplished graffiti artists (not to be condoned of course!).



Cartridge cases are two-a-penny on the Commons, but Simon can read them like a book. He picked up one stamped with the date 1941 and could tell us the calibre, where it was manufactured, and that based on the percussion imprint, it had been fired from a Bren gun.



For more information, purchase Simon's book "Wartime Dalditch Camp and Finds on Woodbury Common" (available from Best Books in Exmouth, Littleham Post Office, Colaton Raleigh shop and Budleigh Salterton TIC) and check our website at <https://www.ova.org.uk/sites/default/files/common/events/walk-reports/180207.pdf> or Ovapedia.

Jon Roseway