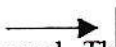


Run no: 297
Venue: The Bricklayers Arms, Thornton
Date: Sun 3 October 1999
Scribe: Barritone

Leicestershire County Council had set a cunning pre-ramble to today's trail – the object of the exercise was to find Thornton. The civic hares had laid a few cunning false trails in the form of signposts saying "Thornton 3 miles", but we weren't fooled, we ignored them all. After the first signpost, we travelled a mile, to find another saying "Thornton 2 ¼ miles". Another said "Thornton", but we ignored that one of course. Eventually we found a signpost saying "Thornton 3 miles". At that point SCB Doc Crippen had short-cutted, following the first signpost, and had gone straight to Thornton. We followed him.

Our reward was to find that our intended pub (Not the Bricklayers Arms) had changed its name in line with some corporate pub-owning consortium's Silly Name Policy, and the car park was locked. Wallington had a word with the landlady and soon it was opened. We welcomed a virgin (David from Beeston), and refugees from Too Tuf's West Bridgford trail, and off we went.

The first check got Durex excited, running round the lake quipping "This is nice" as he burned the rubber in his diamond-studded trainers. This led to a picturesque regroup, beside a cove with two swans. Pigeon Hole relayed Mudflaps' problems with the Bradgate Park authorities, who accused her of laying "Illegal substances" on the ground and poisoning the deer. Well, it's only 12p a bag from Sainsbury's – what a bargain! Too Tuf them appeared – he must have had insider information as he correctly predicted the remainder of the trail. However, one novel feature of the trail was a Benchmark Symbol similar to this:  After one of these after six blobs, Jetslag seemed not to be amused. The trail looped back round the church, as Too Tuf predicted.

We returned to the pub, where the bar staff were instantly recognisable by having the pub's name and logo emblazoned on their sweatshirts. We sat at Table 26 for some idle gossip, or so we thought. You see, to sit at any of the tables you had to book it at least two weeks in advance. Creamy pleaded with one of the corporately clothed staff, who said she would ring the boss on her mobile phone to see what she could do.

We contributed to the Pubco's profits by holding the circle in the patio in the rain (the only place where we could sit down). Wallington and Pigeon Hole received beers for sins already mentioned, and followed by virgin David and Geoff representing the second-timers. Just as the circle was winding up ("It's always like this", we assured David) it pelted down, and we all made a mad dash for the other pub, the Bricklayer's Arms.

The Bricklayers Arms is everything the other pub was not. It was a genuine village local, where locals gathered and conversation flowed. They served Adnams in supreme condition, the food was delicious and the portions huge, and the bar staff were courteous, friendly and helpful. And who should pop in but Showman, Mudsucker and friends!