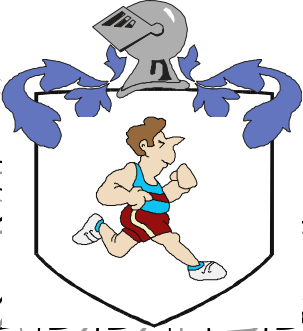


KENNALLEY HASSE HARRIERS



Hash	Pub	Village	Date	Hare/s	Scribe
364	The Swan	Wilton nr Marlborough	25 Sep 2011	Colin	Kathy

Well, this really takes me back, because it was about nine years ago that I attended one of my very first hashes at The Swan (getting lost in Savernake en route), and I vividly recall sitting in the pub garden afterwards on a beautifully warm, lazy afternoon, animatedly chatting with Keith P in between mouthfuls of delicious food (OK, OK Maurice.... so I chatter *ALL* the time...!). Another memory of that happy hash was that Graham, a former keen hash walker, turned up bright and early for the occasion at Wilton... er that's Wilton near Salisbury, folks.... But he caught up with us eventually for the 'après' bless him!

And the weather this time around? Yep, yet *another* gorgeous day. We've been having simply perfect weather conditions hash after hash lately ... doesn't it get boring? I can't remember the last time I needed to clean my boots... Shouldn't we all pray for some horrendous downpours and squelchy mud to create that unique sense of well-being and innate smugness that only a truly mucky hash can engender... er, or something? (Though I *have* heard a whisper that after this Indian summer we're forecast some **late October snow**... so pay attention... you've been warned!).

To the hash itself... thank you so much Colin for laying such an interesting trail; we were all really sorry that you couldn't linger afterwards to bask in our compliments, because you really did create a very varied, and not too arduous route (from the walkers' perspective at least) - though a few runners did take great pains to stress that the six *Colin* miles were more like 7.3 *actual* miles (what a polite way to complain!), but who's counting when you're both keeping fit AND keeping up with gossip? And while I'm mentioning Colin, I'd just like to say that I think both Colin and David have two of the merriest, smiling faces I've come across in ages, yet they must have their fair share of woes like the rest of us - does wonders for the spirit (or, as Churchill would have put it, "makes you proud to be British!").

But I digress. We started off from a 'wow' of a village centring on the quaint and aptly named Swan inn, then we followed a row of immaculately thatched cottages, edged by a pretty pond fringed with elegant weeping willows. Then it was straight on up a gentle slope that led us to the banks of a wide river with several clusters of swans and Canada geese (and noticed what appeared to be some solar panels erected in mid-stream; explanations on a postcard please). We were then guided along the canal towpath leading to the deservedly famous Crofton Beam

Engines. We were especially lucky that a steam rally was taking place today, so there were even more colourful canal boats than usual, as well as the happy sound of a hurdy-gurdy sounding machine, actually called a *Calliope* or steam organ (yep, after Annie told me this I had to look up the spelling – ain't Google wonderful?!) This music fortunately managed to drown out the sound of weekend maintenance work taking place further down the track, but even that was fascinating to watch as the sturdy steam engine hauled the gravel trucks back and forth.

The walkers found it a delightfully gentle and varied hash, easy under foot (*thank you, thank you!*) with the bonus of piercingly clear birdsong and even a glimpse of some astonishingly bright scarlet fungi in the lovely woodlands (the last two items thanks to a very observant James). Our slight and temporary confusion, on emerging from this enchanting thicket, was soon put right when some of the joggers who overtook us sounded the ever-welcome “on, on”.

Amongst the runners I'm told there was a truly iconic moment, whilst coming down a hill known as The Brail, when a neat formation of Maurice, Jeremy, Margaret and Mike prompted Jeremy to remark that it was like a “**GOM Express**”.... all four GOMs descending together in the correct sequence – a lovely image (though it's the suggestion of *speed* I'm having trouble with, Jeremy!). But, apart from the aforementioned whinges about the actual length of the hash, I could tell that the runners enjoyed themselves as much as the walkers did because everyone was in such a relaxed mood back at the pub, sitting outside and putting the world to rights, and it was only a sudden shower that prompted everyone to leave a bit early.

Rita took great satisfaction in handing over the shorts to John with, sadly, only one bell remaining (the shorts that is, not John, who - Viv assures me - still has all his bells intact), pointing out that she'd received them only because she'd fallen down at the previous hash, and had just learned that John had *also* slipped over at the same hash, with ne'er a moan... aren't we a stoic lot?

It was good to have Linda with us again and to welcome back Johnnie, who I'm told ran amongst us four or five years ago, never to be seen again. (Perhaps that should have read 'ran amok' instead??). Never mind, I hope he was reminded of what's he's been missing all these years; our hashes are definitely the best!

P.S. *If this magazine seems a bit rambling please accept my apologies, but I lay the blame fairly and squarely on the ever-genial Maurice who threw down the daunting - but irresistible - gauntlet of challenging me to write more than one page... (and I resisted the urge to use 1.5 spacing or larger font!)*

Which reminds me of the story my ex-boss told me about the secretary who addressed a letter to a Mr Bugger, instead of typing his correct name which was 'Bigger'. Her boss returned it to her with a note saying “please make Bugger Bigger”... so she did. And just to make sure to please him she used a size 16 font AND bold print!

