



Hash 156 - Prince of Wales, Wootton Bassett - 11th January 2004

Have you noticed how misleading the place names are of where we have been Hashing recently? The previous Hash was in Wootton Rivers. Did you notice any rivers? Neither did I. Last time out, we were in Ditto Bassett, and whilst I came across a sodding great Alsatian and a mangy Poodle, the total number of Bassetts encountered added up to the square root of buggery all. I'm quite willing to shell out a fiver to anyone who caught sight of one single Abbott today - but - well, I'd better not say anything about the location of Katrina's trail in a fortnight's time!

The day of Steve's Hash dawned with eye-achingly blue skies, but the promise of showers was borne out by the grey clouds which came scudding along on a stiff breeze. In fact as I was pensively dipping a soldier into my second boiled egg, the skies darkened so much that I could hardly read the lacrosse scores in the *Sunday Sport*, and the rain threatened to break the windows down. 'Oh well, back to bed' I thought, before Mad Mike Fisher turned up and frog-marched me to the car.

As always, the weather had cleared up on arrival at the Hash meeting place - although I looked a right Charles at the Prince of Wales, still wearing my pyjamas and slippers. Keith2 had a mild heart attack at seeing me there at 11.00 but recovered in time to attend to the Hare - Steve, fresh and immaculately dressed. The usual legerdemain with flour led to us charging off into a sylvan grove alongside a stream - just the four of us: two Keiths, one Mad Mike and one Brian, although the walkers were into double figures. As we emerged into very open country, the trails for runners and walkers parted company.

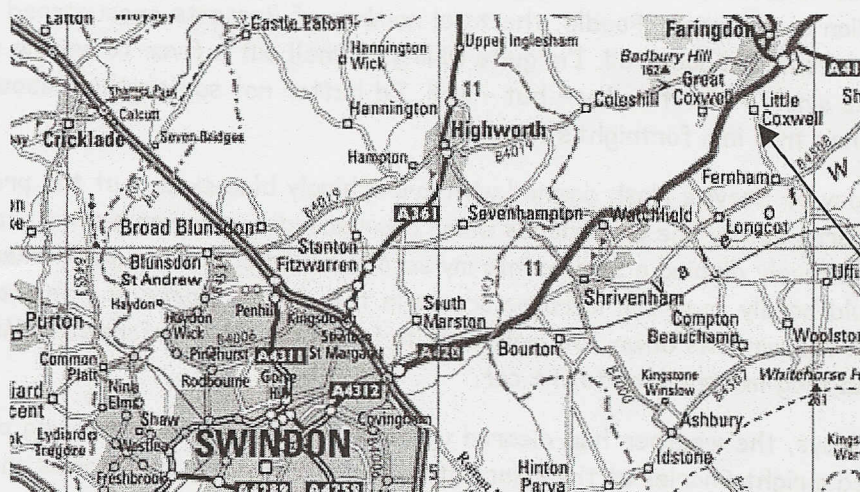
Away in the fairly near distance I could see huge rain clouds rushing towards us, and although the Bassetts had sensibly snuggled back under their blankets, I fully expected to see the Hound of the Baskervilles sweeping across the desolate moor towards us. It would have taken Sherlock Holmes himself to find any flour at that juncture, as the bloody stuff had all been blown away in the storm force 10 which now enveloped us. However Mad Mike was nose down to the sodden turf, and with the aid of his 3/6 Boots reading glasses was able to make out the occasional ghostly imprint of what might once have been a trail. Our very own bloodhound - Keith2 - sniffed the air and was able to pick up the scent of ten bedraggled walkers slithering across Great Grimpen Mire, and we soon caught up with them. A brief foray into WB led once again into the freshly-sown fields, where the four of us soon accumulated 1/8th of Wiltshire upon each foot.

Back once again into WB, we crossed the railway bridge and ran (in the sunshine - hurrah!) alongside the hidden and little-known delight which is the old Berkshire canal. Keith2 was now doing his Pointer impression, sniffing out the trail and wagging his tail eagerly whilst

waiting for the three Lurchers to catch up. A fair way towards Swindon and we had to cross the railway line, where we played chicken with the 11.02 express from Paddington.

On the far side of the tracks, the trail led down to a treacherous-looking bog. Brian nobly volunteered to lay down and make a dry path for us - well, he says he didn't volunteer, but frankly it was hard to make out what he was saying while three burly blokes were holding him face down in the water. Once through, the turf turned dry and springy as we headed once more to WB. Keith2 was now our Greyhound, and showing off alarmingly, sprinted to the top of the very steep hill which drew us into the suburbs, where we were welcomed by a beaming Steve. Although we sniffed like mad, even our delicate twitching noses failed to pick up the final trail, but instinct and the scent of beer led us back to the pub. A brisk towelling off, and it was inside for a well-earned bowl of water and couple of dog biscuits.

Upon the arrival of the walkers, Mike barked out a brief speech of thanks to the Hare (in the absence of Cruella De Ville), the effect of which was somewhat spoiled by Brian cocking his leg against the bar..... Many thanks, Steve!



Fifth Coming Hash Runs

158 - 8th Feb - The Eagle Tavern, Little Coxwell - Katrina

159 - 22nd Feb - The Duke, Hilmarton - Ray

160 - 7th March - The Bugger's Arms - Jeremy

161 - 21st March - The Cross Keys, Great Bedwyn - Mike

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 the late Keith Mitchell on 01672 511530 - email keith@pallettfs.co.uk - website <http://kvhash.mysite.freemove.com/>.