



Run no: 141
Venue: The Bull & Swan, diseworth
Scribe: Ken Elliott
Hares: Lightning Rod & Oriface

This is a draft by Ken for a running / general interest magazine.

HASH FOR THE FIRST TIME

Have you heard about Hash? No, not that one, but the sport where grass is strictly underfoot. To give it its full title, Hash House Harriers.

Hash is non-competetive and appeals to the display of the fox hunter, the masochism of the cross-country runner, the arcane secrecy of the brotherhood and the bonhomie of the bar lizard. I found it easy to sample this curious mixture: just a phone call located the nearest group (pack? Herd?). The voice on the phone was cheerful and welcoming, and told me that the venue was a local country pub.

So, on a cold March Sunday morning, this Wrinkly Runner set out in a positive frame of mind. Naturally, so as not to be late, I arrived early at the pub car park. Was it the right place? There are two pubs in the village, and doubts started to surface. Should I just go for another LSD? (No, Long Slow Distance, ideal for wrinkly runners to regain lost fitness). Then cars started to arrive and disgorge men of all shapes and sizes, in a motley variety of gear. So, it's just a male preserve, thought Wrinkly Runner.

They milled around quietly, but seemed to seemed to be lacking direction and organisation. Then she arrived: Queen Bee in lycra tights shouted a welcome to all and kissed and hugged several. The sun started to shine.

Nobody but Wrinkly Runner had an ordinary name, everyone else used noms de guerre. Queen Bee is Melba (After Dame Nellie, or her peaches and cream complexion, or just because she likes toasts?) Other names clearly related to bodily functions and behavioural characteristics, but others would defy the cryptographic skills of the crossword addict. Wrinkly Runner Debutant was warmly welcomed, and a circle formed for ceremony (Chant and notices... this was reminiscent of the simultaneous proceedings in the parish church nearby).

Then off into the village, where there was much running in all directions whilst others waited for the directions to be located. Somebody shouted "On On" - he had found blobs of flour marking the trail - and everybody followed.

Up and down hill, through masses of mud, with much millings around at lost or deliberately confused trails. WRD was beginning to get the hang of it. Many co-hashers asked how I was enjoying it. This was a really sociable group. Occasionally somebody blew a hunting horn for no apparent reason, but the local dogs approved.

After about an hour and a half later, having covered about 8 km., the trail led muddy hashers back to the pub. More good-natured ceremony involving pints of beer followed in the car park, and then all gathered in the bar. Lots of happy chat, a strong welcome giving a feeling of being included.

Will WRD hash again? I've rearranged my diary.

A March Virgin.

P.S. Spot the deliberate mistak.

