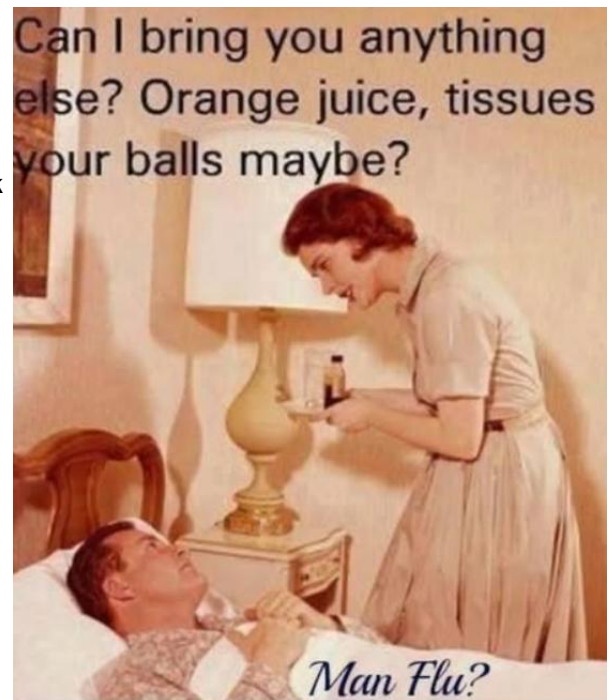


Herts
Hash
House
Harriers
Herts official Website: hertsHash.co.uk



Run No. 2199
Date: Sunday 1st February 2026
Venue: The Jolly Fisherman
Location: Stanstead Abbots
Beers/Cider: Mac's AK, IPA, Boot Warmer
Hare/s: Paxo & Jules
Runners: 26
Virgins: 1
Visitors: 0
Newies: 1
Après: 2
Hash Hounds: 4
Total: 34
Membership: Avoiding the dog-poop bags



It was a dull old morning for the gathering Pack in the Stanstead Abbots Car Park, but at least the Rain was holding off as some of the early birds contemplated whether one diesel VW parked on the way out of the car park was TBT OBEs? Was it there because he didn't want to pay £1.50 for all day parking? Was it actually his car, for he may have still be holding a valid sick-note?

All the answers were sorted as TBT OBE drove into the car park in his, same model of, car. So, those gathered knew that he ~~was~~ fit & well, turning out this morning before bemoaning to those gathered about his latest maladies. Some wondered why he had driven, since he lives the nearest of any of the Herts Hash?

Anyhow, this week saw Head Mistress joining us, after her move back to Enfield having previously Hashed in Malaysia & Addis Ababa. Also present this week was Casey Jones, from Essex H³, who at the moment was on his own, but was hoping that either Pic or Mix would try & make it if they could drag themselves away? It was looking to be a good turnout as the RA informed Fliptop about having a newbie & a Virgin, so the Pack would know who to look out for on Trail. Sensibly Head Mistress sported a bright pink hat for easy recognition out on Trail. The Circle was called on time & once the Hash welcome was announced, it was over to the Senior Hare of Paxo.

There were mentions of a Short Cut with Jules keeping an eye on those wanting this option, the all-important Sweet Stop & regroup, also that the Trail was slippery out there in places. Then without further ado the Hash were sent away out of the car park & westward down the Stanstead Abbots High Street.

Having successfully managed to pass by the open local Wine Shop, some of the senior Herts Hashers present felt the stirring of a few old Memories of the days when the Christmas Party was just one night, before Weekends became the preferred celebrations, as the Trail passed by Khunni Thai & Japanese Sushi Bar & Restaurant, better known to those Hashers as 'Cheers' that we would hire the whole Family run restaurant for a few Christmas Dinners.

Back to the Trail & this would lead over the bridge, spanning the River Lea Navigation, where some noticed the signage under the street name showed the names of fallen WWI Soldiers who lived in Stanstead Abbots. The Navigation is the border between Stanstead Abbots & the neighbouring Stanstead St Margeret's, where the Onn Inn Pub could be seen.

No sooner than crossing the Navigation & the Trail would turn nor-nor-west to drop down the ramp to the tow-path of the Navigation. My Lil', Casey Jones, Parsons Nose, TBT OBE, Mr X & Paxo all descended to follow Trail up by the moored up narrow boats, Hash Test Dummy's progress was slightly delayed as Monica made her way down from St Margeret's Station, having alighted from the Train.

Hash Test Dummy & Monica would now pull away with the rest of the FRBs on the long, 1300 Yards on the nice flat towpath, here the Pack passed by many 'wintered up' narrow boats on the western side of the Navigation. Some of the floating homes had smoke wafting for the chimneys as they were being lived in, others looked like they just there until a Spring clean was on the cards, there were a few that really looked like they needed a bit of love & care to the bodywork.

It was on the towpath that the Hash would first encounter discarded, tied & used dog-poop bags littering the way. The RA's progress had a slight hiatus as he had to tighten up his bum-bag for a less unhindered trot, with Juices



Flowing & Milf not far behind him as the Trail reached the next CHK up on the bridge by the access road to the level crossing over the Hertford East branch line to the west.

Some had been tempted to check it out over toward the southwest bound level crossing, above a low area that was once an area of Watercress beds, perhaps they could smell the cat-flaps of nearby Chez TBT OBE & expected a stop there? Then there was another option to tease the Keenies & that was into the Amwell Walkway in the wooded area just below the level of the towpath.

In the end it was those who search the third option over the arching bridge, who would find the Trail on the eastern side of the Navigation, a notice board here informed the local Twitchers of what avian species had been spotted, of most interest was on the 27th of January a Bittern had been seen.

The Trail now headed nor-nor-west on the track between the Navigation & the larger Great Hornead lake of the Amwell Nature Reserve. The former gravel extraction site having been repurposed as a Nature Reserve from 2006 when it was bought by the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust, it has now gained Ramsar, Special Protection & SSI status. Plants include marsh dock and hairlike pondweed, both nationally rare, as is the Bittern, most commonly heard for its 'boom' of a call, rather than be seen.

The Trail would turn around to the northeast as it came around part of the Bittern Pool where there is a viewpoint, where, according to the information, "With some patience and a bit of luck, you'll find one of our most elusive winter birds skulking in their favourite wet reedbed home: the Bittern. It is a thickset bird from the heron family, with a black and brown plumage providing perfectly camouflage between the reeds. A winter bird, the Bittern will often sneak across the ride in front of the James Hide!"

Leaving the Navigation behind, the next section of the Trail would start off on the level of what was a former track-bed of the 'Bunt', the now gone Buntingford Branch Line, from here Casey Jones went wrong at a CHK by the meandering path up through the scrubby, elongated spit of land by the Tumbling Bay lakes.

The Trail advanced further to the northeast, this part had plenty of visual evidence tree work going on, with piles of coppiced branches by the sides as the Hash moved on with the smaller Hollycross Lake to the right before heading up to the old railway bridge that carries Hollycross Road above. It was along here that FWB & the late arriving Des Res caught up with the front of the Pack.

A CHK was discovered just before the bridge, where Paxo had to call back Parsons Nose & Des Res, amongst others, though one was of them was not My Lil' who had carried on under the bridge on the former railway that is now called the Amwell Walkway on this section, that is below the level of the fields on either side.

TBT OBE gently picked his way through the fallen tree across the wide track, Kylie had an issue with getting around this due to having some extra wood with him exploring on an old railway line. [Careful Pebbledash! – Ed] TBT OBE pointed out the small square cement markers that must have been something connected to the railway days?

Paxo said that Jules could take the Knitting Circle on the footpath on the outside of the tree-lined former railway line. After 400 Yards there would be another slight detour as some used a little loop with less Shiggy on the short up & down bypass a short, to avoid a very slippery section.

Out of the tree-line & the Held CHK was found as the sweets were brought out, Mr X was handed the Allsorts first, which meant he had first dibs at the Aniseed Buttons, one of which was teasingly sitting by the lower window in the packaging. Unlike Tent Packer, Mr X didn't have to rummage around to locate an Aniseed Button.

The Pack began to regroup, & the Keenies were at the Held CHK longer than perhaps they'd like, as Head Mistress, Milf & Juices Flowing, Monica, Sludge, Pebbledash, Soggy Butt, Where's Wally? 3D & Slug, with Sally, Josey finally arrived, with Jules. Pic & his son, Stinking Bishop, both arrived here, just before the sweets were packed up. Milf was spotted repositioned a painted stone she had found a bit earlier, for some one lese to dicover.

The FRBs set off with Paxo, a little later the Knitting Circle did also headed away on the same easterly direction for 230 Yards in the bottom of the verdant vale the River Ash flows through, with Easneye Wood on the ridge to the south-east & Mead Wood over the valley to the northwest.

The footpath would change tact to head 400 Yards nor-nor-east, with the prominent red-brick Dairy Farm up in a section carved out of the wood. Pic & Stinking Bishop caught Mr X on his way to the kissing-gate at the end of the field, in passing, Mr X told them that Stinking Bispo's Grandad was not that far ahead of them, he could just be seen turning off of the driveway running below the woodland on the right.

After 220 Yards, some of those going off on the longer Trail would cut over a diagonal footpath across the smaller green space as the Oak Tree Cottages drive turns almost due northward over the river Ash & up to the southern end of Easneye Farm, where Dust led off below this on a drive to the north-east.

The Short option Kitting Circle were left by Paxo as he marked an 'L' for the longer option, the likes of Milf, Juices Flowing, Des Res, Tent Packer & Mr X waited patiently for Jules to arrive, but the next section of the Knitting Circle had been delayed, this being down to one of Lobby Lobster & Mark E Marks' pooches taking a swim on the Navigation, & again later on in the River Ash, but only to swim away the wrong direction back toward Ware & Hertford! [& Home! - Ed]

After some 260 Yards the Keenies of Hash Test Dummy, FWB, Casey Jones, Parsons Nose, My Lil', would find a CHK, where the Trail would take the right-hand, eastern option beyond Hopneye Cottages to





rise up the ridge for 300 Yards to a CHK by the smaller Dog-House Wood. Where's Wally?, Soggy Butt would gain some ground on the FRBs up ahead as the Trail's route would change direction to sou-sou-east, running along the western side of Youngs Wood.

From the Knitting Circle perspective, they could see the distinctive outfits & headwear of My Lil', Parsons Nose & Casey Jones bobbing up & down along behind the hedgerow on the ridge in the distance, where they would occasionally to be seen in the few gaps along the way to the southeast, until completely disappearing out of sight. Casey Jones' progress would be hindered as he pulled something in one of his legs.

The Knitting Circle would make their way up through the woodland, with some having to make way for an Amazon van to pass by them in the middle of nowhere. Once on the level the Knitting Circle passed by a couple of old estate cottages, Sludge, Tent Packer & Des Res pondered on what the two small side by side brick outbuildings were, the consensus was that these were old kennels for the estate hounds with a small arch door in the front of each that led out to a small compound surrounding with railings.

A fingerpost sign directing the way down to Hollycross Road, which almost tempted the front of the Knitting Circle on the currently unmarked Short Cut, but Hollycross Road is a long road going all the way back to Ware. Paxo had previously mentioned that the Short Cut would branch off, so the Knitting Circle waited for Jules to arrive & direct them away to the east on 'The Bournes' with the shorter Trail being marked along the way behind them.

The Knitting Circle was now split in to two, with TBT OBE, Sludge, Josie, Kylie & Pebbledash all following up behind Jules, with the Dog walkers of Fliptop, 3D, Slug, Mark E Mark & Lobby Lobster a little further behind.

The Keenies made their way through a couple of CHKs on their way southward, as Pic & Stinking Bishop reached a crossroads of tracks of Bridleway 18 from Hollycross road to Hunsdon, the first of the Knitting Circle would also reach this point & this saved them from searching off to the west.

The Trail would leave the farm tracks to take to a parallel southbound footpath, here Pic found a lost 'dog tennis ball', which was thrown down the track side of the hedge after a Jack Russell was spotted rooting around in the undergrowth.

A few spots of light precipitation were now in the air as the whole Pack began a steady descent, the footpath made its way some 850 Yards to the back of the homes on Cappell Lane, that runs off of Holycross Lane, Pic now asked Mr X how far the Essex Border is?

In modern parlance, the border is around a mere 1.5 Kilometres from Stanstead Abbots with the river Stort & its Navigation forming a part of the boundary to Roydon to the south [Well, the less said about a swimming pool there the better! We all know how Digger's Full Moon Hash 'Bingo call' goes "There's only one dead body in Michael Barrymore's swimming pool!" – Ed]

The last leg of the Trail would pass by St Andrews Church as it completed the 640 Yards down to the small roundabout at the end of the High Street, passing by the Red Lion. Mr X thought that he may have found My Lil' in the Red Lion with a pint for him, but then spotted through the window & they only had TT Landlord on, so there was no chance of a Pint while awaiting the van keys to arrive back! So, it was a trudge back to the car park, where My Lil' was found, he was moaning that he had been there for at least 20 minutes!

Mr X said to My Lil' that if he really desired a pint of M^cMullen's that much he could go to the Jolly Fisherman, while Mr X waited for Lobby Lobster & Mark E Mark to arrive back, being delayed in having to fish one wet pooch out of the Navigation & the River Ash. But, oddly, My Lil' refused!

Even Captain Slow was back before eventually Lobby & Mark rocked up, after a further delaying in talking to some non-Hashing friends, those who were seizing up collected their bags & everyone went off to the Jolly Fisherman, where the Hash swamped the Pub, eventually making their way around to what was the smaller public bar area. Where Sis, Danni & Mrs TBT OBE were found.



TBT OBE was soon all-of-a-fluster as deputy Hash-cash, with a larger than expected turn-out & the Pack all spread out! The Circle was called early, as plenty were eating after a longish Trail. So, the Hares were rewarded for setting an excellent Trail.

Then in no particular order we had: Mark E Mark, who after some vigorous discussions with Lobby Lobster at the Bar, seemingly is now the owner of the Poch who went for several swims! TBT OBE was out for almost being able to touch the old cat-flaps, while My Lil' was there for bragging about coming second when Parsons Nose questioned him if he was back first? Our Newbie of Head Mistress, with our Virgin of Monica accepting their Down-Downs. Finally, we had the two Essex visitors, for gracing our little old County.

