



Hash 132 - The Old George, South Cerney, 23 February 2003

Those of us who had endured Steve's inaugural trail from Cerney Wick a couple of years ago were filled with trepidation. We turned up early, all wearing backpacks stuffed with survival gear, sleeping bags, a torch, lifebelt and Kendal mint cake. It was like a meeting of D-Day veterans - "Do you remember Ian and Ray wading waist-deep across that flooded field?" - "Yes, and Margaret and Dave took the short-cut and so got back within two hours" - "What about those two walkers who never made it back and were never seen again.....". Speaking with a modest amount of pride (not something I am often able to demonstrate on a Hash) as the only person who followed the entire trail **as laid**, I was confident that I could make it round again.

In the event, we need not have worried. Unlike the previous time, God did not cause it to rain for forty days and forty nights, and so Steve was able to set the trail he wanted, rather than a trail across the few bits of the earth's surface still showing above the water. The sun was shining, the ground was firm, I turned up early, and the only thing causing a slight damper on proceedings was the absence of hare. But on the dot of 11.01 Steve turned up and sent a large crowd of runners and walkers upon their merry way.

In the event, we started off down a long, worryingly familiar, long, straight, long trail - the old, long, railway line to Swindon. The train of runners gradually built up a fine head of steam between the boating lakes, with me in the guard's van as usual. We shunted into sidings near Cerney Wick to let the Chief Engineer of the Churn Valley Hash (according to Mike) come through much faster on the up line. We stopped to take on water just outside Cricklade Station, and just as I thought we were about to meet the junction for the main track to Swindon, Steve threw the points and we steamed off east. Gradually chugging back towards the pub, we did some complicated shunting over and under the bridge on the outskirts of the village. Those wagons which followed the driver were led down a delightful final stretch along the banks of the Churn, and with some relief were back to the Old George after only 1 hour 40 minutes. Some eejit forgot to bring the horn, but we were all amused by a witty and accurate HashMag from Jeremy.

Many thanks Steve, for letting us off so lightly and taking us round a lovely trail

The following weekend saw almost every Hasher congregate, all wearing clothes for a change - and not just any old clothes - dinner jackets, lounge suits, smart dresses. Not a fancy-dress run, but the 5th Anniversary Dinner of the Kennet Valley Hash, at the Plough in Shalbourne - itself the scene of more than one Hash run. After Steve, Jeremy and myself had banged our heads on the beams a few times, we were spared further punishment and allowed to take our seats in the dining room where we were regaled with a splendid repast. And then came the moment we had all been ~~dreading~~ awaiting with eager anticipation - the KVHHH DIY cabaret.

We showed how in touch we all are with contemporary youth culture by regaling the audience with extracts from Stanley Holloway, Joyce Grenfell, Billy Merson (? - Kathy) and Flanders & Swann, a display of David Nixon prestidigitation, and an exhibition of jive dancing. Troubadour Mike and 'little' Keith had each composed an ode to the dubious joys of hashing. Stars of the show were undoubtedly Tom & Sam, not just for the panache of their conjuring, but also for sitting with a roomful of dull groan-ups for hours without going bonkers. And also GOMargaret for sheer elegance and style.

Thanks to Mike for all the effort that went into organising the event, and we now all know that we have only five years in which to practice a whole new set of variety numbers before the 10th anniversary dinner. Flanagan and Allen, anyone.....?



Second Coming Hash Runs

133 - 9th March - The Wagon & Horses, Beckhampton - Ray

134 - 23th March - The Swan, Southrop - Dave & GOM

135 - 6nd April - The Bugger's Arms - Paul

136 - 20st April - The Bugger's Arms - Steve

137 - 4rd May - The Bugger's Arms - Keith2

138 - 18th May - Sally Pussey's, Wootton Bassett - Ian

139 - 1st June - The Check Inn - Navy Mike

140 - 15th June - The Red Lion (meet visitor car park), Lacock - Jeremy

141 - 22nd June - London to Brighton Old Crocks Ridgeway Run

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