

## **Tuesday, 28th February “Easing the Spring” with Brian Turnbull**

Nine of us gathered on a lovely sunny early Spring day to join Brian Turnbull on a walk to discover more about the remains of the sites used by the soldiers training at Dalditch Camp in WW2, but we had a surprise in store.

He explained how ‘easing the spring’ is also a military term which relates to the rifle used in training. We were also promised a poem during our coffee break, so we set off with a spring in our step heading uphill towards Squabmoor Reservoir.

We stopped briefly here for Haylor to give a quick history on the building of the reservoir and subsequent de-commissioning. Apparently, it would now only serve Exmouth for 6-7 days, so is only used for recreational fishing. The eagle eyed amongst us spotted a shag or cormorant diving and we also learned there is a substantial number of freshwater mussels living in the reservoir.

Our route then headed across East Budleigh Common towards Frying Pans passing decontamination buildings, Nissan hut sites and rifle ranges.

We stopped for coffee and Brian read a poem which inspired the title of the walk, a small extract is reproduced below:

### **Naming of Parts by Henry Reed**

*And this you can see is the bolt. The purpose of this*

*Is to open the breech, as you see. We can slide it*

*Rapidly backwards and forwards: we call this*

*Easing the spring. And rapidly backwards and forwards*

*The early bees are assaulting and fumbling the flowers:*

*They call it easing the Spring.*

It was very atmospheric to listen to the poem with signs of Spring around us and imagining all the troops who had passed through the area.



We continued briskly on, viewing rifle ranges, two more decontamination units and evidence of support buildings.

Circling around Wheathill plantation we made our way back having enjoyed a lovely sunny walk which eased us into Spring with echoes of all the men who trained and lived in such challenging circumstances.

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Jane Connick