



Herts
Hash
House
Harriers
Herts official Website:
hertshash.co.uk



Run No. 1969
13th March 2022
Venue: The Crown
Beers: TT Landlord; Sharpe's Atlantic
Location: St Albans
Hare/s: Dr Plague
Runners: 15
Virgins: 0
Visitors: 0
Newies: 0
Après: 0
Hash Hounds: 0
Total: 15
Membership: Celebrating Sparky's 80th!

A not a bad turnout for Sparky's 80th Birthday Trail, of course there were a few who promised they would attend but as the Rabbi Burns said "The best laid plans of mice & men, I know already!" things don't always work out so, with Mr X going down with the plague & not wanting to pass this on to those older & frailer than himself, ironically one of the younger ones than him, who also couldn't make it was Flying Solo who was nursing a broken arm after a cycling accident that may have left her screwed! [With a plate Pebbledash! – Ed]!

A message was left with 5 different Hashers who were on their way for the opening Circle, eventually Tent Packer replied to confirm that the gathering Pack were now aware that there were two bits of plasterboard to mark the CHKS with, as well as a Map for My Lil' & the Short Cutters who would be hobbling around the Trail found stashed behind the small wall by the First CHK of the Trail, which for My Lil's benefit had been set beside the Pub!

Photo's taken of the Pack in the Pub door-way & the Hash were ready for the off. The Trail would start by taking the Hash away in a south by southeast direction down Camp Road, a road & an area of St Albans which is named after the fact that a Roman Camp was once located there & not after those 'who may live a more liberal way of life'. Though the nearby Liberal Club used to be called 'The Camp Liberal Club' but several years past there was a vote to change its name to the Hatfield Road Sports & Social Club, which is just not as funny to pass by on the late bus home after a session of drinking in St Albans.

Anyhow, it was only a short way down to the first CHK of the Trail by the southwestern bound Breakspear Avenue, there are plenty of place in St Albans named after Nicholas Breakspear, former priest, bishop in St Albans who later went on to become Pope Adrian IV (Or Hadrian IV) from 1154 to 1159 & still is the only English Pope to date.

The arrows & Dust were found on Breakspear Avenue, some knew this already as they had parked up along this street, & after 90 Yards the next CHK was found by an alleyway. "On!" was called from up this back passage through the Camp Area of St Albans [Steady Pebbledash! – Ed] There was a turn in the direction to the east as the Pack made their way out on to Vanda Close & another CHK, by another Back-passage!

The next section of alley would have the correct Trail on it, after 70 Yards it would come out on to the tarmac route of the old St Albans Branch line between St Albans Abbey Station & Hatfield, now a popular route used by walkers & cyclists alike. There was no CHK here, just a Short Cut marked to the southeast, with the Trail marked south-westerly along the old Albans Way. By now the weather had turned to drizzle & Sparky had turned his collar to the wind & rain. [Steady there Paul Simon! – Ed]

No Eye Deer, Milf, TBT OBE, Tent Packer, Mother, Zing-a-long-max, Lemming & Des Res would stretch their legs for 600 Yards, passing through the ornate arch of the Midland Railway Arch with a distinctive pattern created on the arch with a novel use of stepped dark grey brickwork to create a checked pattern. Sadly for Kylie the local interactive information boards had seen better days & could do with a refurb, but on the plus side the ornate bridge had the colourful graffiti that spelt out BOOBS sprayed up on the inside of the arch.

This bridge would carry Midland Railways Trains above the former Great Northern Railways seven & a half mile line to Hatfield, although the line predated the Midland route, the other having a direct route in to London & up to the Midlands soon made the Great Northern line pretty much redundant, it closed to passenger traffic in 1939, then reinstated during the war due to the Aircraft factories in Hertfordshire it could serve, but these were again withdrawn in 1951 & then the good traffic in 1968.

Back to the Trail & the arrows led under another bridge, this one carrying the traffic along London Road, the FRBs were now directed to the southeast & through a small derelict area with a set of steps up to the level of London Road. Here the Arrows pointed them away from the centre of St Albans. Crossing over via a traffic island, to run under another bridge, this one being another carrying the Midland Railway over London Road & after 277 Yards they reach the next CHK at the start of the dead-end Cunningham Avenue.

There was no more Trail along London Road, instead those who searched the dead-end suburban road would find the Trail heading north-eastward for 280 Yards to find the Trail leading through the old iron railings at the end to enter Cunningham Hill Park, via the old gate with a "Please shut the gate!" sign upon it.

A 370 Yard run across the park, where a football match was taking place to reach the eastern corner, where My Lil' had led Birthday Boy Sparky & the SCBs had already passed through to come out on to Cell Barnes Lane, heading southward for a few more yards further down Cell Barnes Lane, passing by St Luke's Church, a modern place of worship with a steel tubing steeple that sits out side of the building, it rather resembles an electricity pylon.

A few more yards on & a CHK was found by the entrance to a local School. Those with eagle-eyes noticed that across the road was a signposted footpath between the end of the converted flats of Wavell House & an electricity sub-station, those who ventured over & took to alleyway would find Trail as the path turned through an arcing bend to come out onto the elbow of Kitchener Close, a small 1970's looking estate to head northward for a few yards before taking to another footpath, this one between the two short lines of terraced homes to come out into the Camp Play area. [I'll let you make your own jokes up about that! – Ed]

Considering Sparky lives in St Albans, My Lil' was surprised to hear Sparky admit that he didn't know that this area of St Albans actually existed. Then later on Sparky disappeared, later to return for the Hot Buffet he had the Pub put on for the Pack to celebrate his 80th Birthday.

The SCBs were still ahead as the FRBs arrived on the main tarmac path, like a spine running through the Park, the options were now nor-nor-west, nor-nor-east or south by southwest? Away to the south by southwest where beyond the tree-line Dust was found on the dogs-eggs littering the side of the path, more sacred flour was found on more dog's eggs to take the Pack on by the local allotments & the rear of a local school!

After 100 Yards the Hash were now out on to small elongated green space for 70 Yards to a CHK in the centre of the park. Options were to the north, the south or further eastward toward the southeast. It paid off for followed the ~~peep~~ Dust laden section who searched the south-eastern option out on to Windermere Avenue, where arrows pointed the pack straight over to another section of long green space between the homes.

Eventually the Trail would come in to Drakes Drive Open Space & run to its eastern tip, here a CHK was found by a pedestrian crossing. Buttons pressed & a quick search over to a marked alleyway for the Hash to pick up Trail down a path through a tree-line between the three little groups of houses.

Now on the edge of Hill End Lane, the arrows pointed over to the Highfield Park open space, with its nursery, Petanque pitches & other attractions to the south, but the Trail was going to turn away from them & head northward for another of the Park's fun things to do.

The Keenies now took to the spirit of things & followed the Dust into the Millennium Maze, with Tent Packer being proud of reaching the large erect totem [Steady Pebbledash! – Ed] in the centre of the Maze. Now the Hash haven't been in the maze since Sparky's 75th, in those 5 years the hazel has grown higher, so high that only the top of Lemming, Mother & No Eye Deer's headwear could be seen bobbing around after Zing-along-max, Des Res, TBT OBE & the afore mentioned Tent Packer!

The Trail exited the Maze by an unofficial exit, a suitable gap where a silver birch sits in its perimeter, resuming with the Hash & the FRBs were soon away to through a gap in the northern tip of the park. The Trail would cross the junction to run on to a cycle/footpath that heads on by a local Spar to head northward on Hill End Lane again, now running opposite the large Royal Mail depot.

450 Yards on & the Pack were directed across Hill End lane, there the only Held CHK of the Trail was found at this poignant spot. This area of the Park was used a cemetery for patients & staff of Hill End Hospital, then later Cell Barnes Hospital which did not have its own burial ground. *Investigations into the cemetery site uncovered some of the several hundred numbered grave markers in what was unconsecrated ground, which have become overgrown or buried over the years. It is known that over 1,000 people were buried in the cemetery between 1898 and the 1960s.*

Now the area falls under the Highfield Park Trust, which has worked to improve the site to ensure it is a fitting memorial to those people who have been buried here. Part of the site has now been designated as a Hertfordshire Wildlife Site. Highfield Park itself was created as a part of the redevelopment for housing after both the Hospitals were closed.

The Trail resumed out through the trees & on to the Albans Way again, here there was an SC Marked along the way to the west, while 'Trail' was marked to the east, only for a few yards to turn northward up through the tree-line & into Longacre Park [The RA had Long Acres once, but that's a different story! – Ed]

It was off to the north for Milf, No Eye Deer, Des Res, TBT OBE, Mother, Lemming & Tent Packer, starting off on the permissive cycle path running up the eastern side of the open space, merging from beside the toddlers play area to take to Oakdene Way section not open to traffic, where a left turn led the FRBs along the back of the homes on the southern side of Pinewood Close.

The Keenies would not re-join the old railway just yet, as the Trail led out via the other enclosed play area & then out of the park gates to the suburban section of Oakdene for 180 Yards, at the end of this area of housing to take a left turn to the head southward down Ashley Road, over the old railway bridge to turn onto the down ramp descending to the Alban Way, where they would take to the west by northwest section of the Albans Way which the SCBs of My Lil', Sparky, Slug & Kylie were now walking up.

There was a Sweet Stop called by No Eye Deer now the Pack were back on the former railway line, which for the uninitiated is both a Cycleway & Footpath, so standing in the centre of the fairly wide tarmac route & being an obstacle to approaching cyclists is not a good idea. TBT OBE was nearly clipped by a Cyclist who flew by him at some speed, the shock of this made TBT OBE blurt out loudly "You fat cow!" & in reply he was given 'the finger' by her. All of which left No Eye Deer looking on in amazement at our Hash diplomat's skills!

The route would temporarily leave the tree-line as it took to section beside Coach Mews before reaching Sutton Road. One last CHK here & it wasn't really not going to slow up those with local knowledge as they carried on searching to the west on the rest of the Albans Way as it runs below the local Morrisons' store.

Arrows were found on this narrow start before the width increases back to the normal width of the former single track route as it arcs slightly to the southwest. The Trail would lead on behind the Hatfield Road Cemetery, then the grounds of a local School which on the 1889 Ordnance Survey Map was the St Albans Orchid Nurseries. On the opposite side of the line lies an industrial estate where the Campfield Printing Works once was.

This Print Works was famed for printing Salvation Army Bibles, religious pamphlets & the infamous 'War Cry', giving the area the Salvation Army Halt on the line from which Trains could pick up the Bibles etc! After this 630 Yard run to the footbridge spanning Camp Road, here the On Inn was found down the set of steps & then back up a few yards to the Crown. In the Northeast of England a 'War Cry Job' is an expression Geordies use for when they need the loo after a really hot curry or a heavy drinking session, for the Sally Ackers used to sell the War Cry around the Pubs & it was cheaper for the drunkards to buy than toilet paper to hang in the outside privy!

Back in the dry to find that there was a special area with lots of balloons, streamers & banners to celebrate Sparky's 80th, for which he received his 'Special Jacket' embroidered with his name & the Herts Hash logo, it's good to see that Harrington's have never really gone out of fashion.

First appearing in the 1930's by two UK company's based in the northwest of England, the Barracuta or G9 was originally design for Golfers, hence the distinctive tartan inner lining. However it soon got the 'Harrington' name from Ryan O'Neal's character of Rodney Harrington in the 1960's Payton Place US Soap. Perhaps Sparky sees himself as a bit of a Ryan O'Neal?

Those gathered settled into enjoy the hot buffet & a drink on Sparky, with a few missing, especially Mr X, there would be a lot of food left over. Sparky is not one to miss out & he took home a tub of cocktail sausages, the last of which he will get through by an estimated date of March 2023.

