

Hash 236 - The Keepers Arms, Quenington - 26th December 2006

Well, what a day it was! Boxing Day, to be precise. And out of their boxes sprang cops, robbers and more Fathers and Mothers Christmas than you could shake a stick at. Especially welcome was Laura - temporarily back from her travels (Iain in Hootie-land) with much of her family. MMF came dressed as a Mafia hood (or Swindon solicitor - much the same thing), whilst GOM looked ready to swing over castle ramparts with a box of Milk Tray, and Mabel looked gay as in a blonde beard, tash and sidewhiskers. Someone told me he was Starsky (or Hutch - I never saw the programme) but I just thought he looked cute. Several of the ladies were dressed as policewomen - but enough of my fantasies...

The assembled villains and filth were sent on their way by Lady Margaret and Duke Dave, along a now-familiar trail. Galloping across the fields in a heavy overcoat, complete with deerstalker, pipe and magnifying glass soon had me puffing (smoke!) even more than usual, and it wasn't until the first regroup that I managed to catch everyone up. We were on new territory by now, and were rather cruelly lead through a stream – which we recrossed not long after – and then back more or less to the start. Hooray, we thought – a nice short run for Boxing Day, a couple of beers and back to the turkey.

But it was not to be, for as we panted up a backstreet behind the pub, we came across—the Walkers! who had followed an entirely separate trail in the opposite direction—down which the Runners were now directed. MMF said several terse words, of which "for a game of soldiers" are the only ones I can repeat in a family Hash Mag—and stumped off to the pub. Brian the Bold and I exchanged glances, said "hey ho", and pushed off back into the wild—but not before I had entrusted my treasured (if somewhat sweaty) Jason King greatcoat to a reluctant Katrina.

As I have mentioned before in these pages, Brian (who was cunningly disguised as himself) is a most agreeable Hashing companion, chatting easily of this and that, setting little targets to run to, and generally jollying me along. And this second leg was even more beautiful than the first, down into the valley, through a sleepy village and back along the tree-lined river. Very pleasant - we must try it in summertime. Eventually we galumphed back up the hill to the pub, and in for a reunion that was somewhat warmer than the room - the fire being in the other bar - where dear Terry had turned up to join us.

Our jovial GOM speechified at length about the many highs of the year - whilst remembering Sandra - and our jovial landlord quite rightly chose young Tom as the fancy dress prizewinner (although I'm sure his parents made him chose the wine rather than the chockies - boo hiss!). And of course Margaret and Dave were resoundingly cheered for their splendid efforts in nobly rising at the crack of and setting such a wonderful trail. Many thanks to both!

The next Hash is in the beautiful Lambourn Valley, where we have seldom if ever ventured. The landlord is a helpful soul, and would be delighted if I could give him an idea of how many might be eating – so please let me know.

The Management & Staff wish everyone a Happy and Healthy Hashing New Year!



