



Hash 165 - The Cross Keys, Great Bedwyn - 16th May 2004

If the Kennet Valley Hash had a committee, it would have been a glum committee that was staring into its beer glasses outside the Radnor Arms in Coleshill four weeks ago. In the Hash mag, under the heading 'On-Ons', the fixture list was looking decidedly thin. In fact so thin that the very next Hash was to be at the fabled 'Buggers Arms'. All we knew was that Ian had been volunteered to do it - possibly without his knowledge. And when Ian - glowing from his global gallivanting - announced to the assembled Hashers where he had chosen as the location, my heart rather uncharitably sank.

For the Buggers Arms turned out to be none other than the Cross Keys, Great Bedwyn. Please, not again. With the best will in the world, I could run a Hash from there with my eyes shut. East out of the village, across the railway track, splash through the river, over the canal, through Bedwyn Brail, down the long track west, through the field to the Grafton Road, back to the canal, past the church - why, we'd only been there a month ago.

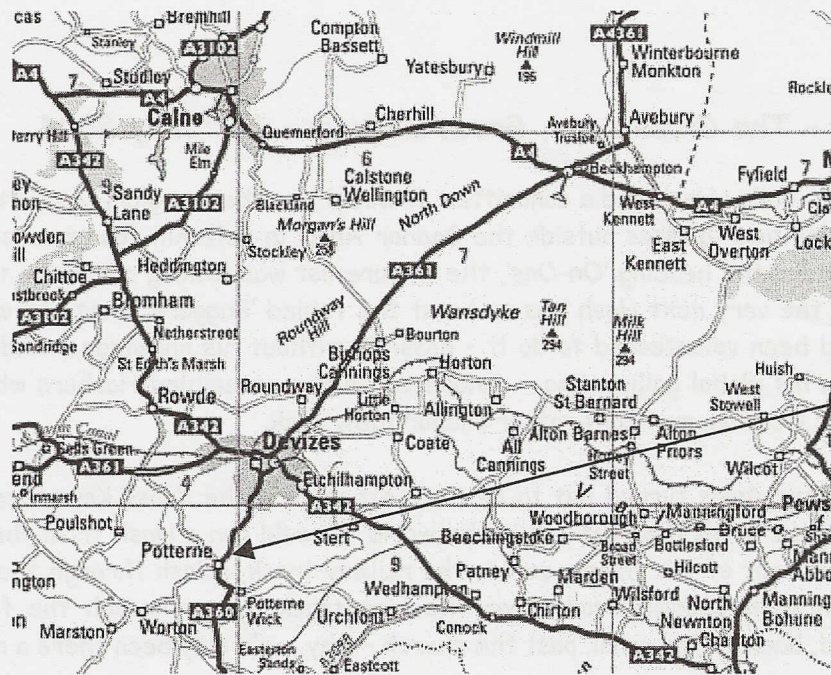
I should have known better. Full respect to the canny Ian, who had determined - to use his own words - to 'take you bastards somewhere from Bedwyn where you'd never been!' - and he did, bless him. No fording the river, but straight over the bridges then east, quite a long way - and indeed into foreign territory, possibly Berkshire for a bit. Just the four of us - Me, Jeremy, Maurice and Mike, with Laura and Katrina taking a more leisurely pace to recover full fitness. And what a perfect day it was, as we ran in the warm spring sunshine into the solitude of silent green dappled meadows, where lazy fat cows raised a ruminative eyebrow at these unaccustomed interlopers.

Every now and then Ian would pop up from the undergrowth to run with us for a while, then disappear as mysteriously as he had come. We ran past a field of horses, where an obliging lad filling a trough hosed some of down, and then the familiar glades of the Brail welcomed us again.

Having snootily opined that I could run the trail blindfold, I managed to take a wrong turn within sight of home, and ran into a ploughed field closely guarded on all sides by barbed wire and nettles. But no matter. I sprinted gamely and lamely over the bridges and back up to the pub, followed five minutes later by K&L. Taking a while to cool down, I was last into the bar, and was surprised to find everyone sitting inside. We soon tooled off into the garden, however, to be joined eventually by the walkers, who - armed with a map from Ian - had very sensibly decided to extend their walk and take in part of the long trail.

Mike, acting *in statu* GOM (who was off dancing somewhere, if you please), thanked Ian fulsomely for laying a trail that was mostly new even to a former Bedwyn resident - a magnificent achievement, especially considering the skinfull our Hare had had the night before! Maurice, who had brought the horn with him - only to send it off shopping in Swindon - then made a moving speech in presenting the aforementioned musical implement to I forget whom, as I was emotionally overcome.

A superb trail, Ian, and a lovely day - many thanks.



Fifth Coming Hash Runs

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

167 - 13th June - The Green/Red Dragon, Potterne - Laura

168 - 20th June - The Ridgeway Geriatric Gallop

169 - 27th June - The Bugger's Arms - Katrina

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>

Volunteer to lay a trail - NOW! Or we'll just be sat in the pub!