



Hash 160 - The Plough, Eastbury, 7th March 2004

As always, clear skies smiled on the assembled Hashers as Jeremy initiated the tyros into the arcane rites of flour signals (I assume - we were late for a change). However, by the time yours faithfully put in an appearance, grey skies were the order of the day. Only briefly bamboozled by the lack of white stuff anywhere in the vicinity of the pub, we soon found a scuffed-out circle the other side of the pretty little bridge. A minute later, we had all the white stuff we could ask for, and more, as the heavens opened and a blizzard of hail rattled on my balding pate.

Pausing only to don my fetching black woolly hat, I muttered something about it never raining on a Hash, which may have remained technically true, but small comfort as we looked in vain for a trail, or a path, or anything visible beyond a distance of fifteen yards. I whimpered pathetically that we could sit in the car until it passed over, but as Katrina likes nothing better than to out-bloke blokes, I whimpered in vain.

The technically-minded amongst you will have realised that trying to find a flour trail in the middle of a white-out presents certain practical problems. The tireless Jeremy, who accompanied the runners, later acknowledged that he may have well have stayed in bed as lay a trail. The backmarkers however, lacking the services of their very own personal Sherpa Tensing, relied on their basic survival training, sense of smell and intuition.

Thus it was that after 20 minutes or so we happened upon the forlorn walkers, milling around nervously at a parting of many ways, anxiously awaiting the return of the various Captains Oates who had just slipped out of the igloo with vague promises of returning. Making my sole positive contribution that day to the task of getting back to the pub before the summer solstice, I happened to notice that one of the walkers was straddling the only patch of hail-free ground in the county, slap bang in the middle of which was a clearly-defined flour arrow. Spitting the ice from my rime-encrusted mouth, I bellowed 'on-on' and slithered off in the general direction.

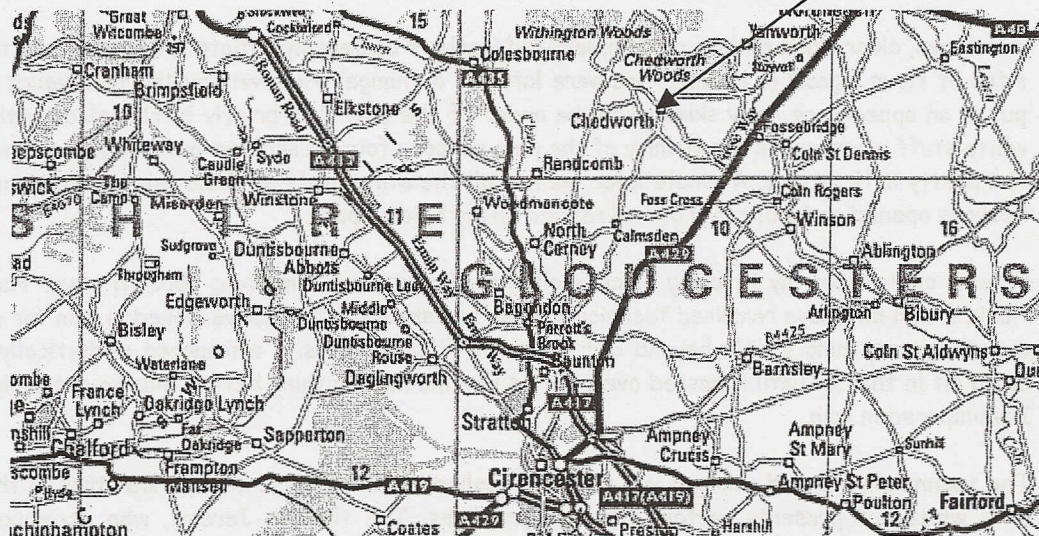
Having slowed from a trot to a crawl to stationary, we caught a brief whiff of Mad Mike Fisher's manly Old Spice intermingled with the mysterious, alluring, sensuous, almost erotic fragrance of Dave's trainers, and ploughed our solitary way ever onwards, ever westwards.

Imagine our fear and loathing therefore, when casting around at another crossroads, we saw two grey shapes loping effortlessly through the mist from *behind* us! Were these the dreaded *yeti*, of whom simple Oxfordshire villagers have told gruesome stories, huddled round their Habitat stoves, since time immemorial? Were these the abdominal snowmen, fabled monsters who along with Margaret Thatcher and Lloyd Grossman, have had their frightened children snivelling in their beds for centuries? Worse, far worse - it was Keith2 and young Elmesy (I think - without me specs I can't see bugger all). The runners, it seems, had taken a loop which allowed us backmarkers to feel our way in front of them.

After that, it was relatively plain sailing in the cheerful company of our Hare. Only once did that trepidation return. Having negotiated a tricky check, we set off across a field more or less in a group. There in the far distance could be glimpsed the occasional sight of a lone, grey, vulpine figure striding out eerily across the frozen wastes. Some said it was a werewolf, some said - the spirit of a long-departed Hasher, endlessly searching for the good woman, the love of whom would bring him redemption. It was in fact bloody Mike Fisher, who gnarled knees notwithstanding had chanced upon a short-cut and found himself in the entirely unaccustomed lead.

Back in the cheery ambience of the Plough, many welcome beers (and cups of hot water - yuk) were downed. Our lissom and fragrant GOM made a gracious speech of thanks to Jezza, and Brian selflessly gave up the Horn which he had previously awarded himself, and presented it to Dave, for entirely unfathomable but doubtless good reasons.

Many thanks Jeremy, for what was probably a very beautiful trail.



Fifth Coming Hash Runs

- 161 - 21st March - The Cross Keys, Great Bedwyn - Mike
- 162 - 4th April - The Seven Tuns, Chedworth - GOM & Dave
- 163 - 18th April - The Buggers Arms - Some Bugger, hopefully!
- 164 - 2nd May - The Radnor Arms, Coleshill - Brian & Keith

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>

WE NEED MORE DATES IN OUR DIARY!

So bloody well volunteer!

20th May - me.