



Hash 211 - The Bell, West Overton - 22nd January 2006

What is it about pub landlords recently? Every fortnight that venerable institution the Kennet Valley Hash House Harriers honours these menials with its custom, transforming their tawdry and ill-favoured dives into a glittering venue for A-list celebrities and the landed gentry, bounteously bestowing their legendary wealth. None of yer Big Brother also-rans, drunk and/or debauched Liberal politicians or MBE-flaunting journeymen cricketers - no, the KVHHH is full to its diamond-studded gunwales with aristocrats, old money and jet-setting stars of stage, screen and concert hall.

We are discreet about such matters of course, and do not seek publicity. Yet our numbers include Duke Dave, Earl of Coldharbour and Lady Margaret, Countess Motorola; the Hon Brian de Bold, finance director of several public companies (alas now in liquidation); Lord Justice Fisher, Recorder of the Park South Circuit; Jeremy Rindt and Steve Fittipaldi, doyens of the elite BMW banger-racing team; Graham Stallone, star of *Rambo*; Dame Kathy Dench, star of *The Lambshank Redemption*, *A Man for all Seasonings* and *Brie Encounter*; and myself, editor of several Fleet Street publications including the Daily Sketch, the Daily Herald and Quilting Monthly. We dress in the latest Highworth fashions, dine off the finest meat-and-two-veg a fiver can buy, and drink copious bottles of vintage Vimto and pints of Old Dogsbreath. So why are we regularly turfed out of their ghastly parking facilities by these country bumpkins? Beats me. Oh - by the way, please park in the road at the Who'd a Thought It....

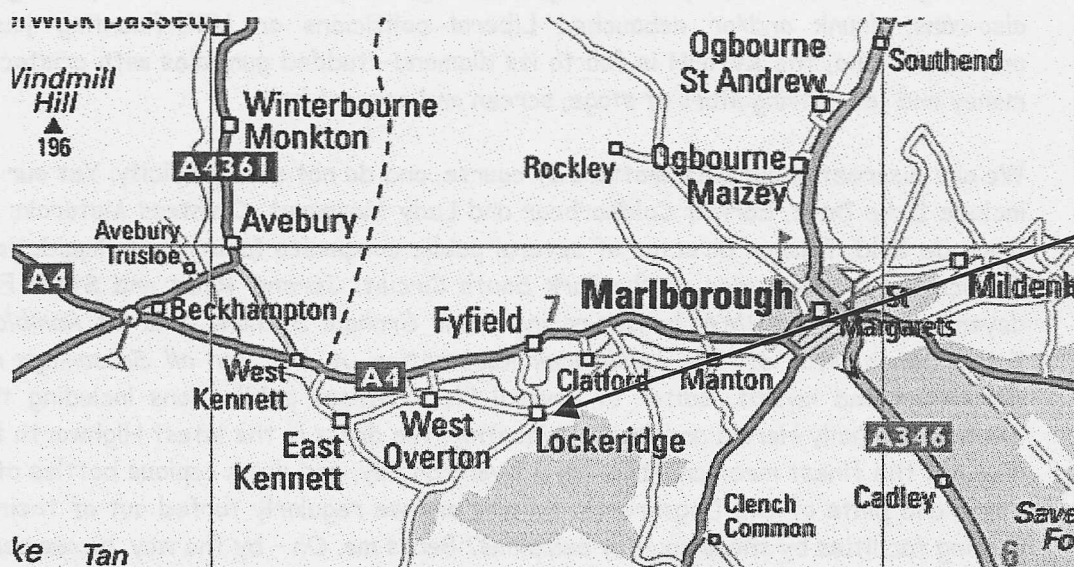
This Sunday - and in good time - we turned the Skoda limousine into the car park of the Bell, to find it empty as a nun's womb - apart from the radiant but red-nosed Linda, who sent us scurrying up the A4 to a National Trust car park some half-mile distant. There, Runners and Walkers groped through the freezing fog in futile search of our Hare, until the frostbite nibbling at our vitals encouraged us to start moving. We pushed off back along the afore-mentioned half mile, paused to spit at the pub 'Open' sign, and headed off into the wilds of Wiltshire.

It is gratifying to see that we have several new **young** regular runners - and I mean *seriously* young - under 40! Oh - and Baldrick. Andrew "the Hashes are too short", Phil and some Steves shot off into the lifting fog, not to be seen again until a regroup somewhere in the New Forest. We knew it was going to be a long run when we came across the Long/Short divide just outside Old Sarum... After several rather unnecessary ascents of the Black Mountains, we hacked through the undergrowth of Offa's Dyke to emerge into clear blue skies on the top of a Cotswold escarpment, Stonehenge distantly visible over a bank of fog rolling through the Bard's fair Avon valley.

After that, it was relatively plain sailing downhill, where we caught first sight of our Hare. He had exhausted all the flour his mule train could carry, and so gave us detailed directions for the final 32 miles with the aid of Ordnance Survey trig points, a GPS and an astrolabe. He then jumped in his car, making V-signs and splashing me as he headed back down the muddy track.

Personally, I found running by moonlight a novel and interesting experience - although as the Walkers didn't make it back until half-past Tuesday, it was mostly Runners - and Judas Fisher, who had put his back out 'gardening' - that assembled in the bar of the bloody Bell, where a glass of mulled wine cheered me up. Our noble GOM managed to thank Brian and Linda in a short speech almost wholly devoid of irony. Curiously, I had quite forgotten to wear the green kecks on our little outing, whilst the Hash Horn has become as mythical as that found on a unicorn. Many thanks (seriously!) to Brian the Bold for a beautiful day; but hopefully, when his next Hash is due, he will pitch it at the average of his previous two!

By the time you will have read this, we shall have completed a Mad Mike Fisher Hash in the statutory hour.....



Second Coming Hash Runs

212 - 5th Feb - The Plough, Shalbourne - Mad Mike Fisher

213 - 19th Feb - The Who'd a Thought It, Lockeridge - The Late Keith

214 - 5th Mar - The Hit or Miss, Kingston Langley - Margaret & Dave

215 - 19th Mar - The Buggers Arms - Steve

216 - 2nd Apr - The Prince of Wales - Andrew & Steve2

If you want to have a bash at a Hash, or find out where The Bugger's Arms is please ring GOM Jeremy on 01672 521064; email jer@xyz.port995.com or the late Keith Mitchell on 01672 511530 email keith@griffins.co.uk - website kvhash.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk