



Hash	Pub	Village	Date	Hare/s	Scribe
353	Malt Shovel	Upper Lambourn	22 May 2011	Paul	Maurice

I didn't expect to step into an Irish community in Upper Lambourne of all places but on reflection I should have known. It's a land of little people – and all of them are jockeys. The Irish landlord gave the place an added level of jocularly and Paul, our hare, told me that he had wound him up every time he visited the pub when setting the trail. The landlord is from a part of the country where they answer a question with a question:

Question: "Is there a post office around here?"

Answer: "Is it a stamp that you might be wanting?"

It can do your head in! But our heads on this hash were certainly lifted by a brilliant trail over what can only be considered manicured territory. The tracks beside the gallops were in great condition. No stiles here as this is certainly horse-country. Even the blobs of flour and circles looked out of place, untidy in fact and no doubt the local community were out after us with hoovers to clear it up. It was that kind of tidy!

The Downs were at their best and Paul was at his most devious. The first circle on the road was beside a path into a forest. Well, where is the trail going to go? Into the forest of course so off we went. But we were wrong and spoke mutinously about rule changes where hares are so deliberately poking fun at us!

The trail soon led on to the gallops themselves and a very windy and cool start changed to a hot and gentle breeze. How wonderful is this area? Rolling hills with patterned layers of crops and variations on green and yellow and gold, then off through ribboned gallops across the downs enticing us to run like antelopes with graceful long strides. Margaret and I took up the rear and deserve different metaphors but I think we will leave it at that!

We did saunter a bit as we passed the studs – I mean the ones where they keep horses. There is no shortage of money around here and the outhouses and stables would have done justice as major homes in their own right. There was no lawn that needed a cut, no flower bed that was unweeded, and even

the casualness of design had structure. We started to think they may even have had a go at levelling the crops so they would not spoil views with indented growth.

Paul had put a lot of effort into this hash. He wanted us to enjoy the Downs and the gallops. But long paths with no deviation do not work well with a hash as it can turn into a long run. He devised circles where he could and sought permission from local landowners where necessary. He left the price of a pint behind the bar for one particularly helpful steward who allowed us through private paths as this allowed the trail to end in a comfortable mileage for both runners and walkers.

This was the subject of chat back at the bar. There is often as much enjoyment in setting a trail as there is in running it. The hares take it very seriously indeed and put themselves under serious pressure. With the constraint of time and mileage, that often means chats with land owners, phone calls, changes to a set trail and re-runs. I know when it sometimes goes wrong we all slag it off and that's the right thing to do but the poor hare is often devastated inside and sometimes she can be close to tears. The tragedy is that those are the hashes we remember. Now, what does that tell us about the human condition?

We were joined by the Chissy cyclists in the pub and we swapped stories of trail and track which was great.

Margaret had the horn from the last hash and presented it to me. I can't remember why but it was a bloody good reason at the time!

Thanks Paul for a great morning's run and some spectacular scenery.



#### ON ONs

355	19 Jun	The Blue Ball @ Kintbury	Jeremy
356	25 Jun	Naas, Co. Kildare	Naas HHH
357	26 Jun	Dublin Mountains	Jeremy/Maurice
358	3 Jul	Bugger's Arms	
359	17 Jul	Carriers Arms @ South Marston	Mike
360	31 Jul	Ivy @ Heddington	Des

If you want to have a bash at a Hash, or find out where The Bugger's Arms is please ring the GOM, Maurice, on 07887 608019 or email [mspillane@appligenics.com](mailto:mspillane@appligenics.com)