

Hash 228 - The Crown & Anchor, Ham - 3rd September 2006

"Rain before seven, fine by eleven" observed Katrina sagely, tucked snugly in the depths of the duvet as Winston brought in the early morning Earl Grey. I was less sanguine, having seen the sparrows' farting ritual rudely interrupted by a torrent of cats and dogs searching anxiously for an Ark. But, being a woman (Katrina, that is), she was of course right, and it was under blue skies, fluffy white clouds and warm sunshine that the executive Skoda rattled its way towards Ham.

In days of yore, Mad Mike Fisher and myself were wont to sit outside the Crown & Anchor of a summer's Friday evening, enjoying a yak and a few pints. But things move on; MMF is now married, and the C&A has morphed into a curry house. Quite why the residents of Ham and Shalborne need their own poppadom parlour is beyond me - and apparently beyond them too, as the place seemed untroubled by customers both before and after the Hash; though with orange-juice-and-soda at £4-40 a pint....

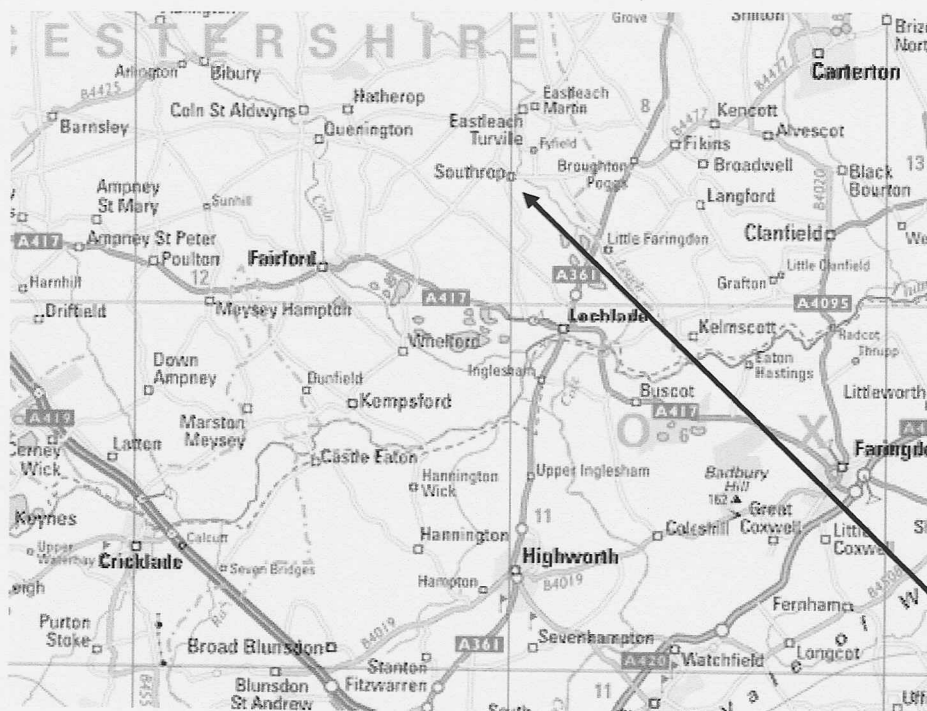
Being the Late Keith, I was, of course. And so, by default, was Katrina. But as we stretched our thews on arrival - to thunderous applause - we noticed an absence of Hare. Now in the normal course of events, one does not often see a Hare. They are shy, solitary, secretive creatures, not much given to mixing with the general public. But they are somewhat *de rigueur* at Hashing events such as ours. Our Hare was conspicuous by his absence; clearly, the Hash had been rained off. As we were about to jump back into our cars and return home to resume our various matutinal pleasures, the Maj-Gen loped apologetically into view. The bugger was late.

Quelling our mutinous mutterings with a steely glare, he briskly barked out the orders of the day and the 5th Battalion of the Kennet Light Armoured Brigade (augmented by a NATO contingent from the Isle of Wight) advanced into battle.

According to Sun-Tzu, it is the cavalry which undertakes the 'shock and awe' skirmishes and clears the way for the infantry. But so muddy was it that the cavalry were bogged down, and the infantry were soon marching through into the vanguard. However, the naval attaché instantly assumed command, and sent the cavalry galloping off in a north-easterly direction. This was uncharted territory for most of us, but traces of the enemy were easily found and followed. The General himself appeared in his scout-car from time to time to direct operations, and led the cavalry in an encircling pincer movement, driving the enemy south and west towards the foot-soldiers. What deeds of bravery there were that day: the commando raid through the woods was particularly successful, taking out a vicious detachment of nettles with only one casualty (calf wound to Lt Mitchell of the Press Corps), and the airfield was captured without enemy resistance.

Another enfilade through a forest, then onto dangerous open ground. The cavalry performed magnificently, scattering the foe so wide and far that we seldom found any further trace of them, and it was left to the reconnaissance troops to find our way back to base, the Maj-Gen himself coming out to welcome home his victorious army.

Back at the NAAFI, Sgt-Major Rees proposed a loyal toast to the CO; however he was reduced to the ranks after referring to the Maj-Gen's female companion as 'totty'. Trooper Jane was presented with the Order of the Hash Horn for conspicuous gallantry, and Lance-Bombardier Katrina was awarded the Green Kecks. A minute's silence was observed for the two WACs who sadly failed to return from battle. Our thoughts go out to the grieving loved ones left behind with only their pints for consolation.



Second Coming Hash Runs

- 229 - 17th Sept - The Jolly Tar (nautical again!), Hannington - MMF
- 230 - 1st Oct - The Swan, Southrop nr Lechlade - Brian the Bold
- 231 - 15th Oct - The Charlton Cat, Charlton - The Late Keith
- 232 - 29th Oct - The Swan, Lower Green, Inkpen - MBA Mike
- 233 - 12th Nov - The Buggers Arms - Katrina

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 or the late Keith Mitchell on 01672 511530 email keith@griffins.co.uk - website khash.mysite.orange.co.uk