



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

Run No. 2037
Date: 1st May 2023
Venue: The Strathmore Arms
Location: St Paul's Walden
Beers/Cider Tring Side Pocket; Brew by Numbers Chocolate Stout;
New River Twin Spring.
Hare/s: No Eye Deer (& Sidekick)
Runners: 20
Virgins: 1
Visitors: 0
Newies: 0
Après: 0
Hash Hounds: 1
Total: 22
Membership: 森林浴



It seemed to be a freak of nature, but for just for a change the weather gods were on No Eye Deer's side this morning, the Sun was out, there were a few grey clouds gathering on the horizon but not threatening, & there was little wind.

Being a bank holiday the numbers can fluctuate, but most were surprised that there was a decent turnout, perhaps it was the weather, the venue's surrounding area, or a combination of both? Anyhow, the Hash gathered in the Pub's rear garden, Paxo was on hand to welcome the Pack to the correct run number, then he introduced our virgin for this week, Iain, to the Circle.

No Eye Deer was finally called forward to explain what the Hash could expect out there, as well as perform a quick demonstration of Herts Hash Markings for Iain, which would also be a benefit of Sludge who was back after his cruising around southeast Asia.

The Pack were warned that there was a little bit of road-running, then there would be a section in a woodland where the Hash were instructed to stick to the official footpaths & not wander off in amongst the bluebells, even if they see idiots of the general public disobeying the signage to keep off the bluebells! For those who don't need to use Sparky's Hearing-trumpet, they were told to keep an ear out for a Cuckoo, the Hares heard calling away the day before.

With the time well gone 11:00Hrs, the Pack were ushered away, with some bemoaning the short grassy uphill start out of the Garden & into the Church car park to the west of the Pub grounds. Up on the level & a CHK was found by the entrance & the south bound uncapped track down to Michael's Hope. The consensus was to search the opposite way into the grounds of All Saints Church, the one used by the Earls of Strathmore & Kinghorne, the Bowes-Lyon Family of which the late Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother was a member.

It is not sure whether Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother was born here, or elsewhere, but it is known that the Duke of York, later King George VI drove up there to propose marriage to her. The St Paul's part of the village name is derived from the fact after the Reformation the land of the Manor came under the governance of St Paul's Cathedral.

Anyhow, back to the Trail & once through the gate in the stone & flint walls, with a small distinctive white on green Commonwealth War Graves Sign to one side, the Trail was picked up across the Churchyard & out to a CHK just beyond the gate in the corresponding northern wall. There were calls of "Gate!" to alert the last of the knitting Circle to close the gates behind them

Although he had been warned at the circle 'Not to follow Where's Wally?' Iain didn't heed Milf's advice as he began searching away to the east behind Where's Wally? [looks like he'll have to learn the hard way! – Ed] Mr X & My Lil' were using past experiences in these parts & were keener on following Flying Solo as she searched the opposite way on the narrow rustic lane. There she found a finger-posted [Careful Pebbledash! – Ed] north bound footpath beside the end of the White House, which lends it name to this little lane.

Out of the small wooded area behind the house, to take to a footpath that runs along the edge of the crop fields, here there were a couple of elongated fenced off areas that were a part of some experimental restoration project with saplings set up in rows within.

Along here Mr X asked Tent Packer, fresh back from his visit to Langkawi, how his & Mrs Mallets Luxury Spar Weekend went? Tent Packer came back with "The Pot Noodles were better than the Pie!" Tent Packer would explain that when cooked, the pastry of Fray Bentos Pie rose nicely & all was looking good, until Mrs Mallet cut into it & the air came out, the crust collapsed quicker than TBT OBE on an electric bike by a canal lock, & the contents that slipped out was just a meaty gravy! [Oh dear! – Ed]

Back the Trail & the dry footpath moved north-eastward toward the B651 lane, in a break in the roadside tree-line an arrow directed the way across the tarmac bend in the lane & then in to another section of woodland, here the Hash could see the first blooms of the carpet of bluebells that cover the floor of Hitch Spring Wood.

The flour Trail took the Hash out of the wood to cross a crop field of clover, My Lil' wondered if anyone was going to stop & try to find a four-leafed one? This crop has two purposes, it is a legume so its roots have nodules on them that contain nitrogen & these refresh the levels in the soil, then after ways it can be reaped & used as cattle feed. Around half along the 700 Yards, there was a large pile of old flint stones that the farmer had removed when ploughing the ground.

The Trail reached the Langley Lane, Flying Solo, Where's Wally?, Ian, Moss Key Toe, Tent Packer, My Lil', Milf, Mr X & Mother had all pulled away from the rest of the Hash, even Sludge was way back with Paxo, Veronique, FWB, 3D, Slug, Lemming, Doeswhatshesays & No Eye Deer in the Knitting Circle.

Moss Key Toe suddenly stopped on the lane & wondered which way to go, Mr X encouraged him to take to the continuation of the footpath through the opposite hedgerow, then on northward along by the hedgerow between two crop fields until reaching a CHK behind the large, & somewhat ornate gardens in the enclave like area of nice houses & old converted farm buildings at the southwestern end of Hill End Farm Lane in Langley End.

Flying Solo & Where's Wally? went wrong as they headed out toward the northeast on the farm track, the Trail would be picked up through the gap in the treeline to a footpath running between the trees & then out north-westward on to the drive, keeping with it as it bends around the refurbished barns from the southwest to north west, then at the end there were arrows to point the way off of the old farmyard, then to drop down the small meadow hillside & on to the regroup at Hill End Chalk Pit.

Most had a look at the information board, by the fenced off drop down to the chalk pit, there they could read up on this area being formed when it was once the sea bed, hence the abundance of chalk. Also of interest were the wild flowers & the Orange-tipped butterflies that are attracted to them. Milf asked what the clump of yellow flowers, & the one red one, of what variety they were? Mr X said that they were Cowslips, he was then informed that according to Veronique, in French these are called Coucou, as the Cuckoo is known in French.

The FRBs were getting restless, to relieve the wait, Milf requested a photoshoot of Hash shoes in the CHK, while Flying Solo enlightened Ian on some of the idiosyncrasies of the Hash. Then there was another distraction as Zingalong arrived, he was closely followed by Des Res to give the numbers a little boost after their late start.

Eventually FWB, Lemming, Sludge & Paxo came in to sight & down to the Held CHK, followed by 3D, Slug with Sally, & No Eye Deer with a couple of bags of Sweets. While My Lil', Tent Packer & others shook up the bag of Allsorts to pinch out the blue & pink bobbly aniseed jellies, No Eye Deer said that there would be more Sweets on their way with Doeswhatshesays, if he was still coming this way?

Doeswhatshesays did walk this way, he arrived & handed out the other sweets, while the Keenies were in favour of getting back on Trail, before they seized up. So, they were allowed to set off & they began the decent down through the corner of the enclosed meadow & out the Whitwell Road, crossing to run through the small parking area by Hitchwood Barn to enter Hitchwood via the north-eastern corner.

Here the Hash were bedazzled by the spectacular sight of the vast expanse of bluebells, the scent of which could be appreciated drifting in the air, sadly they also saw some of the general public walking in amongst the pretty blue flowers, Mr X then explained that he was reading this week, that when trampled in bloom it can take a bluebell up to ten years to recover!

The Hash stuck by the rules as they followed the main, wide path with carefully placed fallen branches along either edge to try & keep the public off of the woodland floor's flora & fauna. With the other paths into & around the woodland closed off, there were no opportunities for any CHK points for the long 800 Yards within the northern top of the woodland, then a further 160 Yards up the narrow lane toward Preston.

There was some traffic for the Keenies to deal with, & a call of "Petrol!" from Milf received a "That'll be out of date in ten year's time!" from Zingalong. Up by the few houses at the southern end of Hitchwood Lane, just outside of Preston, here arrows pointed the way on a hairpin turn to take to the small drive by the cottages in the edge of Lady Grove Wood [Steady Pebbledash! – Ed], the tarmac would soon end after a few yards to become an earthen woodland track in between Lady Grove Wood & Hitchwood.

While Mr X, Zingalong & Milf followed Dust on the more westerly of the two adjacent tracks, My Lil' claimed that they were off Trail! Even though they had seen Dust on the trees to the west! However, the Dust did appear on both tracks, in a case of the left hand didn't know what the right hand was doing? Along this way Zingalong mentioned that he'd be getting an electric car next, so Mr X asked if it would come with leather seats & a leather covered steering wheel? Milf was puzzled until Mr X explained that Zingalong is vegan.

Zingalong, Milf & Mr X then crossed to join the others as their side of the Trail became litter with many more fallen branches, so they avoided these trip hazards blocking their progression, heading southward with the others until there was an ideal picture opportunity of the FRBs with a sweeping sight of bluebells behind them.

Neolithic stones found in field

■ Archaeologists have uncovered what they believe to be the oldest stones known to man.

A chance discovery in Wiltshire has shed new light on the activities of Neolithic man.

The stones, Keith and Mick, were discovered passed out in a field. One expert explained, "Exactly what the Stones were doing there remains one of the great historical mysteries of all time – they certainly can't remember."

The section of the woodland Hash was rather akin to 森林浴 the Japanese past-time of Shinrin-Yoku, which translates to "forest bathing". Scientists in Japan back in the 1980's started experimenting with the effect of spending time in an outdoor natural setting has on the physical body. They have documented the amazing health benefits from lowered blood pressure & pulse rate, to decreased levels of the stress hormone Cortisol. This Forest Therapy has also been shown to boost the immune system, aid in relaxation, increase creativity, & for the Hash problem-solving as to where the Trail goes. [See, Hashing gets you out in the countryside, & comes a relaxing Ale or to at the end! – Ed]

With photos taken, the Keenies continued to run out of the woodland here the gentle breeze had lots of small white blossom petals drifting in the air, this made some of the Pack mention the resemblance to snow, which we have had on a No Eye Deer Trail or two over the years.

On to the CHK on the edge of the farm field, here Mr X & My Lil' favoured the diagonal footpath through another clover field toward the Pinfold Cottages, where the Trail would be found, unusually the local gamekeeper normally kicks out the Trail as has happened many times in the past. Perhaps he realises that by Kicking out the Trail, the Pack could stray from the Public right of way with no Dust to keep them on the old straight & narrow.

This time the Trail was intact, as the FRBs followed it as it cut through a tiny section of the corner of Pinfold Wood where the bluebells are untouched as it has no access to the public. On the way up the farm track for a few yards, then arrows changed the Pack's direction to head over into Foxholes Wood, more bluebells & a large pile of branches forming a wig-wam shape up against a tree, then out to look down over the field toward the Sue Ryder House Neurological Care Centre.

While Ian, Where's Wally? & Milf picked up the Trail from the CHK on the end of Foxholes Wood & then down & around the driveway surrounding the centre. Mr X, Tent Packer, Zingalong, Des Res & My Lil' all slowed up a bit, then My Lil' bemoaned the fact he could see Milf following on behind Flying Solo, Where's Wally? after they emerged back up from the to the southwestern track, which briefly dips down out of view & then rises up from a CHK to turn south-eastward, passing by the field before Chalkley's Wood to the southwest on the way back to the level of Church Lane.

After 600 Yards on the lane the Trail would come back by All Saints Church & in through the back of the Church Car Park, where the FRBs soon got a pint & a samosa to sit outside in the garden. But it wouldn't be No Eye Deer Trail without a little precipitation, which began to lightly fall just as the Knitting Circle arrived back, so the Pack soon made themselves at home in one of the front corners of the Bar.

When it came to the Circle, the rain had ceased, so it was time to reward the hares for setting a splendid Trail, deliberately picking the Strathmore Arms to run from so the Hash could appreciate the Bluebellies. O hi way out, the RA was questioned by the local lads drinking at the bar, whether he was a Priest, his reply was that of Father Ted "The money was only resting in my account!"

With the Hares rewarded, time had turned to winding up Lemming as he was called forward to accept the Hash Post of Hash Stat's, which was made up, so he could recorded if Mother gets one Run ahead of him again! Then it was Ian's turn for his welcoming drink for completing his first Herts Hash.

Tent Packer was out for his re-election as Haberdasher, as well as nursing an overseas infection from a bite! This week saw two Hash namings, with Veronique [Who's name means Victory Bringer! – Ed] she was joined by PC as they received the names of Coucou & Hot 'n' Spicce respectively, since PC always.

The Pack then retired to the Bar, for more Ales & Samosas, having a good laugh & entertain the locals with their banter.

