

## Hash 198 - The Sun Inn, Coate, Swindon - 20<sup>th</sup> July 2005

I have only three rules when it comes to Hashing:

- 1) I don't run in the rain;
- 2) I don't run in the rain; and
- 3) I don't run in the rain.

Fortunately - in fact unbelievably - in the six years I've been doing this lark (and I try hard not to miss a Hash) - I have never had to start in the rain, and I can only remember two Hashes when it started raining *en route* - Hannington (December 2001) and Headington (Oct 2001), where Iain managed to lose several walkers who were never seen again. So what was I doing - a man of principle, mark you - standing in the sipping precipitation outside the Sun at Coate Water when I had the *perfect* alibi - a ticket for the 1<sup>st</sup> Test at Lords? I could easily have played the double bluff - because frankly only an *eejit* would have hoofed it up to London to hang around for 5 drizzly hours just to watch the inevitable debacle. I could have stayed in my nice warm bed, for a long languorous lie-in, and *nobody* would have been any the wiser.

The answer - of course - is Mad Mike Fisher. Even though the man himself was not present - off sunning himself in the bosom of his family in Cornwall - I could feel his baleful glare across the intervening 200 miles, piercing my soul like a red-hot gimlet. I could hear his withering scorn: 'Keith? - oh, he's only a fair-weather hasher. Lacks the moral fibre to Hash in the rain.' I lay there in my pit, tossing and turning fitfully, unable to sink back into the arms of Morpheus beneath the weight of my troubled conscience, such is the influence of my friend and mentor. What a bxxxxxx!

Thus it was that I dragged myself into my vest and shorts, brushed the rain from my specs, and headed the trusty Skoda towards Swindon, wipers battling vainly against the elements. A dozen hardy Hashers stood shivering in the grey November mist, as Steve lied through his chattering teeth about how short the trail would be. And off we trudged through the park gates, along the deserted shores of Coate Water, the diving platform eerily mocking us.

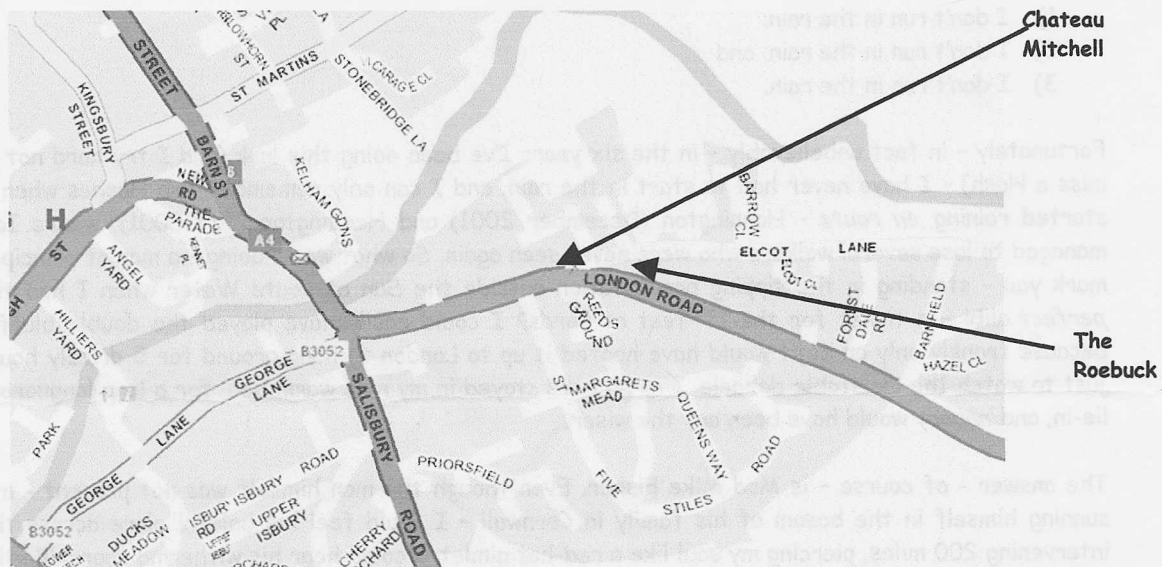
In the event, it wasn't too bad - a bit like making love - OK, but not as good as the real thing (joke!!!). After all, once you are wet, you can't get any wetter, and being the middle of July, it wasn't *absolutely* freezing.

Now my geography of Swindon is not too hot, despite having worked there for several years. Once we had worked our way round the lake, we were led back across the Marlborough Road, and then I was completely lost as we headed into the shrubbery on the opposite side.

I have bored you all rigid with my eulogies on the main joy of Hashing - turning off the beaten track of countryside you think you know, and into pastures new. And thus it was on Sunday: we came across a series of lakes in the heart of Swindon - and hills, and quiet back-roads sprinkled with ancient houses and the ruins of an abandoned church - all within a few yards of Old Town High Street - I

had no idea... Last and lost, falteringly following the largely washed-out flour trail into a park, I rubbed the rain from my spec-less eyes to find myself high on a bluff in the middle of a field, overlooking a misty vista towards - well, a few blocks of flats in the distance, actually - but I could have been in the middle of nowhere, rather than the middle of Swindon; a remarkable experience.

I had given up all hopes of ever finding flour in this lifetime, but guided by the scent of Dave's trainers, I managed briefly to pick up the trail again on a cycle track leading to Queens Road. I missed the bit through the underpass and into the dubious delights of Park South (or is it North - who cares). Like me on Steve's famous first Hash, Jeremy was the only one to follow the trail as laid, and somewhat to my surprise, arrived back at the pub *after* me. Laura, Katrina, Jeremy and I gave the regulars an eyeful by stripping to the buff, towelling off and changing back into civvies in the arbour outside the pub dining-room, and then gave ourselves up to the enveloping fug of the bar for a well-earned orange juice-and-soda. The après-Hash was in 2 camps, with the few Walkers sitting in the noshing-room, but GOM made a *sotto voce* speech of thanks to Steve (never a dull hour on his Hash trail), and I awarded him the soaking, sweaty green kecks, whilst (who?) got the Horn.



PLEASE RING OR E-MAIL TO LET ME KNOW IF YOU ARE COMING! Don't bring food or booze, just three of your English pounds!!!

## Third Coming Hash Runs

- 199 - 7<sup>th</sup> Aug - The Seven Stars, Bottlesford - Iain
- 200 - 21<sup>st</sup> Aug - Chez Keith, The Kennet Valley, Marlborough - Keith
- 201 - 4<sup>th</sup> Sept - The Buggers Arms - Margaret & Dave
- 202 - 18<sup>th</sup> Sept - The Royal Oak, Bishopstone - GOM
- 203 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct - The Masons Arms, Meysey Hampton - Brian

If you want to have a bash at a Hash, or find out where The Bigger's Arms is please ring GOM Jeremy on 01672 521064; email [jer@xyz.port995.com](mailto:jer@xyz.port995.com) or the late Keith Mitchell on 01672 511530 email [keith@pallettfs.co.uk](mailto:keith@pallettfs.co.uk) - website [kvhask.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk](http://kvhask.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk)