

Run no: 259
Venue: The Abbey, Darley Abbey
Date: Hallowe'en 1998 – Red Dress Run
Scribe: Barritone

It was, after all, I think the first UK Red Dress Run to be held outside Winchester – certainly the first one ever to be held in Derbyshire. If you have never been to Derby, let it be said that on a Tuesday night in January, probably the worst weekday of the worst month of the year, Derby CAMRA managed to find 119 different real ales available in pubs in a half-mile radius of the City Centre – more probably than any other city in the UK. In short, for Hashers Derby is paradise. Your scribe finally found Malty Teaser's house in Darkest Allestree, where the motley few were basking in the freedom of their frocks.

On the steps of the Abbey, who should we see but Arnie – sole representative of MH3 (apart from the hare that is) and on home territory too. And so we fluttered across Darley Park to the first check, which would eventually lead us to the first pub, The Bridge. After bemused locals took a few photos, we headed for the second pub, the **Exeter Arms**. Sipping the wonderful Hartington IPA, conversation inevitably turned to **Bomb Making**. Just what the regulars thought of 20 scarlet tinkerbells earnestly discussing what proportion of sugar should be mixed with what proportion of fertiliser I'll never know.

We side-stepped the Smithfield and the Alex for the next pub, the glorious Brunswick. This hostelry is famous for two things: 1. The scrumplicious amber nectar brewed on site, and 2. Beautiful bosomy barmaids called Fiona. Although Fiona wasn't on duty that night, we did encounter a poor little waif collecting for charity, a trifle unsuccessfully. "Rattle your tin" said Blow, trying to be helpful. Alas, the coffer was empty. And so it was on on to Market Place, where chess with human-size pieces was called for. Naturally all of us attempting to be queens ended in chaos, so Father Abraham seemed a much more sensible move. Despite Barritone's attempt to check up Irongate, the trail took a more spurious route to the fourth pub, the **Flowerpot** (Are you paying attention? You will be tested on this later). Here we met the charming Mr Bhajee, or rather Creamy Bristols did, who complimented him on his lovely white jacket, and pointed out ever so politely that what he was wearing was neither a dress nor red. On the way back the ground may have been swimming, but the trees were our friends.

Back at the Abbey, the air was so thick with compliments you could flick a knife through the air and spread them on toast. Wallington was keen to tell everybody how perfectly formed their nipples were (even squeezing Doc Crippen's to make sure), until he got to Creamy Bristols and gleefully announced that they were real. Creamy meanwhile said what a nice neckline I had and how it complimented my hair. Aah.. But I bought my dress from Dorothy Perkins (in mitigation I must say half price, and Oxfam don't sell Juno size) For this both Wallington and I got down downs

Our pyromania outside included Kentucky's military explosives – these have to be heard to be believed. However, you won't get another chance, as what went up in smoke was the last of its kind in the world. So it was with an ooh and an aaah and a gargle of gluhwein that we made our way back to Allestree. Malteser had done a wonderful job creating some pretend cobwebs and spiders (I could have given her the real thing, free of charge), and all the traditional Hallowe'en protein (including some large sausages appreciated by Creamy Bristols – or was it just wishful thinking?) There were however, some more down downs, including a bottle of Kingfisher (reputedly the most disgusting beer on Earth – no, not the Kingfisher you get in Indian Restaurants, but the Kingfisher brewed in India – ugh!). And what better way to crash out than "The best Punk Album ever"?