



Hash 161 - The Cross Keys, Great Bedwyn - 21st March 2004

The Cross Keys in the central square of old Great Bedwyn city;
The river Dun, deep and wide, washes its wall on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied. But, when begins my ditty,
Almost two weeks ago, to see the townsfolk suffer so - from Hashers - was a pity.

Hashers!

They chased the dogs and trod on cats, and frightened babies in their prams,
And littered the streets with flour pats. With their knobbly knees and wobbly hams,
Some wearing silly bobbly hats, running and streaking, and shrieking and squeaking –
You never saw such a bunch of prats!

Till at last the townsfolk went to the pub - on the bar door started knocking.
“You berk!” cried they, “You started this –
We take it very much amiss; these Hashers are quite shocking!
If you don’t get them out of town, to the Horseshoes we’ll be flocking.”

The landlord scratched his greasy head, as his wife began to snigger –
When down the road, like an ugly toad, approached the strangest figure!
His queer top coat, from waist to head, was all in yellow, none in red.
And he himself was old and thin, with rheumy eyes – no light therein,
And lank loose hair, yet mottled skin; no colour in cheek, nor beard on chin,
But lips where spit went out and in. There was no guessing his kith and kin,
And no-one present would admit to knowing this obnoxious git.

He went up to the publican, and said “D’you know, I really can
By means of ancient secret charm, and without doing any harm,
Or causing locals much alarm, make any creature leave – girl or man.”
“What, even Hashers?” cried mine host, “for they are awful – worse than most.”
“Hasher, rat, or newt or viper – and people call me the Pissed Piper.”
(And here they noticed round the neck of this appalling, haggard wreck –
A silver’d faery pipe or horn, with rubber bulb all scratched and torn).

“Yet,” said he, “poor piper as I am, I’ve made a lot of cretins scam.
The Argies from the Falklands – then - Mad Thatcher out of Number Ten;
From Albert Square drove Dirty Den – although the bugger’s back again.
If I can lose these Hashers queer – will you give me lots of beer?”
“Beer! – a firkin, hogshead, cask – and any spirit that you ask”
Said the landlord – “Upon completion of your task!”

Into the street the Piper stepped, smiling first a little smile
As if he knew what magic slept in his mighty horn the while.
And ere three fruity parps the horn uttered, the ragged Hasher army muttered.
And out their cars came Hashers –
Lanky Hashers, skinny Hashers, pale Hashers,
Old Hashers, young Hashers, new-shod Hashers,
Grave old walkers, gay young friskers, fathers, mothers, sons-in-law.
Balding heads and greying whiskers, followed the Piper with a roar.

Until they came to the River Dun – the daft sods jumped in! All bar one –
Who piggy-backed to the other side. The others – carried by the tide
Were duly scattered far and wide; the wicked Piper's work was done.

You should have heard the Bedwyn people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple –
When up popped the Pissed Piper, who said with a leer
“Of Hashers you're free – now where's me firkin beer?”
Free beer! The landlord looked blue; so did the grim landlady too.
To give free beer to a wandering fellow with a hideous anorak of yellow!
“Get stuffed!” said mine host – “We're rid of those folk;
To ask for free beer is a very poor joke.”

Pissed Piper loped off to far Bedwyn Brail, found walkers and runners adrift on the trail.
“On Inn” cried Pissed Piper – and back to Cross Keys;
“That's twenty-five pints if you firkin well please!
Or I'll bring this poor pub to the end of its tether –
By Hashing from Bedwyn each fortnight – for ever!”

With many sincere apologies to the shade of Robert Browning

Fifth Coming Hash Runs

162 - 4th April - The Seven Tuns, Chedworth - GOM & Dave

163 - 18th April - The Blackbird, Bagnor, Newbury - Jeremy
[signposted Watermill Theatre]

164 - 2nd May - The Radnor Arms, Coleshill - Brian & Keith2

165 - 16th May - The Bugger's Arms

166 - 30th May - The Oddfellows Arms, Manton - Keith1

If you want to have a bash at a Hash, or find out where the
Bugger's Arms is please ring GOM Margaret on 01793 703744, or the
late Keith Mitchell on 01672 511530 - email keith@pallettfs.co.uk
- website <http://kvhash.mysite.freemove.com/>.