

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

Run No. 2033
2nd April 2023
Venue: Plume of Feathers
Location: Ickleford
Beers/Cider GK Abbot; Theakston's Old Peculiar;
Hare/s: No Eye Deer (& Sidekick)
Runners: 14
Virgins: 1
Visitors: 0
Newies: 0
Après: 0
Hash Hounds: 1
Total: 15
Membership: Surprisingly dry in the air on a No Eye Deer Trail!



The old 'wind-chill' factor was prevalent this morning, with a cool northerly wind dragging the temperature down in the exposed areas. Two of the Hash noticed this as they walked a couple of miles up from Hitchin Station to the venue, where at least they could shelter in the Hare's Car at the venue, while rest of the Hash slowly began to arrive.

The Pack began to circle up outside on the small green triangle of grass out front of the Pub, it was here that Rocket Rider was joined by a local, Kit Millington-Hoare, who was this week's Virgin Hasher. TBT OBE arrived, with Milf & Kylie. Then, just as No Eye Deer was going through Herts Hash markings for the benefit of this week's Virgin, a solo Lemming drove up.

Everyone knows that he wanted to get that one Herts Hash Run back, the one where he was laid up & made him one Run behind Mother in total Herts Hash Run numbers in the sacred Hash book, so no better opportunity for him than while she is away. [The Hash is supposed to be non-competitive! – Ed]

No Eye Deer didn't wait for Lemming, since he knows our Hash Markings [Unlike Sludge! – Ed] So, hopefully the newbies were more the wiser with what to expect out there? Meanwhile Kylie took a picture of the ornate plaque up on the nearby St Katherine's Cottages. But did Kylie snap one of the colourful signs about the Easter Egg Hunt at the local Sports Complex on Palm Sunday?

When asked when Palm Sunday was? My Lil' replied that you ought to ask an RA! Turns out it was this Sunday 2nd April. [Luckily Pebbledash wasn't there, or the answer to Palm Sunday may have been something rather different! – Ed]

The Hare added that there were several short cuts, including some short, short, short-cuts, all while Doeswhatshesays denied having anything to do with setting this Trail!! Anyhow, the Hare who would take any flack, then marked an arrow pointing to the southwest down Greenfield Lane & by the St Katherine's Cottages, then beyond the bike restricting bar to run the narrow footpath that runs behind St Katherine's Church, with its distinctive Norman Tower.

The tarmac footpath emerged from behind the Church, named after St Katherine (of Alexandria) & if Kylie wondered why there was a cartwheel above the plaque for the nearby St Katherine cottages? It's because she was to be put to death on a 'Spike Breaking Wheel' but it shattered when she touched it, eventually she was beheaded, but instead of blood, a white milky substance flowed from her neck, [Steady Pebbledash! – Ed]

Kylie should have known this as St Katherine is the patron Saint of Engineers, Wheelwrights & unmarried girls. In days gone by in France, unwed women aged 25 or above were known as 'Catherinettes' & they would wear brightly decorated bonnets on her Feast Day (24/25th November) The spinning firework is named after her.

Anyhow back to more modern times, the Trail now passed by the back of the Old George Pub, which is half hidden for the main road by another old building in front of it, then arrows showed the way around on to the Turnpike Road, going beyond the spot where the former Green Man Pub once stood, but is no more than the small Green Man Close estate, another part of our history sold down the river by greedy Breweries.

Mr X, My Lil', Milf, TBT OBE & Moss Key Toe lead the rest the Short Way to the First CHK by Walnut Way, where Mr X picked the Trail up in a nor-nor-westerly direction into the 1960/70's estate. Mr X ran some 245 Yards, almost to the opposite end of the estate, all in the belief that the Trail would head up to the Ickleford Sports & Recreation Club in the north, then he reached a Bar CHK!

Mr X's loss was My Lil's gain, for he found the Trail off of Walnut Way & heading westward on Greenfield Way, this also gave Moss Key Toe & Milf their chance to catch up after they were astray way back at the First CHK. The Keenies now followed the Trail as it weaved its way through the estate rather like the 'Snake' (Only) game that My Lil' has on his mobile phone.

Perhaps that's why My Lil' rapidly found his way around this maze like section of Trail, from the CHK on the junction of the sou-sou-east bound arm of Greenfield Avenue, where the Trail turned again on to the dead-end of St

Katherine's Close, where the FRBs were led up a long old wonky back passage [Calm down, Pebbledash! – Ed] that would lead westward & out on to the A600 Bedford Road.

A turn to run Due North saw My Lil' lead the way, while Mr X began to slow up now as he was now busting to scare the squirrels, & he thought that his chance had arrived as My Lil', TBT OBE Milf & Moss Key Toe all ran on by the footpath away to the east.

Mr X was not in luck just yet & had to hold it all in for a bit longer, for he found the Trail leading along this old hedge-in route, right at the same time that My Lil' found the Bar CHK back on the Bedford Road. So, the other Keenies would soon be running up behind him & there was nowhere to break off.

The footpath would head north-eastward between the crop fields, then after 200 yards along the back of the homes at the top of the 1960/70's estate, that the Hare had made the Keenies ran all the way around. The FRBs were just a matter of a few back gardens away from where the backstreet section of the Trail ran.

The Shiggy footpath got wetter as it approached the Ickleford Sports & Recreation Club, relief at last for Mr X as he could nip in to the sports complex & use the facilities there, which was a good thing as there was an open day on for a Kids Easter Egg Hunt. Lots of Horrors were milling around to locate different, brightly colour pictures of Easter Eggs were hidden & had to be colour matched in crayons with the corresponding image on the sheet.

Before disappearing into the complex, Mr X told Moss Key Toe that there was a footpath running down the southwestern edge of the building, but when he came out he could see that he others hadn't got that far ahead of him. By this point the RA now had to catch Dora, Rocket Rider & Mr Double-barrel Surname, Doeswhatsheys & Sis, both were surprised when Mr X passed them by, exclaiming that they'd have thought he'd be up ahead? He explained that the 'call of nature' took priority & that there were too many Civilians around in search of Easter Eggs.

Having passed by the Kylie, Lemming, the Short Cut Hare & the Knitting Circle, it was time to try & catch Fliptop, TBT OBE, Milf, My Lil' & Moss Key Toe up ahead, & at first it looked to be a daunting challenge, however, some 350 yards at the corner end of the field the Hare had done a splendid job of catching the Keenies out.

They had all crossed the small wooden bridge over the stream & exhausted the option on the footpath up to the unusually named Pinchgut Hall, on the A600, which had no Dust. There was a Falsie on the eastbound footpath on the north side of the watery ditch, so My Lil' came back to find that the Hare had been even craftier, for the Trail was found by My Lil' on the southern side of the stream & after 100 Yards or so, he had to cross back over to the northern side of the stream, where it resumed its east by northeast run along the bottom of the open crop fields towards delightfully named Snailswell.

Mr X now had an opportunity to make up the lost ground & he was soon up with My Lil' after the 200 Yards trot to the Held CHK, which was also the Sweet Stop, with Allsorts, Wine Gums & Jelly Babies. Doeswhatsheys was happy to discussed the rendered down animal products in the sweets that TBT OBE was snacking upon.

Here the Pack regrouped & said hello to a variety of passing dog-walkers, of course as normal the pack explained to the pooch owners that the Trail was just plain flour & not harmful. For the FRBs, the owner of a Border Terrorist (As Mr X calls Border Terriers) let slip that they had seen white blobs of flour up in the north where they had walked down from.

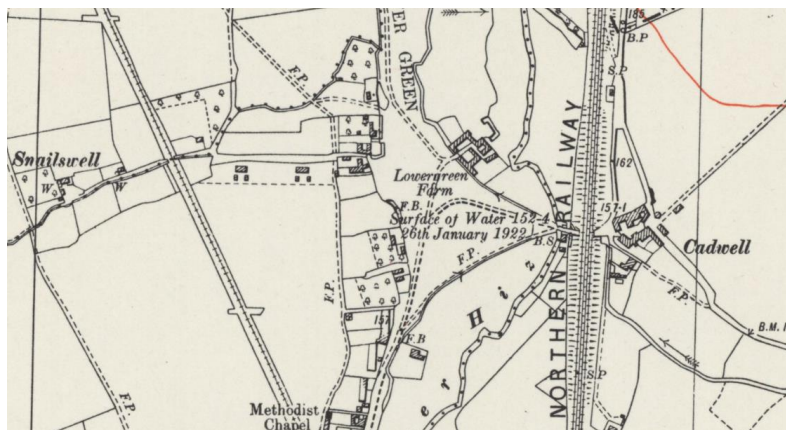
The pock walkers information, & the SC marked to the east, gave the game away for the FRBs, when the Trail resumed north bound was the way the FRBs would go, away on a long 750 Yard trot up beside the equine paddocks to the east of the tree-line, then once out beyond these it was a run up between two seeded crop fields & then a turn eastward on to a farm track.

The Farm track would lead on to the junction with another track up to New Ramerwick Farm, way off in the distance, which was too far for today's Trail, instead the Trail went around the southern elbow bend on the opposite path where the Trail would resume its eastward journey.

Mr X & My Lil' did have some local knowledge, but even they could get caught out with the plethora of footpath options around these parts, Mr X fell for the first of the triangle of linked footpaths, this one heading south-eastward back toward Snailswell, luckily Moss Key Toe & Milf were calling "On! On!" before Mr X advanced too far in between the crop.

Some 200 further along the wide track & the second, southwestern footpath of the Triangle out along the edge of the field was ignored, as the choice of sticking with the farm track was preferable, this proved to be correct as it makes its way around the east of Lower Green by the rustic cottages on the west & the meadows to the east.

A CHK was found on the green, with Doeswhatsheys waiting to offer up a Long or Short tail option. The Long Trail now headed away out eastward, with TBT OBE, Milf & Moss Key Toe leading the way out on the Arlesey Road to Cadwell.



By this point Mr X & My Lil' had decided that having walk to Welwyn garden City Town Centre, then from Hitchin Railway Station to the venue, they were finding it hard to get motivated after the wait at the Sweet Stop. Plus the time was edging around to just after ten to the hour & opening time would soon be upon them. The shorter option of heading off behind the homes backing on to the corralled off paddocks of Lower Green, looked more appealing.

On the 1948 OS Map of the area, Lower Green Farm has a 'Surface Water 26th January 1922' warning printed on it, where the area

flooded. The majority of the Pack chose stick with the longer option, moving under the railway & then down from Cadwell on the long footpath leading away over the marshy area by the tributary that joins river Purwell.

If anyone hoped that the underfoot going would improve further to the southeast, it wouldn't, as it was here that the difference between the driest February on record to the wettest March was plain to see, for after another new metal kissing-gate, the footpath from the horse paddocks was overcome with enough water that it resembled a river in its own right.

This route through the scrubby nature reserve was not without any hazards, for there was a long piece of wooden boarding within the thicket, that was no longer any use as a 'stepping stone' on the already failed original duckboards as everything was all several inches underwater, this east side of the track was definitely the Shiggy side!

Even though some lay in wait with their cameras recording, TBT OBE let those hoping to get £200 out of Harry Hill down, as he managed to stay upright to plough on through this hazard as the path through the flood plains at the bottom end of the meadow would lead the Hash on to the Icknield Way, as it comes in from the northeast to head toward the Northbound Peterborough Railway Line in the west. Here the Pack could easily see with the new, large raised concrete structure of the crossover rail bridge for the Cambridge Line, created to elevate Trains stopping when north bound Letchworth & Cambridge Trains used to have to cross the whole junction, something that allows the Inter City Services not to have to slow down.

As they kept to the wide tract of Shiggy near to the disused Sewage works, which these days look as if these filter beds made be being brought back in to operation? The Pack passed up & over the Railway, then on the southern side of the Shiggy farm track was Gerry's Hole, a deep watery hole created by excavation to build the railway, that caused the demise of local who fell in a drowned after staggering back from the local Pubs [Let that be a lesson to you Junior! – Ed]

Way back until the 1960, there was a third railway line, this was the Hitchin to Bedford one, which sadly was axed after passenger numbers dwindle due to local bus services, three Railbuses were introduced in 1958 but the decline was too far by then. Some evidence of the former line remain, one of which is the remnants of the bridge stanchions, as well the old sleepers that make up the wooden Bridge spanning the crystal clear waters of the River Purwell, this would have been the spot of where the village gets its name from, Ickleford is derived from the Ford in the Icknield Way.

The On Inn was just at the end of the now *dry* track as it came up to the main road, then it was over to Upper Green, beyond the ornate brick & timbered Bus Shelter known as the 'Rest' which the Lord of the Manor dedicated to the 1935 Golden Jubilee of King George V & Queen Mary, to reach the Plume of Feathers. Here the Pack found My Lil' & Mr X already imbibing within the Plume of Feathers & as chilled out as the two resident pooches! There has been a change of ownership since our last Hash visit, which was well before Covid-19 lock-down.

Lemming suddenly had a distraught look on his face, when My Lil' told him that he didn't have the Hash Book, that it was locked in the Hare's Car! But eventually the Hare Riser relented & the book fetched, but it was passed around the table in the opposite direction, away from Lemming, who was sitting right next to him! Lemming eventually sign the sacred Hash Book, before he had to set off to pick up Mother from the Airport.

Later Mr X would receive a TXT message, form Lemming, to say that he hadn't paid Hash Cash for the Run Fees he owed! So, technically, he hadn't paid, so the Run doesn't count as yet & could be struck off if he doesn't cough up double next Trail!

The Down-Downs were sorted by the Beer Master, but before the Circle could be called, the 13:30Hrs lunched came up before it was one o'clock! The Sunday Lunches looked too good for the gourmet Hash to have to let go cold, so the Circle was split in two as Mr Millington-Hoare had to move on, so Mr X got his, & Dora's Welcoming Down-Downs for completing their respective First Herts Hash, TBT OBE was amused when Mr X mentioned Mary Millington's name [Seems Teebs has knowledge of the UK's 1960/70's porn actress! – Ed] Also Lemming was given his orange juice, for being competitive in his attempt to catch up with Mother's Herts Run total.

With the first section of Hits out of the way, allowing the Newies & Lemming to move on, the Gourmet Hash were still sat noshing away. Once the feeding frenzy was over with, & TBT OBE forgoing his Pork Pie for veggie pie in front of the Hash, unlike the day before at a Wine tasting evening! It was time for the second section of Down-Downs, with the Hare from today & the previous week's Trail both receiving their just rewards.

After the Circle Milf bought everyone a yellow knitted Easter Chick, complete with a Crème Egg inside, then Mr X went around with a charity box for a collection, as one of the bar staff was having his hair & large bushy beard shaved off for McMillians. A great Trail, Pub & Hashers!



A Park Royal Railbus at Bedford Station

Americans will measure with anything but the metric system

