

Friday 17th May, 11.30am. Bedwyn Brail guided walk.

1.25 mile (2 km) easy access walk.

29 walkers booked to come along to this special footpaths group event in Bedwyn Brail hosted by Richard Charles and our group. Richard was our guide and his passion for the countryside shone through as he shared his wide knowledge of the area, the forest and fauna as well as historical facts.

Bedwyn Brail is under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme which supports the environmental development of the Brail. Within Wilton and Bedwyn Brails 1500 new trees and shrubs have been planted including Beech, Oak, Sycamore and Chestnut. Unfortunately, the Ash trees can no longer be planted as they are affected by Ash Dieback a serious disease involving the fungus, *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*.

Along the way, we stopped to view Broad Walk Avenue which leads to Tottenham House shrouded in tarpaulin as the new owners begin their restoration. Richard explained that he has a duty to ensure there is a sweeping view from the house and no trees must be planted to restrict the view. While viewing the Avenue we were delighted to hear Raven's calling to each other as they prepared their nest in the Scots Pine. Apparently, the Red Kites are not happy with their new neighbours!

Our final stop was the site of the Roman Villa (a Scheduled Monument). The villa sits under a metre of earth which is there to protect the ruins that lie beneath. It is a large villa with 4 springs at each corner. On this site, during excavations in 2006, a Roman corn drier was discovered with a fire pit and tunnels to dry the corn. Richard hopes that one day someone will want to undertake a full excavation and explore all this site has to offer.

At the villa site we were treated to a good old English picnic by Richard during which many memories were shared by the walkers, some walking with us for the first time. This slow steady short stroll meant that some walkers with limited mobility were able to come along and even one person with a mobility scooter,

The main right-of-way through the Brails is along a well-made up track, suitable for some off-road mobility scooters but it would not be possible to reach it with a scooter along the many footpaths and bridleways that access the Brail. Our linear accessible walk was made possible because we were granted special permission to park close to the track. Richard has kindly offered to allow private parking for easy access for anyone with mobility issues, by prior arrangement. If this is of interest contact bedwynfootpathsgroup@gmail.com and we'll put you in touch with Richard.