

Hash 237 - The New Inn, Winterbourne Monckton - 7th January 2007

Springing from the Mitchell passion-pit at the unearthly hour of 9.27a.m., I flung back the heavy silk drapes and cast a jaundiced eye at the brimming grey clouds scudding over the hills on the skyline. 'Looks a bit dicky', I thought to myself. A quick check on the BBC weather website showed great blobs of blue, green and even yellow hanging over central southern England - very dramatic, the rain on the Beeb. Whilst there was only a hint of drizzle then, by the time we had polished off the kippers and Earl Grey it was sheeting it down. A quandary, indeed, since it is a well-known tenet of KVH³ lore that TLK does not run in the rain. If the Hare had been anyone other than MMF, I should have crawled back under the duvet. But dammit, once you've been invited to act as Best Man to a chap, you're obliged to look after him for life; a bit like blood brothers, really. As we drove through the sipping rain, I explained to Katrina that no other idiot would be there, and it was a duty of honour to turn up and support him.

How wrong I was. As K&I bowled up in the stretch limo on the dot of 11.03, we found about 40 other idiots, and MMF busily engaged in dispatching them off into the wilds. Bugger the late-comers (we were not the last), punctuality the politeness of princes etc etc. Duly chastened by the withering scorn, we did at least have time to notice that the rain had stopped; in fact it never reappeared until we were safely back home. The God of the Kennet Valley Hash smiled upon us as usual; all those sacrifices of virgin Hashers had not been in vain....

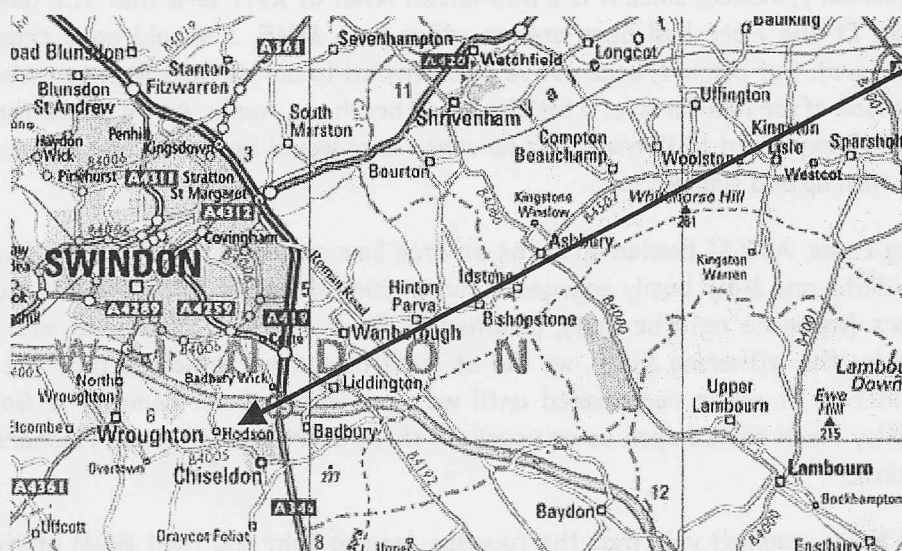
You would think, wouldn't you, that the founder, leading light and first GOM of the Kennet Valley Hash would have known which river it was that we crossed and ran along through the village of Winterbourne Monckton? "Haven't got a clue, mate" was his reply to all those who asked. It was left to me to explain that it was in fact our very own Kennet, and the Winter Bournes - of which there are several in Wiltshire - are bournes or streams which only fill in winter, when it's been raining. In summer the Kennet is dry even at Lockeridge, only a couple of miles from Marlborough, but in winter it flows from north of Uffcott, just down the road from Wroughton. So now you know.

Anyway, enough Geography. We set off through the village, a grand total of 20 Runners - possibly our biggest turn-out ever (when not combined with the scruffs and layabouts of the North Wilts), and were pleased to see Iain, Laura and Steve after a lengthy absence - and several of their (and GOM's) friends and relatives too. We crossed and slithered alongside afore-mentioned river - in full flood - and up to Windmill Hill (time for a little History), the largest causewayed enclosure in Britain, dating back even further than our Hare - in fact to 3,700 BC. No windmill though.

After a few minutes getting blown about, we pushed off down the other side of the hill to the second long/short divide, where we were delayed for several minutes owing to some poorly thought-out flour-work (I'm going to get it in the ear for this). Eventually we were back on the Trail, and met with MMF who was kidding no-one that he wasn't freezing to death standing there in just his vest and pants. A few more mud-baths (K2 managing to stay upright for once), a long hack down a farm track - thankfully with the wind on the starboard quarter - and we were back in the village and soon in the welcoming pub, to be followed a little later by the Walkers.

Landlord was an affable chap apparently answering to the name of Sandra. We took over the entire pub as well as the car-park - none of this nonsense about parking down the road - and GOM quelled the hubbub of chatter to thank Mike for a scenic, interesting and one-hour Hash. James was given the Bird (Mabel's unhealthily close examination of its under-carriage failed to reveal whether it was Bernadette or Matthew) for getting the Walkers back on the straight and narrow in their hour of need, and Lovely Linda presented Stevie with the Horn to encourage him to return sooner rather than several months later.

Many thanks, Mike, for a splendid Hash!



Second Coming Hash Runs

238 - 21st Jan - The Swan, Great Shefford - The Late Keith

239 - 4th Feb - The Calley Arms, Chiseldon (Hodson) - Jackie & Pauline

240 - 18st Feb - The Buggers Arms - Brian

241 - 4th Mar - The Buggers Arms - Keith2

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.orange.co.uk