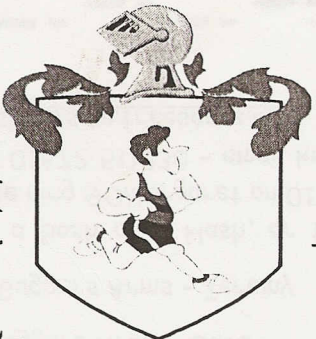


KENNELLEY HASH HAKKERS



Hash 171 - The Savernake Forest Bash - 25th July 2004

I daresay most of us know Savernake fairly well - I have lived round these parts for more than 20 years, and used to walk the dogs and kids (well, drag the kids) round the the forest at least once or twice a week. If we were still out at dusk, I used to sing a song from one of the Noddy books, in a gobliny voice:

"It isn't very good
In the dark, dark wood
In the middle of the night
When there isn't any light"

What a classic. No wonder Enid Blyton is banned from public libraries. The dogs seemed to like it though; but then they also liked rolling in decomposing rabbits.

Did you know that nine hundred and fifty years ago the forest was much larger, and made up of small woods and coppices, separated by heath, scrub and downland? Savernake has documents recording its management from about 1086 to the present day, providing a wealth of historical insight, glimpses of dark political intrigues and royal collusions. The earliest mention of the forest is recorded as far back as 934 AD, when King Athelstan refers to 'the crofts alongside the woodland called Safernoc' - 'boundary wood', the boundary between the Britons and the Saxons. A Saxon named Aluric was the first recorded 'occupier' of the land. The forest is older than the eponymous "New" Forest - the reason for its name. 'The Wardens of Savernake Forest' by Cardigan is compelling further reading, apparently. It is the only privately-owned forest in Britain, and the serial monogamist King Henry VIII - the Sven-Göran Ericsson of his day - met Jane Seymour when he stayed at Wolf Hall. Some girls have all the luck....

By Jove, the Hash Mag is a mine of use~~less~~ful information - worth every penny.

What? The run? Oh yes, the run. Well, we assembled at the southern picnic site as instructed, and bang on the dot of 11.15 off we set along an unmarked path towards the A346. Risking imminent death beneath the juggernaut wheels of caravans hurtling south - I am not a prejudiced man, but if I had a gun... - we were soon enveloped by the

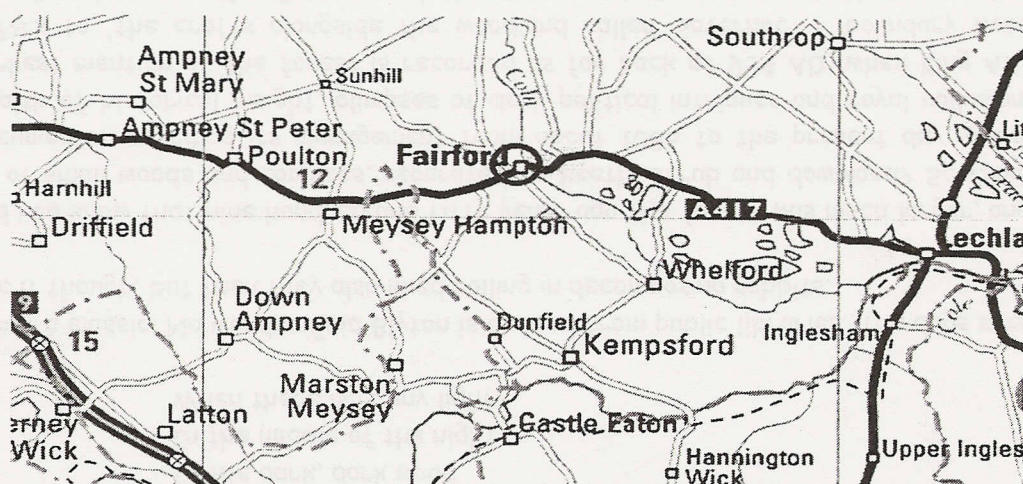
.....delicatest lattices,
covered with crystal vines: then weeping trees,
moving about as in a gentle wind,
collecting, mimicked the wrought oaken beams.

Pretty soon, we came to the first of a series of checks.

.....Wherefore delay,
young traveller, in such a mournful place?
Art thou wayworn, or canst not further trace
The diamond path?

Well, we were fairly wayworn, and fresh out of diamond paths - after all, it was our fair lady GOM - Madonna of the Flour-Free Trail - who had laid the Hash; but using our acute sense of smell, we were soon en route again. Down verdant roads of tarmac and spongy turf, past ancient, nobly rotting oak, towering airy beech and dry, dusty fir, we were constantly guided through the gently-nodding bracken by the ack-ack fire from the Cadley clay pigeon range. Back over the road, we arrived salt sweaty, in the Mad Mike-approved one hour, at the picnic area - me a long way last (conserving my strength for an afternoon's goal-keeping at the Mildenhall cricket pitch) to find - a total absence of walkers. No doubt they turned up eventually, for an afternoon of beer, sandwiches and rounders.

Familiarity with Savernake can never breed contempt, and we have to thank Margaret and Brian for a beautiful Hash.



Fifth Coming Hash Runs

172 - 8th Aug - The Village Inn, Liddington - Brian

173 - 22nd Aug - The 8 Bells, Fairford - Keith2

174 - 5th Sept - The Buggers Arms - Dave

175 - 19th Sept - The Buggers Arms - Jeremy

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