

Herts  
Hash  
House  
Harriers  
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Run No. 2051  
Date: 31st August  
Venue: The Overdraught  
Location: Park Street  
Beers/Cider Trrriiiiing [Is there a phone ringing? – Ed] Side Pocket  
Hare/s: Zingalong & Des Res  
Runners: 11  
Virgins: 0  
Visitors: 0  
Newies: 0  
Après: 0  
Hash Hounds: 0  
Total: 11  
Membership: ODing



The Hares (both of whom are usually late arrivals) returned to the pub at about 6.30 after laying the trail and were surprised to see Tent Packer and Where's Wally? already there. They were soon followed by Kylie, Milf, Lemming, Mother and Moss Key Toe. Then Limb Sprouting - and even Ketchup arrived before the circle was called.



Sparky's original Satnav

Kylie insisted on everyone posing for a photo at the front of the pub before the pack made its way southwards along the right-hand side of the old Roman Road of Watling Street, which became the A5 just over a century ago, and in the late 1970s was renumbered A5183.

A CHK was soon found at the junction with Branch Road, which most of the pack ran along, only to find a 'T'. On returning to Watling Street, they rejoined the others heading south; but much to co-hare, Zingalong's disappointment, some had spotted a footpath sign pointing into a large hedge, and Ketchup quickly realised that the path was several yards before the sign and that it looked at first to be a part of someone's front garden.

He didn't waste time in taking this path and soon disappeared out of sight, while the rest of the pack were either holding back or continuing along Frogmore, which was what Zingalong was hoping most would do, as they would have found a bar check a long way further down the road. However, they were called back by co-hare, Des Res, who was more benevolent than Zingalong and decided not to let them take such a long false trail so near the start.

Meanwhile, Ketchup had found the trail and was way ahead, making his way along the Ver-Colne Valley Walk, (where the gardens of the Frogmore Park Homes reached the edge of the River Ver on the opposite bank) towards the next CHK on a larger gravelled path. I should mention that Milf was suffering from a slight injury and decided not to continue with the trail after this CHK, so she returned to drink the pub dry before the rest arrived back.

Nobody seemed to have taken the false, south on the gravelled path, as the FRBs, including Where's Wally?, Moss Key Toe, Tent Packer and Limb Sprouting took the left fork to follow the path running between the River Ver and the largest of the several ponds - the result of sand and gravel extraction between WW1 and WW2. These ponds are now used by Verulam Angling Club and are a part of Moor Mill Fishery.

Despite covering a small area, there is a labyrinth of paths among the ponds and through woodland, many of which were traversed on the hash later as well as near the beginning. At the end of the path, there was another CHK, where three of the FRBs took the most obvious path straight ahead over the end of Hyde Lane and found a 'T' just as Zingalong called them back to follow the trail which went a short way up Hyde Lane before turning right onto a small southbound path.

After about 100 yards, the small path entered a large open area close to where the FRBs would have emerged if they had passed through the 'T'. The trail continued south for another 300 yards or more until another CHK was found at the end of Moor Mill Lane.

Dust was soon found by turning right on a path between the premises of Broadway Construction and the M25 motorway and then the trail made a sharp 90-degree left turn to go under the M25 with the river immediately on the right. Passing to the left of the 18th Century 'Moor Mill Watermill and Inn' (currently a Beefeater pub) the trail continued down the tarmac road to cross Smug Oak Lane. It was only another 100 yards before reaching the Held CHK on the corner of Riverside Way Car Park in Drop Lane.

Moments later, when the Hares arrived at the Held CHK with Lemming and Kylie, they found the FRBs of Ketchup, Where's Wally?, Moss Key Toe, Tent Packer, Mother, and Limb Sprouting talking to a walker named 'Neo' who was curious to know what was going on. Where's Wally? had already carried out his duty by handing him a H4 business card and Neo sounded interested enough to join a future hash.

After Zingalong had handed out his vegan gummies to the pack, he gave them the choice of shortening the trail by over a mile or continuing along a path southward away from the car park, which all the above FRBs chose to do.

The trail then followed a long footpath running beside the River Ver, parallel with Drop Lane for about half a mile before crossing the river to turn left onto Drop Lane. A short way along this road was a CHK, close to where the River Ver joins the River Colne, from which there were two short options of arriving at the same place on a path that continued north-east past what was recently HSBC Group Management Training College but is now a development of 2-3-4- and 5-bedroom homes known as Hanstead Park, in the grounds of Hanstead House.

After another half mile along the path, the FRBs crossed Smug Oak Lane to reach a CHK offering a shortcut northward leading to a bridge over the M25. Ketchup, Where's Wally?? And Limb Sprouting chose to take the longer trail eastward beside Smug Oak Lane until it reached a footpath on the left, within a few yards of where they had reached Smug Oak Lane before the earlier mentioned Held CHK.

This is the path that the Knitting Circle were taken along after leaving the Held CHK, which meant that they were now a long way ahead of the FRBs. The path was almost blocked at one point by a fallen tree that was not there a few weeks earlier when the Hares were checking the route for the trail. However, it was just about possible to squeeze between the tree's thorny branches on the left and the brambles on the right (ouch!) enabling everyone to cross the bridge over the M25 and reach another CHK.

When the Hares arrived there with Kylie and Lemming, they were uncertain whether they had arrived before the FRBs, but Zingalong estimated that only Mo Farah would have been able to run fast enough to get ahead of them. Nevertheless, Zingalong went back over the M25 bridge to look across the field but saw no sign of Ketchup or the others. By the time he had returned across the bridge, Des Res and Lemming were waiting by the CHK and said that Kylie was out of sight looking for the trail in the wrong direction, to the left. Zingalong ran up the path and found Kylie puzzling over why there was no sign of a trail.

Meanwhile, Des Res and Lemming took the correct trail east, then north, following a path for about half a mile, dropping to the Moor Mill Fishery ponds until it reached the large gravelled path mentioned earlier, within about thirty yards of the end of Hyde Lane, where the pack had already been. A left arrow pointed the trail to a CHK at the fork of two gravelled paths.

The Hares and Lemming had hardly arrived there when Ketchup, Limb Sprouting and Where's Wally? suddenly appeared, confirming Zingalong's estimation that they hadn't run faster than Mo Farah! With no hesitation, these FRBs took the left fork, which was the correct route.

With most of the pack now within proximity, the Hares decided to take a shortcut along the right fork with the intention of reaching the next decision point ahead of the pack, which they achieved comfortably. The left fork led to the level crossing over the railway near How Wood Station [Many years ago the F.U.K Full Moon Hash set a Trail there so they could especially sing 'How Would you like my finger in your ear?' – Ed]

Before reaching the level crossing, the trail took a right-hand gravelled path for a short distance before forking right again, this time on a smaller narrow path between trees and eventually emerged onto the gravelled path that was the right fork taken by the Hares.

This point was dangerously close to the 'outward' trail where it followed beside the River Ver, so a distinct arrow led the pack northwards to the left, where the Hares were waiting a little further on. With little more than a third of a mile left, the FRBs were asked if they wanted to add another half mile to the trail.

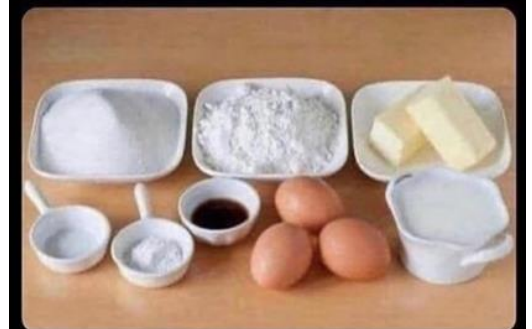
The unanimous decision was to get to the pub as soon as possible, so they continued north along the path passing Park Street Primary School on the left and crossing the end of Branch Road into an open area of grassland and the local playing field. On reaching Park Street Lane near the traffic lights by the railway bridge, arrows took the trail along the pavement towards the 'On Inn' directing the pack to turn right at the A5183 to the pub.

Once the FRBs had crossed Branch Road, the Hares changed the arrows for the rest to return to the pub via Branch Road – slightly shorter than going via Park Street Lane. It was here that the Hares mentioned that Kylie hadn't been seen for a while, but they were reassured that he was seen taking photos of rare birds or the lily ponds, which were particularly eye-catching.

Back at the Overdraught, the pack gathered outside under a sheltered area, and after imbibing and chatting for half an hour, Tent Packer stood in for the absent RA and awarded Down-Downs to Zingalong and Des Res for laying a trail that included a lovely network of paths in a secluded wildlife reserve, hidden from passing traffic.

Other Down-Downs were given to Where's Wally? for refusing to run the last loop on the grounds that it hadn't yet been laid; then Milf, for post-injury participation, albeit little more than half a mile. Milf chose not to take it as she was driving (or was it because she really had drunk too much before the pack returned?), so Des Res stepped in and offered to drink it on her behalf because he was being chauffeured home by Mother and Lemming.

The manager at the local IKEA is retiring, so I sent him a cake.



21K

202 1.4K

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