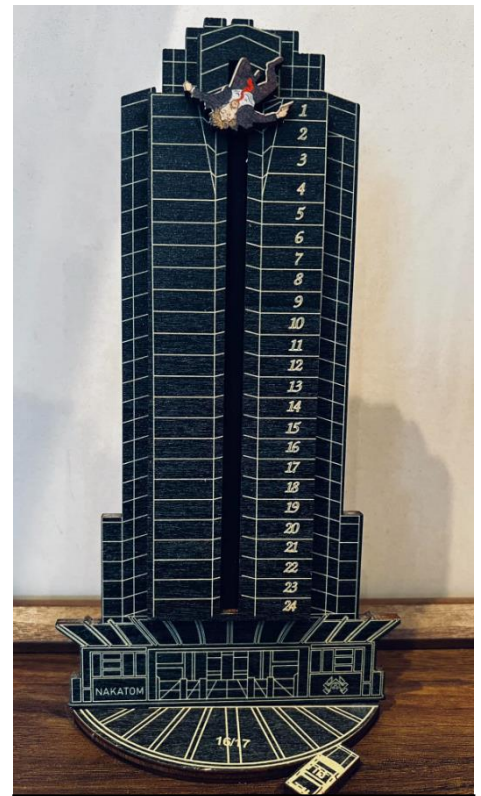




Herts
Hash
House
Harriers
Herts official Website: hertsHash.co.uk

Run No. 2071
Date: 3rd December
Venue: The Station
Location: Knebworth
Beers/Cider: Farr Brewdolf; Buntingford Hurricane, Red
Hare/s: My Lil'
Runners: 17
Virgins: 0
Visitors: 0
Newies: 0
Après: 0
Hash Hounds: 1
Total: 18
Membership: A bus! A bus! My Trail for a Bus!



It's not Christmas until Hans
Gruber has fallen from the
Nakatomi Tower!

Sadly the once reliable Herts Bus Services aren't what they used to be, with the 301/302 being completely unreliable at the moment. Experienced by the Hare & the RA who patiently waited to board a 301 which never arrived, forcing the Hare to now drive over & pick Mr X up from Welwyn Garden City Station on his way through. Perhaps one day Arriva & HCC will get things back to normal, maybe getting rid of the pointless 400 service to the QEII & back, which normally has no one on board, would free up drivers, since at least three other bus routes go & back that way every day?

Anyhow, the scribes rant is over & back to today's Trail.

With advanced warning the Hare would be late, the Pack patiently waited in the light precipitation for My Lil's arrival, which was all worthwhile as My Lil' had brought along flasks of a very nice warming home-made 'Hot Mulled Cider'.

This week saw Paxo's return after a few weeks absence, on the subject of which TBT OBE's no-show was noted this week, no reporters luvie? But there is Swine Flu going around at the moment & you never know why he was laid up in bed? Anyhow, the Circle was eventually called by Paxo, over in the Knebworth Station approach, there was talk of short cuts & these were as welcoming as the Mulled Cider was, as by now the drizzle was now becoming proper rain.

The Hare pointed the way for the Keenies to head away & under the rail bridges on to Station Road, well albeit for around 80 Yards, then arrows pointed the way over to the northern end of Pondcroft. Mr X & Where's Wally? led the way on the eastern side of the back-street, which had recently had the footpath re-tarmacd with what looked like a thin layer of marmite, & had set about the same. The black surface was far from smooth, with lots of footprints, tyre marks & other scrapes that had pulled up & removed sections of the surface.

Mr X took a picture of Where's Wally? passing by him, to make it look as if it was a Where's Wally's feet causing the footprints. As Where's Wally? headed off, Mr X asked "Do you think the dodgy tarmac men pulled up at the Council Offices & offered them a cheap deal? The wide strips of Frog-tape made it appear this way, not to mention the little lumps of broken off bits that were scattered all over the road, & probably brought in on bottom of shoes into the residents' cars & homes?

Around 160 Yards & the Trail left the poor path & headed east by northeast to reach London Road, Mr X now said that he believed that this would be a loop for the Keenies as they embarked on a 270 Yard trot southward on the main road to reach a footpath back to the west. Up the back passage [Steady Pebbledash! – Ed] to cut through to Pondcroft Road once again & more rubbish tarmac path.

Another 160 Yards southbound would bring the Hash out on to Gun Lane, here arrows pointed the way back under the Railway & on to a CHK by the start of the muddy footpath that runs down behind the back gardens of the Homes of Gun Road Gardens' & parallel to the railway.



Where's Wally? decided to search this obvious option, while Mr X knew this Hare can be devious & chose to search around to the west, in the area that began as Lord Lytton's answer to a Garden City project way back in 1909, some plots of land were sold off to various builders, which explains the eclectic different styles of homes, but with Welwyn Garden City becoming the Second Garden City, after Letchworth, the project failed, even though some of the architecture was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, of the Cenotaph Fame.

Mr X's choice proved to be correct, as he spotted Dust on the trees lining the side of Gun Road Gardens, heading south toward the Knebworth Cemetery, where Mr X knew there was only two way in & out, neither being of much use for a Trail, so he stopped to look at a footpath off to the west, but nothing there as Diamond Geezer caught up with him.

A little further on & they would spot an arrow pointing the way over to Crab Tree Road, then at the opposite end the Trail would turn southward once again, to the end of Wadnall Way, here the Trail would lead out in to the field of Brassicas, the one Where's Wally? would have come out to if he stuck with the Falsie he was searching earlier.

Diamond Geezer was soon on to the scent, as Dust would now turn the pack eastward below the Cemetery & over to the Railway embankment, after a 180 Yards they reached the wide Shiggy Track that FWB had just came out on to, after taking the Short Cut that was the Falsie Where's Wally? was on earlier. The Hare also appeared from the Short Cut as the Trail would embark on some 650 Yards due south, on the slippery Shiggy route.

The Next CHK point was found just over the end of the Track on Wych Elm Lane, here there were three options. Where's Wally?, Moss Key Toe & Diamond Geezer all disappeared under the railway bridge, where even the Network Rail Work vans were parked up out of the rain, while assumed Engineering works were still taking place on the lines above?

Anyhow, the Hare now marked the CHK to the east, under the railway bridge, then on the old, narrow, rising Wych Elm Lane he wrote Very Short Cut, while the regular Short Cut was marked away to the southwest over 'The Drive' footpath across the field, this Shiggy route runs by a line of new hedgerow to reach the north-eastern Brokers Garden Wood corner of greater Mardley Heath Wood.

Meanwhile the FRBs would now be on a loop around into Woolmer Green, which would confuse Where's Wally? [No surprise there! – Ed] but Moss Key Toe was on hand to rally Diamond Geezer & Where's Wally? around to head down Hall Lane, by the local Sports Ground, the Village Hall & Barleyfield Kids Centre. Keeping the Hash well away from the Red Lino & the Chequers Pubs.



The Long Trail would head along the edge of the Playground & then out through a gate on to the back street of Twin Foxes, which is named after Stevenage's most famous Poachers & petty criminals, on toward Mardley Heath Wood.

Born in 1857 at Symonds Green, the Fox Twins [Who Tent Packer bears a striking resemblance to! – Ed] Ebenezer Albert & Albert Ebenezer had over 200 Convictions, with the two getting away with the fact the Police couldn't tell which one was which, not until they started detailing little scars & then Fingerprinting came in! So proud of them, in 1953 the good folk of St Evenage named a new Pub after them!

The Trail would now take the Keenies up on to Heath Road, where Dust would be picked up due west, then they would enter Mardley heath, soon to find themselves running between the Hornbeams & other native broadleaf trees.

Back with the Short Cut & FWB was taking up the lead on 'The Drive' Footpath, with Mr X following on behind her. Why was the RA not doing the longer loop? I hear you ask! Well, he had stopped to clean the rain drops off of his glasses, he hadn't a case to put them in & by the time he had found the proper cloth, the other FRBs would be too far ahead.

The Knitting Circle followed on with 3D & Slug with Sally, Sludge, Paxo, Hot 'N' Spicce, No Eye Deer, Tent Packer, Kylie & Flanders all making a wise decision in avoiding the loop. The Trail now entered Brokers Garden Wood & ran along inside of the northern edge, a nice leaf littered trot was only spoilt as the rain was still falling through a tree-canopy of just bare winter branches.

On the way there were a series of fallen branches stacked up against one tree, to form a basic skelton of a shelter, the type of thing that the Fox Twins were famed for living under, when they camped out in the woodland for weeks at a time, poaching their own game & fish to cook, no doubt while hiding out from the Law..

500 Yards or so into the woodland, a CHK was found & from here there would be another loop to tackle. Mr X was now feeling guilty of not doing the earlier excursion that Diamond Geezer, Moss Key Toe & Where's Wally? were now completing to join the rest in Mardley Heath Wood.

After being called back by the Hare, Mr X now joined Tent Packer & FWB in heading southward up through a patch of bracken



to come up around by the old earthworks of North Pit, all before hankering around to the north & on to the bridleway down to where the Knitting Circle would walk up.

Heading northward & edging over toward the A1(M), once over the Horse Ride beams, the Trail led to the underpass beneath the Motorway. Here the Hare was found sheltering from the rain, as Slug put Sally back on the lead after her exciting mooch around the woodland, spotting squirrels & other pooches.

Mr X didn't want to stop, not now he had got the momentum again, so he continued out on to the end of Norman's Lane, an old route that starts of as uncapped, a rough old drive up through the woodland, with the odd property situated along it.

A 400 Yards on a very shallow, & somewhat easy, uphill gradient, on the way to Spinney Lane, however, Mr X's hopes of heading back right now were dashed as arrows pointed the way to the southwest, on Ninnings Lane [Nope, I don't know what means, but if Pebbledash was here she's come up with an answer! – Ed]

The FRBs would take on some 300 Yards down the slightly serpentine, dead-end, narrow, uncapped lane, avoiding water-logged pot-holes en route through the western edge of the woodland. At the dead-end the Keenies would find that the Trail turned by the last detached property, to head north-westward on a narrow hedged-in footpath out to Potters Heath Lane. A right-hand turn would result in advancing some 170 Yards to reach the T Junction with Rabley Heath Road & where the Potters Heath Road becomes Spinney Lane.

More hopes were dashed as the short option of carrying on north-eastward on Spinney Lane were ruined by arrows pointing to the northwest, on the lane to the Robin Hood & Little John Pub. Mr X wasn't for stopping, not now as he had the bit between his teeth, but mostly as he didn't have a waterproof on, his sweatshirt was soaked through & hanging heavy, he didn't want to hang dawdle in the cold & damp.

After 400 Yards the Long Trail turned around the bend the Robin Hood & Little John sits on, the Dust took the FRBs off of the tarmac & through a gate into an enclosed farm field as the Trail progressed on a wide, three-quarter circumnavigation of the prominent white Rabley Heath Water Tower.

The next CHK was located within a small Spinney in the enclosures opposite end, right by the pond in the dell. Mr X hedged his bets with the Trail heading northeast & back along the edge of the next field's hedgerow to go back to Spinney Lane again. He was right, but then went back to kick the CHK through, as he seemed to be so far ahead of Tent Packer, No Eye Deer, Where's Wally? Diamond Geezer & Moss Key Toe by this point.

Slow progress lay ahead on the 400 yards with a lack of traction through the waterlogged field, it's a case of the Hertfordshire landscape around these parts being a thick clay-capped over chalk landscape, the clay works to stop the rain from penetrating the ground quickly enough so it floods.

Out on to the bend at the end of Spinney Lane, where to the east it becomes Wych Elm Lane again, here the RA also noticed that the Hare & Knitting Circle of Kylie, Paxo, Hot 'N' Spicee Slug, 3D & Sudge had already been through this part, for the Dust was now fresh & no longer damp & dough like in resemblance.

Spruced up markings now led the way across the road bridge above the A1(M) & on the T Junction where it splits in to Wych Elm to the south & Gypsy Lane to the north, the Trail headed northward parallel to the A1(M) on a slippery old footpath beside the tree line, this stopped as the lane came out to turn north-eastward away from the Motorway & dropping down between the open farm fields.

It was now that the rain began to ease, not that it really mattered to the now soaked Pack, on the 400 Yards down to the western edge of Knebworth. The Knitting Circle were by now well ahead, so far in fact that there weren't even in sight on the pretty clear view down the hillside. There was still plenty water about, for there was plenty of run off from the fields to make the tarmac lane seem river like in parts, Hash shoes were going to stay wet.

At the T junction where Gypsy Lane meets its sou-sou-east to nor-nor-west section of the splay in its old route. Here was a CHK, this was now marked with an arrows to the sou-sou-east, with an alternative of a Short Cut straight on through a short ginnel out onto Stockens Dell.

The last loop of the Trail would run down Gypsy Lane, then anti-clockwise around Stockens Green, then Stockens Dell to take to the north-eastern, dead-end of the top arm of the small Stockens Estate finally entering the bottom southwestern corner of Lytton Fields Play Area.

More Fresh Dust along the bottom end of the paly area & then out on to Lytton Fields, where the On Inn was found by another alleyway, then one leading by a set of garages, then the local Scout-Guide Hut, finally by the local Royal British Legion to turn northward on to Gun Lane & back to the Pub.

Back at the Railway time to enjoy a pint & appreciate the feeling of completing the Trail in the rain, where Paxo didn't hang around, he left not long after the Keenies came Inn, No Eye Deer didn't stay either, for she didn't have a dry change of clothes with her, so, with Whatevershesays both headed off to a nice, warm, dry house. Hot 'N' Spicee was concerned about Moss Key Toe, so Mr X said he was on his way & probably about 10 minutes behind him!

With Space a premium, as there were a lot of Reserved Tables for Diners, combined with those leaving early, The RA decided to put off the Circle until the following week. Now, with the absence of the Hash Cash, Milf collected the Subs, but in doing so left ~~Captain Slow~~ Kylie to sign the book, he was far too late to bag the preferred spot, as Slug & 3D beat them to it!

However, this was not the end of the book signing shenanigans, oh no! As when it came around to Sludge to put his name down, he defiled Slug's name by changing it in the sacred book to Sludge! Thus securing the top right hand corner of the Book!

Where's Wally?, Diamond Geezer & Moss Key Toe all came back in, in around an hour & 20 Minutes, all to have a well-deserved Ale & a seat, however, Diamond Geezer was soon AWOL for a bit, as he went off with Tent Packer to purchase a lot of Hash Gear, including Personalized wear, that his Kids are getting him for his most splendid Christmas Present!

