



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



Run No. 2116
Date: Sunday 22nd September 2024
Venue: The Café in the Park
Location: Shenley
Beers/Cider: Various Mad Squirrel
Hare/s: Moss Key Toe
Runners: 10
Virgins: 0
Visitors: 0
Newies: 0
Après: 0
Hash Hounds: 1
Total: 11
Membership: Tea for two!



It now seems that the 'Wet weather Hare' mantle may have been passed on from No Eye Deer to Moss Key Toe? For the 'passing of the baton' of overnight & early morning deluges would, perhaps, deter a lot of the regulars from putting in an appearance this morning? So, it came a surprise for TBT OBE to turnout, when dark clouds still loomed overhead, but the weather would change for the better when the RA alighted the bus & crossed the road to arrive, with a couple of minutes to spare.

TBT OBE called the Circle together after the hour, this would include a very brief description of Herts Hash markings to this week's Virgin of Thomas, Diamond Geezer's son. The Hare would add that the he had set the Trail the day before, then when he checked this morning it appeared it was obliterated due to the rain, & the added that he didn't have time to go around again to reset it with fresh flour, or chalk arrows. However, there were hints that some present may recall parts of the route from a previous Trail set around these parts.

The Pack were all sent off to the southwest, on the hard-capped route toward Shenley Park, the Hare would use his local knowledge to explain some of the historic aspects of Shenley, starting with the fact that the Park was once a part of the large, former Mental Hospital that was officially opened by George V & Queen Mary in 1934, though phase one was already completed two years prior.

The Trail would change direction to the northwest, here blobs of dough were discovered, as some flour parts of the Hash had survived the downpours, unlike the chalk markings that had been erased. After around 90 Yards the wooded path would take a couple of opposing turns to reach the edge of where the barriered end of Grace Avenue reaches Porters Park Drive.

No visible CHK point here & a little confusion was about to set in before Mr X found the Trail heading off, westward on the tree-lined 'Watling Chase Timber Trail' a route that encompasses a large section of the old Shenley Hospital Grounds.

More blobs of dough were now spotted on this more sheltered section of the Trail, having been partially saved by the tree canopy above that has enough leaves remaining before Autumn really sets in. It would be 700 Yards in a clockwise route on the path that is specifically there to keep the housing estate within the former Hospital grounds, this is due to a clause when the estate was run down, closed & sold off by the former owner to mapper further expansion.

Anyhow, Diamond Geezer & Tom reached the corner of Cow Banks Wood, here the Tail would be found heading north-eastward where they would lead Mr X & Karlo over to the opposite south-eastern corner, here the sparse remains of a CHK were discovered, for Mr X & Karlo there were also the surviving remnants of a T off down the snickett into Halliday Court, so it was back to the woodland.

Mr X now employed the old Scout's trick of marking the Trail with sticks to form arrows, before he realised that he did have a bit of plasterboard on his person to mark the correct way. Diamond Geezer & Son lead the way northward along the eastern edge of the wood to a wider back-passage [Steady Pebbledash! – Ed] that runs eastward above the small area of back streets named after English Cricket Grounds.

Having not found anything out between the homes, Diamond Geezer, Tom, Karlo & Mr X continued around the top of the wood to come back on to the Watling Chase Timber Trail away to the north. Emerging for the shelter of the woodland there would be a 350 Yard open trot between a couple of cropped fields, by now the Sun was out & trying to burn off the dampness.

At the end of the dead straight farm-track route, the FRBs would find a wishy-washy CHK that was set on an abandoned square tile of roofing felt, which Mr X marked wrong as he hedged his bets that the Trail would turn north-eastward along the tree-line hugging Watling Chase Timberland Trail. He would be called back as the Hare now arrived on the scene, to help the confused congregating FRBs out.

The Trail continued northward & Mr X returned just as Slug & Sally, My Lil' & TBT OBE all caught up, the RA would turn the felt tile around so that the arrow on the CHK was now pointing northward for the Trail to continue for a further 160 Yards, passing along the edge of square chunk of woodland to the left.

A turn to the northeast on a wide farm track would lead up toward Shenleybury, with Diamond Geezer & Tom both pulling away from the rest of the Pack. Meanwhile, Hot 'N' Spicee & Milf, who is still using crutches, had taken the much shorter of the available short cuts that the Hare had offered up earlier at the Circle.

Tom & Diamond Geezer were now so far ahead that they missed out on a change of direction as the Hare ushered those within earshot to turn southward, & across a field to reach an alleyway into the Shenleybury Cottages back street, the two lost sheep made it all the way to the Shenleybury Road, where they turned left & made their way into Shenleybury Cottages from the wrong way to where the First Held CHK would be at the eastern end of the lozenge shaped grassy green in the centre of the small estate.

Sweets enjoyed, the Trail would head back up out to the Shenleybury Road, where the next Short Cut was offered & taken up by My Lil' & TBT OBE, one of whom confessed that not having Hashed for many weeks he wasn't up for the long Trail that lay ahead, these two would head away down into Shenley proper, while the rest crossed over to make their way up the steps & through the grounds of St Boltoph's Churchyard.

St Boltoph (who died around 680) is the Patron Saint of Boundaries, Trade, Travel & Farming, he has some 64 Churches named in his honour. The grounds of Shenleybury's St Boltoph's are the resting place for a few of the Hare's relatives & Mr X spotted Moss Key Toe's Father's Grave, as he hung back to have a quick look to see if he could spot Racing Driver Graham Hill OBE's grave, he was laid to rest there after his plane crashed at Arkley in thick fog as he was due to land at nearby Elstree Airfield.

The Trail would pass from the graveyard & out through a fallow field below the Farm Close estate, where once through the northern bramble hedgerow, from the crossroads of footpaths the Trail would embark on the long ancient track that is a section of the Watling Chase Way, a nice 470 Yard along the wide farm track to find the way that wasn't overly flooded with puddles as some may have expected.

At the point where the main track turns through 90° on the right, the Dust would lead straight through a narrow gap beside a gate post & into the smaller farm field beyond. A short way to reach the next Hedgerow & here the FRBs would pass by the sign warning that this was home to an active Aircraft Landing Strip used by the Hertfordshire Microlight Society, all of which is located to the south of the de Havilland Aircraft Museum.

This area has been home to aircraft design & more for many years, but in recent times it is also home to both Arsenal & Watford Football Clubs Training Grounds, allegedly Mr Arteta annoys Mr Cleverly by playing his music rather loud when the Gooners Training there?

Anyways, the Trail would now turn southeast on a wide old concrete driveway that passes by the end of the airstrip & rises on a steady 900 Yards up the ridge starting at 75 metres above sea-level to a whopping 120 Metres in altitude, to what the Hare claimed was the second highest point in Hertfordshire, & it felt like it was that high after the long steady climb!

Time for the Hare, Diamond Geezer, Tom, Karlo, Mr X, Slug & Sally to get their breath back as they regrouped at the on top of the ridge. Normally there is a splendid vista from this height, but by now the day had become very sultry & with the weather change the distance views had now disappeared under a misty heat haze, the only thing that really could be seen was the prominent water tower back over in Shenley, a feature that could be used to get one's bearings, as Mr X did later.

Here the Hare would point out the Manor Lodge School, & then a bit further along the tied-cottage that he lived in when his parents worked for the local farm, he then told the story of local man Eddie Chapman who also lived there.



Chapman was a Peterman (A safe cracker) with several conviction, one of blowing up the safe of the Edinburgh Co-operative Society, he was let out on bail & fled to Jersey, where he would be arrested for another petty crime. He was still in Prison there when the Germans Invaded the Channel Island on 30th June 1940.

Chapman confirmed his willingness to act as a German spy under the direction of Captain Stephan von Gröning, he was trained in explosives, radio communications, parachute jumping etc. On 16 December 1942, He was equipped with wireless, pistol, cyanide capsule & £1,000. Chapman became stuck in the hatch as he tried to leave the aircraft. Finally detaching himself, he landed some distance from the target location of Mundford, Norfolk, near the village of Littleport, Cambridgeshire.

Chapman surrendered to the local police shortly after landing, he then offered his services to MI5. He was interrogated at Latchmere House in southwest London, better known as Camp O20, where MI5 decided to use him as a double agent [Agent Zig-zag] against the Germans. Amongst the tasks the Germans had given him was

sabotaging the de Havilland aircraft factory at Hatfield.

During the night of 29-30 January 1943, Chapman with the help of Jasper Maskelyne, a professional magician, & a team of camouflage experts, replica sub-transformers were created out of wood, papier-mâché, buildings were camouflaged, debris was scattered around to create the appearance from the air that it was damaged by an explosion, where the Mosquito was being manufactured. German reconnaissance aircraft photographed the faked damage & this convinced Chapman's German controllers that the attack had been successful.

Chapman was sent to occupied Norway to teach at a German spy school in Oslo. After a debriefing by von Gröning, Chapman was awarded the Iron Cross for his work in apparently damaging the de Havilland works. Chapman was inducted into the German Army as an oberleutnant (or first lieutenant) he was also rewarded with 110,000 Reichsmarks & his own yacht.

While in Oslo he secretly photographed the German agents who stayed at his safe house. After Operation Overlord (D-Day) he was sent back to Britain to report on the accuracy of the V-1 weapon. He parachuted into Cambridgeshire on 29 June 1944 heading to London, where he reported to the Germans that the bombs were hitting their central London target, when in fact they were undershooting into the less populated Kent Countryside.



On his retirement, MI5 expressed some apprehension that Chapman might take up crime again if his money ran out, if caught he would plead for leniency because of his highly secret wartime service. As predicted, he became involved with blackmailers & thieves, getting into trouble with the police for various crimes, including smuggling gold across the Mediterranean in 1950.

Chapman had his wartime memoirs serialised in France to earn money, but he was charged under the Official Secrets Act, fined £50! A few years later, when they were due to be published in the News of the World, the whole issue had to be pulped. However, his book *The Eddie Chapman Story* was eventually published in 1953

Chapman & his wife later set up a health farm (Shenley

Lodge, Shenley, Herts). He also remained friends with Baron Stephan von Gröning, who had fallen on hard times. Von Gröning later attended the wedding of Chapman's daughter. Eddie Chapman died of heart failure on 11 December 1997. The 1966 film *Triple Cross* was based on the biography 'The Real Eddie Chapman Story', as Karlo correctly mentioned.

The Trail continued to lead on through a tunnel like path, formed by the hedgerow & tree line canopy up above the heads of the Hash, near the end of the 600 Yards this would emerge out beside a paddock at Pinks Farm, & on to Rectory Lane. The FRBs would begin to bunch up once again as it took the front three a while to realise that the Trail, which was still fairly intact would head away south-westward on the tarmac of the lane.

Rectory Lane is a quiet old narrow rustic route, which was good as the FRBs would be on this for almost a mile, on the way the Pack passed by the Shenley Equestrian Centre, where an unusual flag was flying but it was not a county flag, but this riddle could be solved a few yards further where a blue plaque was seen declaring that Shenley Stud, 'in 1912 Tagalie from this stud won the Epsom Derby'. So, was the flag based on the Jockey Silks? She is only one of six fillies to have ever won the Derby.

The Trail would move around to the right when it reached the small green triangle, this westward section would not be very far, again Diamond Geezer & Tom were up ahead of the rest, in fact too far up ahead & had gone by where the Trail peeled off in through the tree-line. These two had missed a gap in the hedge & they returned as the Keenies would traverse a green space to the north of the homes on Hillcrest Road, then more diagonal running to enter a back-passage in the corner between two homes, to come out on to Cage Pond Road.

The Hare made sure that the Keenies would now head off to the end, where there is a pond by the London Road, here there is a dome like building that was the former jail. 'DO WELL. AND FEAR NOT.' & 'BE SOBER. BE VIGILANT'. Can be read on the two plaques above the door to the small 17th Century building, no doubt in reference



to patrons of the Black Lion who became a little too squiffy imbibing only a few yards up London Road? Its last recorded use was to hold a First World War Army deserter.

Leaving the ducks, & their little duck house in the pond, behind, the Trail now progressed through Shenley, heading southward & suddenly Tom was spotted popping across the road to look in the local Estate Agents window, this was noted by the RA! Tom was soon back to join the rest on the way down by the local School that Moss Key Toe's Grandfather was headmaster of.

Moving on toward the White Horse, here the Hare called out for those ahead of him to turn off just before the bus stop. The Trail would now turn south-westward in another tree-line footpath, then after 300 yards the Trail reached a T-junction with the Watling Chase Timberland Trail, there were only two options & the northwest one was the way back toward the On Inn.

It would be 860 Yards in the long strip of woodland of the long Woodhall Spinney, that arcs around to due north, & tapers down as it finally moves up the slight hillside to reach the Radlett Road. Having crossed the road, the Pack would turn with the Watling Chase Timberland Trail to the southwest & after one last effort for 330 Yards to make it back On Inn to the car park & a well-deserved Belgian Beer, it was here that those leaving early could sign the book & Des Res was found as he arrived back after having a wander around, choosing not to run so soon after his eye op.

One Belgian beer down & it started to rain, so it wasn't long before those outside were joining the rest in the Café in the Park, a venue where Moss Key Toe & Hot 'N' Spicee first met, in the days when it was the Hospital Social Club. Diamond Geezer & Tom had to leave early for a Christening, while the rest dined in the Café. With others moving on early, the Down-Downs were put off until Paxo's a week later.

Moss Key Toe would also elaborate that his home was used to supply the power for the filming of Anthony Burgess's 'A Clockwork Orange' for what was the mad cat lady's house.

All in all a great Trail, a bit long for the those who were on the Full Moon Pub Crawl the day before, but it made up with lots of history, some personal. The weather couldn't have been better for the Trail, but the RA never does get the plaudits for this. In case you are interested the Highest point in Herts is over in Lemmings corner of the county, outside of Tring [Can someone get that phone? – Ed]

The 2024 Subbuteo World Cup starts in England in Tonbridge Wells

