



Hash 128 - The Dundas Arms, Kintbury, 29th December 2002

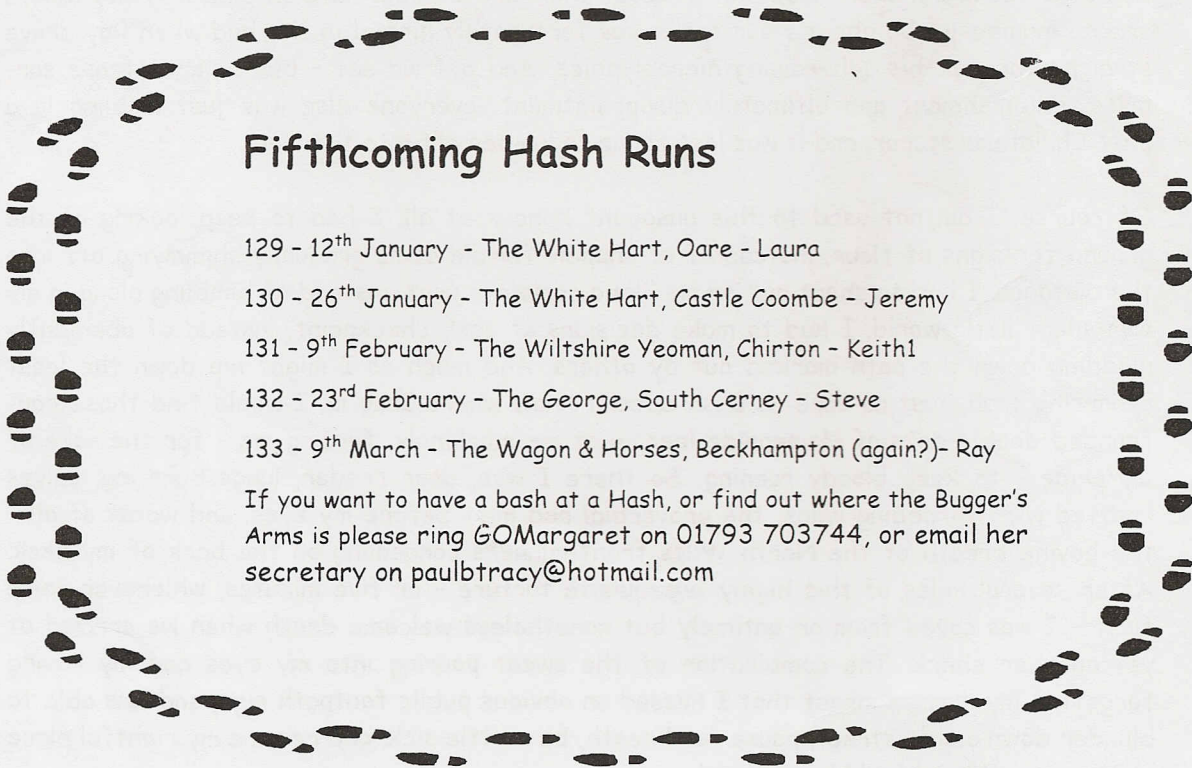
The Lead. Relatively uncharted territory for your scribe, so I thought a little reflection on this unusual position would be in order, for the benefit of those, like me, who do not often find themselves in it. First impression of course, is a combination of the sense of responsibility, coupled with the desperate realisation that you *have* to keep running! Not exactly what I am used to....

It was with a feeling of deep gloom that, upon arriving at the Dundas Arms - one of my favourite sunny summer Friday lunchtime haunts - I was presented with the ghastly prospect of several ugly, misshapen denizens of the North Wilts Hash flexing their hairy thighs and dragging their knuckles along the ground. And the blokes weren't much better. Another bloody hour-and-a-half of these oiks bellowing 'petrol', jumping in puddles and pouring beer over each other - better keep well to the rear, I thought to myself - as if I would be found anywhere else, but at least this time I would have an excuse. Navy Mike's arcane mumbo-jumbo about flour trails was fortunately nipped in the bud when Ray drove straight through his self-raising hieroglyphics. And off we set - but to my intense surprise, astonishment and ultimately disappointment, everyone else was just ambling in a post-Christmas stupor, and it was left to me to lumber off into the lead.

Of course, I am not used to this unsought honour at all. I had to keep looking at the ground for signs of flour, instead of at shapely female bums gradually shimmying off into the distance. I had to shout out 'on on' like a complete prat, instead of bimbly along in my own silent little world. I had to make decisions at each checkpoint, instead of obediently plodding down the path marked out by others. And much as I might nip down the least promising trail, just as sure as Bush doesn't know where Iraq is, I would find those confounded double-dots of Homepride leering at me mockingly, forcing me - for the sake of *my* pride - to keep bloody running. So there I was, dear reader, lungs bursting, calves knotted with throbbing veins, the proverbial red mist before my eyes, and worst of all - the bovine breath of the North Wilts front-runners congealing on the back of my neck. After several miles of this highly *unexquisite* torture - or five minutes, whichever came first - I was saved from an untimely but nonetheless welcome death when we arrived at yet another check. The combination of the sweat pouring into my eyes and my having forgotten my glasses meant that I missed an obvious public footpath sign, and was able to blunder down a side-street, pause for breath, be a little sick, and resume my rightful place at the rear. What bliss! Never again!

At last I was free to admire the beautiful scenery of this inspired trail - which yet again demonstrated what a lovely and largely unexplored part of the world we have the great joy and privilege to live in. Why would anybody *not* hash on a Sunday? One does not have to be a superb athlete (unless you are Jeremy) to participate in and enjoy the experience of wonderful countryside, good weather (it did not actually *rain* on us!), a little exercise and fresh air - whether running or walking - and a decent pint and good company afterwards. As Pop Larkins would say - Perfick! So many thanks Mike - even though the run did go five minutes over your statutory hour. Not even the loathsome presence of the North Wiltshers could detract from the excellent après-Hash in the otherwise deserted pub, where the normally noisy and boisterous GOM delegated the speech-making to the hare. Having duly and fulsomely praised the trail-layer, he presented the horn to Ray for his aforementioned solecism. A great day!

Now. Those of you who have fallen asleep reading this drivel - wake up! The KVHHH 5th anniversary dinner will take place on the evening of Saturday 1st March 2003, at 7.30 for 8.00 at the Plough in Shalbourne. The price is a measly £12-00 per head, excluding vino. The dress is 'formal rig' which according to Mike means that ladies have to wear knickers, but according to GOMargaret means DJs or lounge suits for chaps (no trainers), and evening dresses for the gels. I am unreliably informed that there will be a DIY cabaret, so polish up those dubious jokes and rugby songs, the tap-dance that you performed at the Esmée Spong ballet school when you were seven, or the Burial of Sir John Moore that you recited at prize-giving, and BE PREPARED TO DO IT! Apart from that, it promises to be a lot of fun! Mike will be hassling you like a Big Issue seller with a menu today, from which you will have to pretend you remember what you ordered on the night, so be warned!



Fifthcoming Hash Runs

129 - 12th January - The White Hart, Oare - Laura

130 - 26th January - The White Hart, Castle Coombe - Jeremy

131 - 9th February - The Wiltshire Yeoman, Chirton - Keith1

132 - 23rd February - The George, South Cerney - Steve

133 - 9th March - The Wagon & Horses, Beckhampton (again?) - Ray

If you want to have a bash at a Hash, or find out where the Bugger's Arms is please ring GOMargaret on 01793 703744, or email her secretary on paulbtracy@hotmail.com