



Hash 224 - The Royal Oak, Wootton Rivers - 9th July 2006

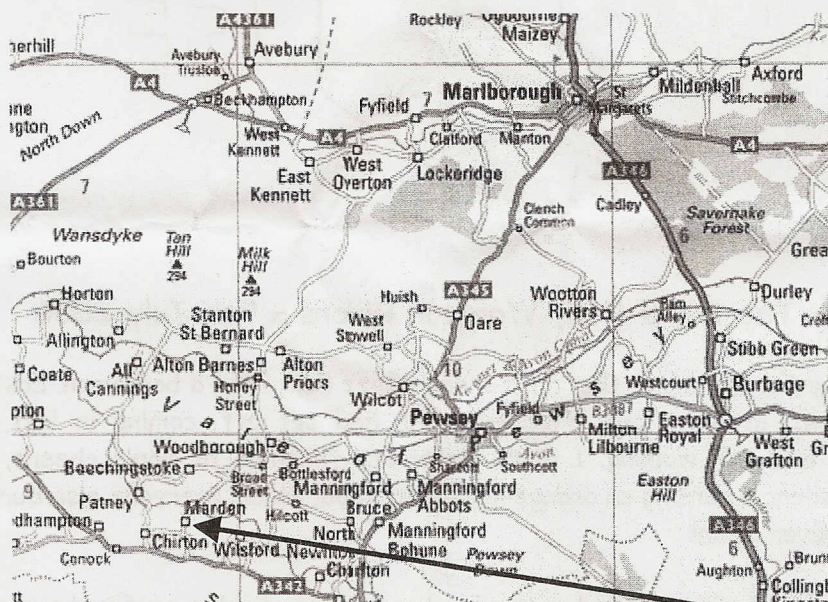
A Hash on the Sunday after the Marlborough Jazz Festival - a bad omen. Last year I was barely sentient, arriving long after everyone had set off, coming in last, even after Katrina, who was only walking. I dimly remember finishing to ironic cheers, and sitting, suffering in silence, nursing an orange-juice-and-soda, whilst everyone else burbled merrily around me. Never again!

Thus it was that I went to bed early, at about 3 a.m., having confined myself to just a round dozen or so pints and a few glasses of wine. And I was first up, tendering to the breakfast needs of 13 guests, and in unreasonably fine fettle for the Hash. From Wootton Rivers, no less, where I had set a trail not long previously. And it was this local knowledge which propelled me into the lead of a round dozen or so Runners - including jovial Johnny (Johnnie?) and resolute Roger - of whom more later - and a similar number of stout Walkers. Yes, that hidden path behind the pub, the tricky bit round the farmyard, the left turn rather than right at Mud Lane - could no-one keep up with me? Well yes; in the absence of GOM and the Sarge, it was ruddy Roger who ran past me all the way up the steepest road in Wiltshire to the Martinsell Hill junction, where I foolishly - and in the teeth of the evidence - checked out a long false trail which enabled me to resume my rightful place at the rear, accompanied by somewhat frail daughter Becky, who had not only Festivalled but Clubbed into the early hours as well.

As I had never been round the hill fort before, I stopped to admire the wonderful view - including the tiny specks of Runners far below me - before setting off down the hill, by this time entirely on my tod. A long way in the distance were Laura - helpfully adding flour to Iain's trail which early morning rain had done much to wash away - and the too-long absent running boots of Jenny. The trail led into firstly a wheatfield, and then an amazing maize maze. This came up to my ears, so to those less lanky than myself it must have seemed an impenetrable forest - so what a boon Laura's flour must have been. Without it, I might have been there still!

Fuelled by the last remnants of alcohol, and an unprecedented determination not to finish last, I managed to claw my way past Laura & Jenny along the canal, and spurred on by Iain, galumphed into the car park. I still have no idea what route the Walkers took, but they were all back before me. Not for long, however, as most of them took off elsewhere for lunch, so it was an admiring crowd of Runners who hung upon MMF's election speech for the Monster Raving One-Hour Hash Loony party (one vote - Lady Margaret Bradbury), in which he graciously conceded the Kennet Valley seat to the Scots Nationalists

So many thanks to Iain and Laura for leading us round yet another beautiful part of the county which still remained - in part - unknown to me.



4th coming Hash Runs

225 - 23rd July - Bankes Arms, Studland, Lady Margaret & Duke Dave

226 - 6th August - The Millstream, Marden - Laura

227 - 20th August - Crown & Anchor, Ramsbury - GOM

228 - 3rd Sept - The Crown & Anchor Korma Korner, Ham - Phil

229 - 17th Sept - The Buggers Arms - The Late Keith

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 kvhask.mysite.orange.co.uk