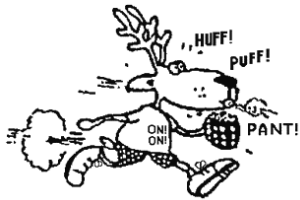


I DON'T KNOW WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS.

BUT STOP TRYING TO
TRACK THAT PACKAGE.

IT'S IN GOD'S HANDS NOW.



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

Run No. 2075

Date: 31st December

Venue: The Mermaid

Location: St Albans

Beers/Cider: Old Growler & some Christmas ones that this scribe can't recall after too many of the Old Growlers!

Hare/s: Mr X

Runners: 10

Virgins: 0

Visitors: 0

Newies: 0

Après: 0

Hash Hounds: 1

Total: 11

Membership: Hashing out the Old Year!



The Hare was up bright & early this morning, just in case the overnight tempest had obliterated his Trail set on Saturday before he set off for the Rugby, where he was to meet up with Hughie Blaaaarghh. There were some nay-sayers like Action Man & Kylie who thought that Mr X would be up really early to set the Trail, but they would be proved wrong as his Home Trail Test-sample was intact, as was the second at St Albans City Station.

On arrival in Snorbens, all the Hare had to do was set the last section of Trail, as he had left this due to the civilian footfall, however, as he set about marking one Falsie & then the On Inn in St Peter's Churchyard, Mr X was greeted with a few "Oi! Over here!" as one of the local 'Down & Outs' sat in a corner, had probably suspected the dishevelled looking Hare, complete with flour covered wrecked old coat & obligatory knackered supermarket carrier bag of Trail flour, was encroaching on his territory?

After his encounter with said inebriate, Mr X decided that as he had well over an hour, that he should keep warm by taking refuge in the nearby 'spoons, raising a pint to the (soon to be) Sir 'spoon for services to the type of person he encountered minutes ago in the Churchyard.

Outside the mermaid & the Pack was called to order by Paxo after the hour, as the Pack awaited Where's Wally? to reappear & due to the restricted parking in the area, any other later comers. Little did they know that would include Sparky [Who just happens to live the nearest to the venue! – Ed]

The Pack size was small, the Hare always thought that it would be the time of year for Family, plus the lurgy going around, we believe scientists have given the new variant the mutation prefix of T8T 08E? This seemingly unshakable bug has now caught up with Milf, who wasn't feeling up to a trot in the fresh air on the morning that started off bright & dry.

The Hare was called forward to explain what was out there on the damp streets of St Albans, normal Herts Hash markings, there would be plenty of Short Cuts & a regroup sweet stop, but also to be aware of a large Scurry of Squirrels busy stashing their nuts! [Careful Pebbledash! – Ed] then Mr X went on to mention the inebriated Tramp to keep an eye out for. Finally, there was one section of today's Trail that was a bit precarious, it was recommended to be avoided by those with TBT OBE' stability.

The Trail finally got under way, once there was a gap in the long line of traffic caused by being backed up at the traffic-lights further down the Hatfield Road, the dough shape of a one-sided Hash Arrow was still clear to see as Moss Key Toe, Where's Wally? My Lil' & Tent Packer followed more around on to St Peter's Road.

Running along the northern side of the street, the Trail led up to where there was a CHK upon a short wall by the junction with Hall Place Gardens, this had been covered over with leaves & sticks by some numpty. However this didn't really make any difference as the Keenies had now split, with Tent Packer & Moss Key Toe heading further along St Peter's Road, with Where's Wally? finding the Falsie up the back St Peter's back-passage [Steady Pebbledash! – Ed], eventually the Trail would be picked up by My Lil' on Hall Place Gardens.

Away in a north-westerly direction through the residential side street for around 190 Yards, before arrows pointed the way off to the northeast on Townsend Avenue, passing a local School to reach an untouched CHK by the entrance of the Sea Lion Swim School. Where's Wally? & My Lil' took to searching the 90° elbow up toward the St Albans Girls School but were soon stopped by a couple of T's!

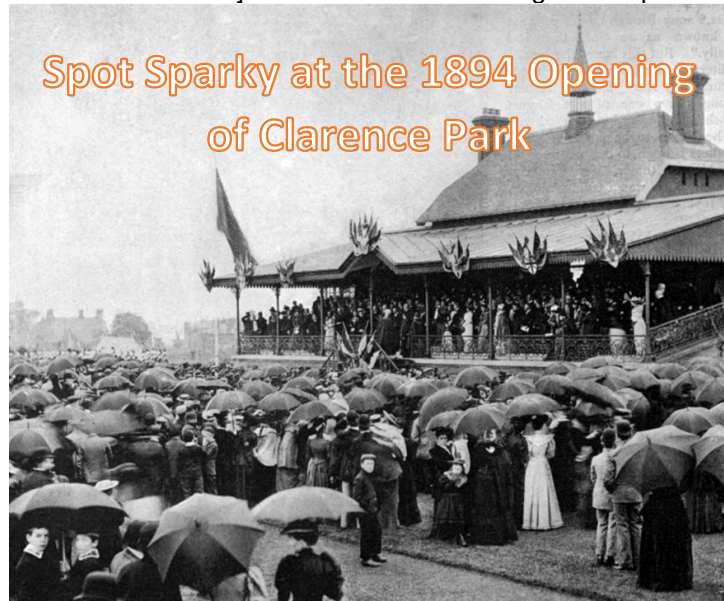
Tent Packer on the other hand was rather hesitant, he took several looks in the direction of an open wire gate, set slightly back beside the St Albans Hub that sits beside the Sports Complex, he was right to have another look for the Trail would be found beyond the gate & on to an old uncapped muddy path that leads between the treeline away to the southeast.

After a couple of turns the path would finish after 180 Yards to come out to a CHK on Hillside Road. While My Lil' went wrong by heading southward, it was Tent Packer again who had suspicions on heading in the opposite direction & looking by the 'No Cycling Sign' on the eastern side of the road.

Tent packer was on form, the Trail was picked up on this 75 Yard westward ginnel between several homes to arrive out on to one arm of the T shaped Althrope Road, the Trail would run down the 100 Yard stem [So Pebbledash! – Ed] of the road to come up to a CHK on Lemsford Road.

Here the first Short Cut was marked, with 3D & Kylie taking up the offer, though Sally wasn't keen to see 3D go off in the opposite direction! This left Paxo, Slug & Sally, My Lil', Where's Wally?, Tent Packer & Moss Key Toe to head south by south west to the Zebra crossing with its orange Belisha Beacons flashing away. [These traffic crossings are named after Leslie Hoare-Belsiha, the former Transport Minister who had them installed nationally from 1935. – Ed]

On the eastern side of the crossing was another of St Albans back-passages & the Pack were led through to the first railway bridge crossing of the day, this being a footbridge that goes up & over the Main Bed-Pan Line [Bedford to St Pancras! – Ed] Once down the short flight of steps to the dead-end of York Road, where a CHK was located.



Spot Sparky at the 1894 Opening of Clarence Park

Where's Wally? & Tent Packer were soon off on to the Falsie on the wooded footpath that is sandwiched between the Railway & the back of St Albans' City Football Club. My Lil' was less keen on this option & with Moss Key Toe they went a few feet further long York Road to look into the open gates to Clarence Park, here Dust was found running along the northern edge of the Public Park & 'Pleasure Ground'.

The Park was set out in 1894, with the money from nearby Childwickbury resident Sir John Maple, of the famed Tottenham Court Road Furniture Store. The 16 Acres were donated to the Public Good, they have been home to St Albans FC since the Saints were formed in 1908, as well as the Cricket Club who moved there in 1895. The impressive Pavilion was recently restored & reopened in Sept 2023, the park also hosts Tennis, Bowls, Hockey & Croquet Clubs.

The 350 Yard trot would take the Hash on the wide path that runs along the top of the Cricket Boundary to reach a CHK in the opposite north-

eastern corner from where the Hash had entered the park. While Moss Key Toe searched around to the south, behind the Bowls Green, My Lil' had already sussed that the Hare was going to lead back over the Railway line again.

Sure enough, when My Lil' left the corner of the Park, he would find the Trail heading northward up Clarence Road for around 100 Yards, to find a CHK by the Pillar Box on the corner of Gainsborough Avenue. Unlike others, My Lil' knew that this Dead-end side street does have an exit, this being via short, uncapped 80 Yards of Blenheim Road to reach Jennings Road, where after a left-hand turn the Trail switched from North to due west to lead up to the dead-end.

The Hash now crossed the Bed-Pan line for the second time, by way of another footbridge to emerge out from another ginnel onto a CHK by the cycle prevention bars to come out on to Lemsford Road once more. My Lil' was soon on to the Trail again, as it come down the slope by the Scout Hut at the end of Lemsford Road to join the main Sandpit Lane, which was possibly a Roman Road that led to Ware.

The Trail used a Puffin Crossing (Derived from Pedestrian User Friendly, Intelligent) to cross to the northern side of this busy road. For the inquisitive amongst you, a Puffin differs from a Zebra Crossing, with the main feature being the Red & Green man figures are located on the post by the button on a Puffin, while Zebra's have then located up on the opposite lamp post by the traffic lights.

Eastward bound the Trail went, crossing back over the road bridge above the Bed-pan line for the third time, there were several northbound starts of residential roads to cross, on each the Trail would move a few yards up these to then cross at a safer spot, set just back enough from any traffic that would come flying around the blind corners. The next CHK on this section was some 900 Yards along Sandpit Lane, by the St Albans United Reform Church on the corner with Homewood Road.

There would be a few more Yards to come along Sandpit Lane, Kylie was now spotted after mooching around on the opposite side of the road, he was called back over by the approaching Hare, while My Lil', Where's Wally? & Moss Key Toe had picked up the Trail up to a gate into The Wick Nature Reserve, though Tent Packer & Kylie did go a little astray by looking at the short side road of Hall Heath Close just before the reserve turn off.

Through the old Iron Gate, complete with a brass 'Please shut the gate' sign, then for some there was a photo shot by the carved wooden sign welcoming visitors to the Nature Reserve of Ancient Woodland, this too was donated to the local people of St Albans.

The Trail never broke off from the main path that leads the way along inside the eastern edge of the woodland, with the open playing field out further to the east. After 400 yards the elongated serpentine path came out through another iron gate in the iron railings to end up on Marshal's Drive.

The Hare caught up with 3D & Slug in time to set them off on the next Short Cut, that he was about to mark once the Keenies were out of sight following the 850 Yard loop they would undertake around Marshalswick, opposite

the shopping parade & St Mary's Church, they would return to Marshal's Drive by way of a 180 Yard uncapped footpath between the large detached homes.

With 3D, Slug & Sally, following on with the Hare, Paxo & Kylie on the Short Cut, the Knitting Circle was halfway along Marshal's Drive by the time Moss Key Toe appeared from the alleyway that was now behind the Knitting Circle on the north-western leg of the Trail.

As Where's Wally?, My Lil' & Tent Packer all strove to catch the Knitting Circle, 3D could admire some of the huge, very desirable homes along this road, some are so big they could be mistaken for Hotels, one even resembles a Châteaux, & most have a swimming pool in the rear expanse of a garden! Even the trees outside of these large homes were decorated with massive Christmas Baubles!

After the long trot to the end of Marshal's Drive, there Pack were led on to the short dead-end section, cut off by Gurney Court Road, before being led over the complicated five option road junction over the Bed-Pan Line. A series of Puffin crossings took the Pack one last time over the railway, then to pass by the front of the King William IV, or the King Billy as it is known by the Locals, to head away down Beech Road

For the Knitting Circle there would be a long 1,000 Yards on the very long spine-like urban road, Where's Wally? was recommend to take this Knitting Circle option, by ignoring the two arrows around 560 Yard along the way, these did direct Moss Key Toe & Tent Packer to the north side of the road, to a short footpath that leads out on to edge of Beech Bottom Dyke.

The reason the Hare warned of cutting this section out, was the fact he struggled along the top with the Shiggy while setting the Trail on the undulating path behind the homes on Beech Road, firstly the route is very narrow, with a steep 30 foot drop away into the bottom of the man-made defence from the Iron Age. All dug out by hand, this may be connected to the defensive structures in not so far off Wheathampstead, built by the Celtic Catuvellauni Tribe under King Cunobelinus, as a part of their centre of Verlamion, later to be renamed Verulamium by the Romans. It is now considered that these Dykes could be a defensive system between the Rivers Ver & Lea

Back to Where's Wally? & the Knitting Circle were now left behind in his wake, they could admire the one house covered in various Christmas Decorations of Snow Men, a large nativity Set, Angles & Father Christmas, which included an angel right up on the TV Ariel!

By the time Knitting Circle reached the junction, which is still known as the Ancient Briton junction, even though the Pub that sits at the end of the Dyke has been just a plain, boring old Harvester in recent years, Moss Key Toe was just emerging from this section of the Dyke.

The Hare now encouraged the Pack, since they were on their way back, with the Trail turning southward on the Harpenden Road, however this would not be a tarmac run back, for the Trail edged into the eastern section of Bernard's Heath Wood, there was a CHK some 120 Yards into the Trees but it had been covered, no doubt by one of the many dog-walkers? Fortunately the Trail was mainly marked on the trees & so Where's Wally? easily picked up the Trail & got far ahead of the rest of the Hash.

Sticking within the wood, the Shiggy Trail would edge further over to the eastern side, the desire-line path gently rose & fell as it led the Hash on by the large, round hollow concrete structure, these were Second World War water storage tanks to keep the nearby Fire Station supplied with water, if there was an issues with the City's water supply. Not too far away is also the large Public Air-raid shelter on the heath, now covered by a large concrete slab.

Dust led on over by the Pioneer Club, then the now derelict Fire Station to reach the Held CHK by one of the large Oaks in Bernards' Heath Wood. Where's Wally? had already been through & he missed out the Held CHK & on a choice of Wine Gums or My Lil's (Least) *favourite* Sour Sweets.

My Lil' may have declined the Hare's Sours, but he didn't realise that when Paxo arrived, he too would be bearing sweets, & these Jelly Babies were also sours in disguise. My Lil' now bore a sour expression on his face.

The last leg of the Trail would be to make the way eastward out on to Bernard's Heath, the original Home for the Hertfordshire Cricket Club, not to mention that it was the site for the Second Battle of St Albans in 1461. Fought between two rival branches of the Plantagenet family (the houses of Lancaster and York).

The Second Battle took place on 17 February 1461. The Yorkist army was commanded by Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick (Also known as Warwick The Kingmaker') who attempted to bar the road to London. However the Lancastrians, under Queen Margaret of Anjou (known as 'The She-wolf of France') outflanked the Yorkists, taking them by surprise and winning the day.

The Trail now left the Shiggy behind, taking to the tarmac section of the St Albans Green Ring on it southeast way over the open green space to reach the Sandridge Road, the final leg was now under way along 270 Yards to reach the passageway behind the Jolly Sailor Pub, at the end of this a few Photo's were taken by the sign of the oddly named Snatchup Alley. Here some of the Pack contemplated how it derives its name?



This back passage is a part of the route taken during the Mayor of St Alban's 'Beating of the Bounds' ceremony, which takes place on Rogation Sunday to mark former boundaries. In 2024 the day will fall on 5th May, being linked to the Easter Calendar as the Sunday before Ascension Day (40th Day of Easter) marking Christ's ascension to Heaven.

Back to how the alley has a such a name, well, it is believed to be as simple as the fact it links the back of two old Hostelryes, that in days gone by had reputations of being dens of Thieves & ne'er-do-wells, where 'Snatching' could have been common place, or maybe a different meaning to 'Snatch' altogether?

The final part of the Hash was to cross over by what was the Cricketer's Pub, now an Indian Restaurant, to navigate the Stonecross triangular junction, then once on the east side to run on the cobbles pavement, crossing a couple of side roads, then by the ancient red brick walls behind which the old Alms Houses sit, then the Age Concern centre to reach the corner of St Peter's Church.

By the time the end of the Pack crossed through the Churchyard, which is designated a 'wildlife haven' & this must be a success as it was here that the Scurry of Squirrels live! Another resident, who was also now out of sight was the Homeless man, all that was left of his presence was an empty bottle of Port, no wonder he was slumped in the corner! The On Inn was found by the corner of the Garden for the Blind, then under the Oaks.

Over to the passageway at the southern end of the Churchyard, that comes running out by what was Liberal Club, but now the Veer Dhara Indian Restaurant, which proudly boasts on the wall "Really enjoyed the Lobster Curry" – Tom Cruise. Mr X explained that Tom Cruise booked a Table for 10 there a few years back, he has been spotted in several Indians over the years when he is working nearby. He likes curries, & if they are good he buys two, with one to take one home! Though this time his Amex Card wasn't accepted & a colleague had to pay:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-19353415>

As Mr X walked back to the Mermaid, he spotted the figure of Sparky crossing the road ahead, walking toward the On Inn! But even before he had made it safely across, Sparky was uttering words about getting lost on Trail, but there were spots of rain now in the air, on what had been a mainly clear & less windy day.

So, in the Pub the Pack could settle in at one end. Mr X was a bit bamboozled as to how Sparky went wrong & ended up at Morrisons, not since there was four bags of flour used to set, & refresh the Trail as he went around! Kylie now produced a tub of mixed Chocolates Sparky had brought around to Milf & Kylie on Boxing day, it was a bit hit or miss in a 'Chocolate roulette' if you got a clean shiny choccie or one with a veggie fat bloom on its outer.

However, there was some glee to be had, as for the first time in ages a paper version of the Trash was available & no refused to take one, these have been brought back due to popular demand.

The Circle was called fairly quickly, as the Pub doesn't do meals & those who wanted to eat could get away. Paxo called the Circle to order inside, in order to save the seats in the small one Bar Pub. The Hare was rewarded for an excellent Trail, with just one light & brief few minutes of rain, the Ale was cold & this even slowed Mr X down!

Normal Service were resumed when Mr X had necked his Pint, so there were a couple of Number Run gifts to hand out, with Moss Key Toe completing his 50th Herts Run; Slug stood in for Sally, after completing her 10th Trail (A couple of Trails ago) for which she received a splendid 10 Herts Run Dog Jacket, which went down a treat [Well done to our Haberdasher for sourcing these! – Ed]

Mr X then had to explain that the Hareline, Printed version was wrong, for he hadn't updated the paper version due to an unexpected issue over Christmas & by the time he did sort out the Hare line it was too late, so Mr X wrote in Red Pen over the Chez Sludge original Venue to make it read the Chequers in Stevenage, but all this did was bamboozled Sparky! [Hearing Cats! – Ed]



Don't forget its only 76 Days from New Year to St Patrick's Day in 2024!

