

THE ROYAL BORDIGHERA HHH - THE WORLD'S SECOND HASH (formed on 2nd April 1947)

This strange tale begins in Malaya between 1939 and 1941 with two Mackey brothers, Rupert, a businessman in Kuala Lumpur, and Gus, an officer in the Gurka regiment posted in South East Asia. Gus spent leave periods with his brother and ran with the Hash House Harriers, which he clearly thought the greatest institution he had ever encountered.

Rupert was in due course captured by the Japanese and, though he survived Changi prison, he did not return to Malaya after the war and his part in Hash history was over. Gus, by contrast, was fighting elsewhere and avoided the 1942-45 Malayan holocaust, later fighting in Italy where he was taken prisoner during the battle of Anzio. Gus subsequently found himself incarcerated with an officer in the Bersaglieri, Giovanni Paradiso, a grandson of the deposed King Emmanuel Vittorio 3rd.

Leaving the army after the war, Gus settled in Bordighera on the Italian Riviera, a few miles from the French border, married a local beauty named Anna-Marie and there, on the 2nd April 1947 he founded the Bordighera HHH, following the Hash format he had learnt in Malaya some eight years before. In this exercise he was associated with his royal friend Giovanni Paradiso, and some British ex-servicemen, and there, unknown to the rest of the Hashing world (which was anyway confined to Kuala Lumpur), the BHHH ploughed its lonely furrow for about 15 years

They closed down in about 1961/2, just around the time that Singapore HHH was being founded. This however was not to be the end of the Bordighera HHH story. The founding of the Bordighera Arena for Science, Technology, Arts, Research and Development in 1984, partly sponsored by Giovanni Paradiso, brought a new supply of potential Hashers, and the Bordighera HHH was revived with the new appellation 'Royal' (in honour of it's co-founder), on 12 December 1984, with Anna-Marie Mackey (now nearly seventy) as Honorary GM-Hash Mistress. The Royal Bordighera HHH held occasional joint runs with the Riviera HHH from France but did not run regularly.

In 1990, Rob 'Bwana' Walker (ex-Mombasa HHH), founded the Milan HHH, and in September 1991 the R.A. of the MHHH, one Fabio 'Fabulous' D'Ambrosio organised a joint run with Riviera HHH and Rome HHH in his home province of Liguria. There they heard of the Royal Bordighera HHH and, from info gleaned from retired Riviera Hashers, discovered that 'Fabulous' was actually related to Anna-Marie Mackey. The following month, when 'Bwana' was visiting Bangkok, he discussed this coincidence with Tim 'Magic' Hughes, who asked him to try to revive the RBHHH. Back in Milan in November 1991, at a joint committee meeting, it was decided that MHHH was to merge with RBHHH, with Anna-Marie Mackey as the Hon. Grand Mistress, and that the new Royal Milan and Bordighera HHH would be committed to Hash at least once a year in Liguria, near Bordighera, to keep the old tradition going.

POSTSCRIPT : *Datuk Sir Jameson ffitch Heyes, a resident of the East India Club, wrote to Tim Hughes in March 1990 about the RBH3, an extract of which follows :*

"Rupert, like so many of the early hashers, lived in the Hash House adjacent to the Dog (the Selangor Club) on the Padang. In the late thirties Gus, serving with Prince Edward's X11 Gurkha Regiment, would travel to KL for leave. There he joined his brother in the eccentric activity of running through the rubber and jungle around the city. In the war Gus fought at Anzio with distinction and it was here that he was taken prisoner.

During his incarceration he met Giovanni Paradiso, an officer in the Bersaglieri, who is of course the grandson of Emmanuel Vittorio 111, from where they received their royal tag. Meanwhile Rupert was captured by the Japanese at Johore Bahru and spent most of his internment in Changi Gaol, which was where I met him. Hence I am able to add more detail on the remarkable family "

Mike Lyons