



Two for the price of one this week - you lucky people!

Hash 174 - The Crown, Ampney Crucis - 5th September 2004

Snake Hips writes - The Crown of Crucis stands beside the Ampney Brook and overlooks the village cricket green. On summer days the sound of willow on leather and the quiet stream flowing past sum up the essence of this most English of country village pubs.

The Romans were at Ampney Crucis - there is evidence of a settlement greater than 4 hectares in the village. In the 1780's some workmen who were digging up stone by the side of the London Road discovered an earthenware urn. It contained burnt bones, ashes and some Roman coins of the lower Empire. The urn is now in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Some locals are still known to grumble "Yes, but what have the Romans ever done for us?"

The Sunday morning was beautiful and sunny and very warm. As we gathered in the car park there was another group of ramblers tying up hiking boots and pulling up long socks. A popular area for the outdoor types like ourselves.

Margaret and David had laid the trails. Everyone gathered around smiling and looking forward to the forthcoming exertions as the Hares handed out dock leaves (glad I wore tracksuit bottoms as this must mean 'stinging nettles').

Luckily I decided to explore the rear of the pub because it looked delightfully picturesque. The Ampney Brook flowed past at a leisurely pace beneath a wooden bridge, which I crossed and gazed down into the clear cool gently flowing stream. And on the bridge was what I hoped to see: two dots of flour. As the Hornblower I honked several times [we've noticed your problem - Ed] and began the run. Skirting the cricket pitch and onto open countryside. I was quickly followed and just as quickly overtaken by the other runners. The land lay reasonably flat but the trail was diverse enough for the landscape to continually change showing the English countryside off to its best advantage.

Half way round David and Margaret provided a regroup point for the runners. Delicious water was also given and very gratefully received. A little later the need for the dock leaves became all too apparent. I managed to find the worst of it and fell behind, never to catch up until the pub. Never minding as it became quite pleasant to run on my own, honking merrily, at a somewhat gentle pace feeling the sun on my face.

As the run neared its conclusion I spotted the walkers ahead of me. This caused me to run a little faster and I caught them as they turned into the car park. We sat outside in the sunshine and had a very nice pub lunch. Margaret and David were thanked for a splendid trail and I awarded Marion the horn for leaving me amongst the nettles.

And thank you Brian, for this slightly belated narrative.