

Summer Leys – December 2018 (Evening Walk)

The night was an unforgiving black as there were no stars that night, the rain predicted earlier in the day had not materialised, so we were all set for our Shamblers' Christmas evening walk. Fifteen, an unexpected high number, had assembled in the Summer Leys car park. The time was 6:30pm and checking in had been accomplished with the aid of illumination from torches.

Last year the walk from the same venue had to be cancelled due to the icy conditions and health and safety fears, so what a difference a year can make as it was quite calm and mild this year.

The route would be mostly free of puddles and Ruth Emmerson, the leader for the evening, would give adequate warning of them. Other than the sight of a pair of boots in front, not a lot could be seen ahead on the path.



A Mallard's quack, a Widgeon's whistle and the occasional hoot from an owl were the only sounds to be heard as our torch illuminated human caterpillar wove its way around the two miles of the Reserve. What a sight it must have been from the heavens. The water gave off a luminous glow in the dark, which looked quite eerie but calming too.

Returning to the car park and finding our cars intact, car boots were opened to produce untold quantities of Christmas fare, all quickly transported to the nearby Pioneer hide. Having set up battery powered tea lights for illumination around the Hide's interior, the central table was laid out with the Christmas tuck for sharing. Finbarr spoke to us briefly about the Shamblers' plans for 2019 and what we can look forward to.



Having tasted and enjoyed the delights laid out and the rendering of seasonal carols made, a thorough clean and bag up of rubbish was completed. After wishing each other the season's greetings we returned to our cars and made our way home.