



### Hash 313 - Downgate, Hungerford - 8 November 2009

This Hash introduced us to the Common Port Down in Hungerford, which is a common but only if you pay the Town & Manor of Hungerford at commercial rates for grazing, which means it's not a common. They just have to be different in Hungerford.

They have a custom here where Tithe Men (originally rent collectors) with florally decorated poles are led through the streets by the Orange-Man to collect a coin from the men and kisses from all the ladies resident in the High Street. The Orange-Man gives an orange in return. I can't see that taking off in Northern Ireland.

But the kissing doesn't stop with Orange-Men. Oh no, there is another custom to this day where the men of the village tie up the women and demand a kiss for their release. The following day the women tie up the men and demand money for their release. But the weird thing is that they do it in public and everyone thinks it's hilarious. If it was done behind closed doors between consenting adults they would probably call the police.

Strange town, strange people - which brings us nicely to Jeremy. Our dear GOM set the course for this Hash and warned us in advance that it involved crossing a stream (probably where damsels were kissed to death in the past) and that it was a long course. He wasn't kidding. He had also sent out an email a few days earlier that said this would be the longest walkers' course ever and guess what? We had the fewest walkers ever. Lesson learned: you should never announce evil intent before-hand.

When we arrived the rain and bitter sleet were so bad that Vivien said she hadn't taken off her trousers yet. It's kissing in this town, Vivien, kissing. The sleet stopped as the Hash started so we can knock this one up as rainless which was a change from the previous two wash-outs. Then off across the Common that isn't a Common.

Jeremy also announced that he used 6Kgs Flour which Mike whispered under his breath, as he often does these days, that that was "excessive" and on such throw-aways are wars raged but fortunately it was not overheard. Jeremy put the flour blobs on cow pads so they wouldn't get wet but it took a while to figure that one out. I wonder what he thinks the constituents of a cow pad might be, or how flour can protect a cow pad from rain. When questioned further he said it was because he didn't want the run to be confused by us looking first for cow pads and then looking for flour.

The interesting result was that when we left the Common and went around the houses there were no cow pads and guess what - no flour! We should have suspected something was amiss because the hare followed us around and kept showing us two blobs when we retraced our steps where before when we passed there was nothing. Clearly



Jeremy's little joke.

Truth to tell, it got worse. When the first runners took off down a hill and had to be called back we asked what happened to the circle or arrows blobs or anything that would tell us we should not run down that particular hill, Jeremy said that if the blob is to the top left of the previous arrow then it is clear you go through the gate marked "Private" and if not you run down the hill. He is clever and knows all the rules so clearly we were mistaken.

It was an amazing day for records – the longest walkers' route, the most flour ever carried and not used and the craziest of all, the elite runners kept passing out the slowest runners, then getting lost and passing them out again, and again and again. Fiona was admonished on several occasions to know her place and she still kept going out in front. There should be a penalty system.

We did get to the stream and there were those among us who ran across as fast as we could so we wouldn't get wet (I know, I know) and there were two among us who stood in the stream and observed the sky over Hungerford. I think by that stage whatever it is that affects the people of Hungerford had gotten to us.

Back over the canal and then along the canal and we got back to the common that isn't a common and waited for some time for the runners who were now all over the place. We had a few pints in the pub, lovely place, and some hours later the walkers came in and we felt we should really stay for one more pint.

Malcolm looked like he had lost a couple of stone. We put that down to exhaustion when Kathy said she didn't feel the walk because she never stopped talking. Malcolm deserved to get the horn for endurance although any other less balanced person might have got the 'ump. A subject we might return to!

All in all, it was a great Hash, Jeremy. Well done. Even the river is fondly remembered!

### Fourth Becoming Hash Runs

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|-----|--------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 314 | 22-Nov | New Calley Arms, Upper Wanborough | Maurice and Tim   |
| 315 | 06-Dec | Black Horse, Cherhill             | Pauline and Clive |
| 316 | 26-Dec | Keepers Arms, Quenington          | Jeremy            |
| 317 | 03-Jan | White Hart, Wroughton             | Margaret & Val    |

If you want to have a bash at a Hash, or find out where The Bugger's Arms is please ring GOM Jeremy on 01672 521064; Email [jer@xyz.port995.com](mailto:jer@xyz.port995.com)  
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