

Hash 274 - The Downgate, Hungerford - 25th May 2008

Good Grief - I've missed the last four Hashes, what with jollies to London, Paris, St Petersburg and Brecon - two of which have been charity-related, as indeed is today, when my exeat is for climbing in Snowdonia for WaterAid. So, in my absence, who has been doing my vital job - no, not writing this rubbish - who's been bringing up the rear????!!!

I used to say that it never rains on a Hash, but God or Allah or Mohammed or Gordon Brown, whoever is responsible for bad weather, has certainly been dishing it out recently. Thus it was that as the all-weather SEAT careered into the Downgate car-park the statutory two minutes late, I just failed to splash the irate Hare in one of the many deep puddles. I'll get him next time...

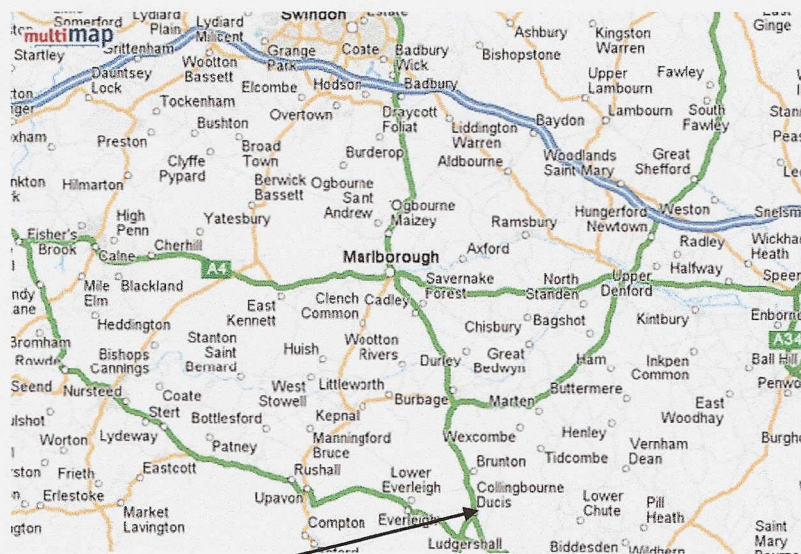
There were six Walkers and half-a-dozen Runners, including the long-lost Count Marulli de Barletta, a.k.a. Maurice, and we set off in dense mizzle towards the canal, along which we doubled back past the town heading west. Through an unlucky combination of circumstances I found myself in the lead, which I held until imminent death by dehydration forced me to stop and remove several layers of outer clothing. Mad Max and his granny soon swept past me, and in no time I had regained my rightful position.

GOM was clearly in an advanced state of Alzheimer's, since he had come Hashing without his customary long johns - an omission he was soon to regret as we entered an endless field of rape, clingly bordered by fiery nettles. We waded through the damp waist-high vegetation - Max getting lost and rescued five times - for all the world like a Malayan mangrove swamp, except not as much fun. At last we emerged, soaked and yellow, to where MMF was waiting for us, absurdly proud of his brand-new tomato-coloured running shorts, which he had apparently paid a large sum of money for. I know Oxfam is a good cause, but still...

We hurtled down a footpath past the back gardens of some very nice-looking houses, crossed the river - where a large sign said "No Fishing", but I bet there was - and ran alongside it past the gardens of some even swankier houses. What's the point of paying all that money for a decent gaff when you get riff-raff like us galumphing past every five minutes?

We ran back into town, where MMF, who was keeping me company, said - rather rudely, I thought - "Gosh, even *you* will be back in under the hour". And so I was, just. I wrung out my socks and shorts, thereby creating another huge puddle, then joined the Walkers (who must surely have jogged when no-one was looking) in the warm and steamy pub. Bloody Arkells, of course, but I must be getting immune to the vile stuff, since I managed to drink half a pint without being sick.

Our GOM made his customary fluent and fulsome speech of thanks to the Hare, and just the one solitary chicken was presented - no Horn and no Kecks; standards have slipped since I've been away!



Unforthcoming Hash Runs

275 - 8th June - The Bell, Yatton Keynell - Brian the Bold

276 - 15th June - The Ridgeway Relay

277 - 22nd June - The Blue Lion, Collingbourne Ducis - The Late Keith

278 - 6th July - The Buggers Arms - JackieandRay

279 - 20th July - Barbie @ GOM's Gaff, Ramsbury - bring your own fuel

280 - 3rd Aug - The Buggers Arms - PaulineandClive

If you want to have a bash at a Hash, or find out where The Bigger's Arms is please ring GOM Jeremy on 01672 521064; email jer@xyz.port995.com or The Late Keith Mitchell on 01264 850841 email keith@griffins.co.uk - website kvhash.mysite.orange.co.uk