



Squire Haggard's Journal - extract 105

9th February 1802

Up betimes, and did brake my fast upon 2 pigeons roasted, and a neats-foot pie (cold). Thrashed my valet for failing to warm my shaving water to 160 degrees reamur. To Swindon, to discuss my application to open a gaming house. Fisher, my man of law, told me of a hunt to take place upon the morrow in the Kennet Valley at Marlborough. It seems that there lives there an Italian nobleman by name Barletta, who keeps a pack of fine harriers; and that good sport would be had in hunting hares. I forthwith resolved to be present, whereupon Fisher produced a bottle of Rhenish wine, which he vouchsafed to be of the best quality. It was not. Thrashed the wretch thoroughly.

10th February 1802 - The Lord's Day

Arose late with great soreness of head and eruption of the bowels, the result of drinking that foul muck of Fisher's. Broke fast upon dry bread and small beer. Attended Mass, and thereafter rode to Marlborough. Thrashed a yokel. At the Castle and Ball was dismayed to find no hounds at all, but rather a group of half-naked ruffians and several lewd trollops. The so-called nobleman Barletta then had the effrontery to invite me to 'join the festivities'. Thrashed the grinning mountebank.

Completely unabashed, he proceeded to lecture the assembled buffoonery, who then began running - God save the mark - into the surrounding hills - and upon the Lord's day! It was then explained to me that this was no hunt in the sense that a gentleman would recognise, but rather a paper-chase for adults. Being desirous of some sport and entertainment from these lunatics, I resolved to ride behind the pack and run down the stragglers.

Some, less demented than the others, had dressed themselves with appropriate modesty and walked into the moorland. Saw Fisher striding out absurdly at the rear of the runners. Resolved to thrash him, but my mount could not trot slowly enough to keep pace with him. Then galloped across the downs, upon a track seemingly made expressly for that purpose. The runners, all common tradesmen answering to such names as Ray and Dave, were setting a good pace, apparently in pursuit of a local bawd whom they very discourteously

addressed as the 'Old Matress'. Thrashed them for their impudence. Tiring of the spectacle of madman capering across the landscape, I repaired to the hostelry for alcoholic restoration. Was astonished to find that one of the runners, a tall, lumbering, taciturn churl, was so far in the lead that even mounted upon a fettlesome steed, I was quite unable to catch up with him.

Having partaken of a pint of foaming ale, my spirits - not to mention my tripes - were quite restored, and I condescended to sup with the runners and walkers. We were addressed in warm terms by Margaret, who, it seems, is no bawd but a respectable school teacher.

Returned home to dine upon a goose bruised, boiled beef, calves head pudding and mutton. Drank three bolts port and repaired to bed with some difficulty.

Unable to thrash Fisher, as he had still not returned when we all left. Thrashed Bartella in his stead.

Fifthcoming Hash Runs

106 - 24th Feb - Slug & Lettuce, Cirencester - Marge & Dave

107 - 10th Mar - The Daneway at Sapperton (where dat?) - Steve

108 - 24th Mar - The ^{CROWN & CARTER} Swan(?) Inn at Inkpen - Mike

104 - 7th April - The Railway Inn at Hungerford - Jeremy

If you feel moved to organise a Hash run, please ring
GO Margaret on 01793 703744, or email her secretary on
paulbtracy@hotmail.com