



### KENNET VALLEY HASH HOUSE HARRIERS

Mag No 231- Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2006 - The Charleton Cat Charleton

Once upon a time, before some of you were born, there was a pub called the Red Lion in the village of Charleton. It was called the Red Lion because the local landowner family's crest had a cross-looking lion in the middle of it. One day some of the locals were gathered in the public bar idly looking at the family crest and one remarked "I do reckon that there lion looks more like our cat than a lion". "Well I'll be blowed" said the landlord "You'm dead right there Silas". And from that day on, despite the objections of the local landowning family, the pub became known throughout the world as the Charleton Cat.

The Kennet Valley Hash are of course not the slightest bit interested in boring things like that and as they gathered in the road next to the Cat on this mild October Sunday their minds were entirely on the challenges that lay ahead. They limbered up their lithe and supple bodies and listened attentively to the traditional briefing by the Late Keith (who was actually early but we're not going to change his name just yet). Two new hashers today both called John, one a walker (who was told he had to run next time) and the other a runner and friend of Margaret - both made very welcome. And then, exploding with energy we were off at full tilt down a grassy meadow with MMF and Kathrina powering along in the lead - for the first ten yards anyway. Andrew and Johnny soon moved effortlessly into the lead with Keith 2 not far behind while Jeremy found all the false trails. There were hundreds of them and so we all kept together well in the early stages - but then the circles became further apart and we spread out a bit. We ran through delightful countryside with the trees just turning to gold and as we ran the sun came out bathing everything in autumnal light and in just over the hour we were back at the bottom of the aforesaid grassy meadow below the pub. At that moment I saw our hare and some of the front runners leaning over the stile at the top watching the back markers come in. "I'll show them there's life in the old dog yet" I thought and galloped up the hill trying to make it look effortless. Just as well really as the sods were taking bets on whether I would stop.

I can recommend the Cat. It is a comfortable pub with an excellent choice of real ales and a friendly landlord making the après extremely pleasant. Jeremy made a long and interesting speech thanking Keith for a splendid trail, presenting Margaret with a rubber chicken (I forget why) and then presenting me with the horn (as he'd lost his bet).

A well crafted trail in lovely countryside which was hugely enjoyable. Thank you Keith.

### ON ONs

232	29 <sup>th</sup> Oct 06	The Swan Lower Green Inkpen	MBA Mike
233	12 <sup>th</sup> Nov 06	The Rose & Crown Ashbury *	Katrina
234	26 <sup>th</sup> Nov 06	The Horseshoe Mildenhall	GOM
235	10 <sup>th</sup> Dec 06	The Buggers Arms	Andrew
236	26 <sup>th</sup> Dec 06	The Keepers Arms Quennington **	Margaret & Dave

\* Please park in the church car park as pub car park is small

\*\* Traditional Boxing Day fancy dress hash. Bring all the family.

Any enquiries please ring - Grand Old Master (GOM Jeremy) on 01672 521064 or email [jer@xyz.port995.com](mailto:jer@xyz.port995.com)  
the Late Keith Mitchell on 01672 511530 - email [keith@griffins.co.uk](mailto:keith@griffins.co.uk) - or you could visit our web site at [kvhash.mysite.wannado-members.co.uk](http://kvhash.mysite.wannado-members.co.uk)

## The Voyage of the SS 'Kennet Valley'

Having suffered three hours' fitful sleep in a grotty hotel, before leaping out of bed at 3.45 a.m. to be thoroughly body-searched at Gatwick, it was a fairly frazzled crew who sat in the balmy sunshine at the pretty harbour of Primošten, downing tre velika piva and jeden bijela vina (3 large beers and a white wine). "I bet they're all having fun running through the rain on the Hash", said Vice-Admiral GOM wistfully. "Yes, and I expect it's nice and cold" agreed Rear Admiral Mitchell mournfully. "Lucky sods" chipped in Commodore Katrina. "I know where I'd rather be" added Leading Stoker 'Mad Mike' Fisher glumly.

Well, we suffer for our sailing. The SS Kennet Valley - a floating caravan built for comfort, not for speed or performance, was our home for the next week, and after a satisfying meal of Dalmatian specialities - mainly tomato soup followed by steak and chips - and a healthy slug of Grants finest, we had an early night to be ready for the voyage ahead.

Monday proved to be a day almost entirely devoid of wind, so we set The Admirable Chrichton (aka the auto-pilot) for the 30-odd nautical miles motoring to the island of Viš (the site of the only cricket pitch in Croatia), where we moored for the night in a little village of ancient Venetian cobbled stone streets and houses, and your scribe was charged a week's wages for a bit of fish.

Tuesday proved to be a day with more wind than we could happily use, but we sailed north, heeling at 60°, to the beautiful St Clement Islands. Brewing a cup of cheering tea below deck as we bounced along was almost as fraught as drinking the stuff on deck, and it was with some relief that we gained shelter in the lee of the islands. Cheese was to form a major part of our lunchtime diet (along with plenty of wine), and after a sunny snack on deck we took the dinghy and poop-pooped around the bay before sailing downwind (genoa only, at 7 knots!) into the marina. The water-taxi across to the neighbouring island of Hvar was great fun (45 knots!) and we wandered round a bit before dining out under the waxing (or as MMF would have it, waning) moon - and a pomegranate tree.

Wednesday proved to be a day with more wind than any sane person could use (30-40 knots), so we chose to sit in the marina wishing we were sailing, rather than sailing and wishing we were sat in the marina. A few lunchtime beers whilst watching various eejits half-capsizing in the bay was most satisfactory. That evening K&I left GOM & MMF to a romantic evening alone, whilst we headed back to Hvar and enjoyed Sex On The Beach (cocktails!) outside a bar watching the tourists being engulfed by the waves which swept over the quayside.

Thursday was bright, sunny and windy, so it was exhilarating tacking up the channel and round the point to a sheltered cove for lunch - cheese, wine and fruit - followed by a little gentle snorkelling. One hour and twenty-five minutes bracing beat across to Brač (I won the sweepstake) was rewarded by a perfect, almost empty bay where we moored for the night, troubled only by the occasional naked German swimming around. Admiral Katrina rustled up a delicious dinner, which we enjoyed on deck. Whether the Germans enjoyed our moonlit singing into the small hours is another matter....

Friday was another perfect sunny, windy day, and we pootled round into the picture-postcard port of Milna to take on water - and a pleasant beer at a quayside bar. Off to yet another empty bay for a sunlit lunch, followed by a stiff sail into the beautiful little restaurant-lined harbour we had selected for the night. Although the quayside was empty, we were waved off by a chappie who informed us that it was all booked. A hasty evaluation of plans B, C & D (it was getting dark) led us to a frenetic 7 miles' motoring across to the mainland for a sheltered mooring. I would like to say that Venišče on a Friday night really rocks, but apart from a clapped-out Beetle with no exhaust baffles, the village was quiet. The only restaurant gave us a delicious meal of Dalmatian (no little bandy-legged dogs) speciality mixed grill and chips, then it was back to the boat for a couple of Scotches and an early night in preparation for the final day of sailing.

Saturday again was sunny and windy, so we popped in to visit plan B before cruising along the coast of Solča to yet another bay for cheese, wine, snorkelling and naked Germans, followed by a stiff beat out to sea and a final yii-haa sail back into base - and yet more bloody soup, steak and Scotch.

You will be pleased to know that after 130 miles and seven days of close-quarters living and sailing, we are still all speaking to each other. You will be *proud* to know that MMF wore his KVH<sup>3</sup> T-shirt morning, noon and (for all I know) night, but sadly GOM seemed to be welded to a Ramsbury Fun-Run T-shirt - which undoubtedly would have stood up by itself, even after Catherine had it surgically removed from his manly torso.

All in all a great success and loads of fun - though of course, not a patch on Hashing through the winter rain and mud....

p.s - photos will soon be on the website!