

Berkshire Hash House Harriers

Run Number: 1935 21Dec14
Venue: Bramshill Plantation Car Park
Hares: Slowsucker, C5

Visit the website - <http://www.berkshirehash.co.uk>
Website Email - iceman@berkshirehash.co.uk

Merry Christmas One and All!



Now due to relatives staying over until Sunday morning and wanting to discuss until 10:30 the amazing value one can obtain at Lidl stores, plus the consequent rush causing me to insert the pub instead of the Hash location into the satnav we just didn't make it this week. The only reportable item I know is that HappyFeet got a Down Down for appearing in the BBC news item about the High Wycombe Hash. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-30559877>. Hope you all enjoyed the Trail. Given that it was laid by two of our most experienced Hares in country perfect for the purpose I'm sure you did.

So then, this Gobsheet will be a little different to the usual periodical. I hope you enjoy it.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

On On. **Hashgate.**

The Tale of the White Hare

It was Christmas Eve during the daytime and snow lay, crisp and packed, outside the cave entrance. The white hare sat and twitched his whiskers distractedly, tweaking a long ear with a front paw while he pondered. As a dutiful, though little known outside the North Pole, first lieutenant to Father Christmas he had planned the delivery route for His Hollyness for more years than he could remember. Though the concept of 'years' in Christmas time was a bit, how shall I say it? He thought. Ah yes. Stretchy. Millions of children's presents to give in just one night across several human time zones using a sleigh pulled by nine reindeer. Hmm. Veeeerrry stretchy.

He looked rather mournfully across the snow to where a large mound used to be. It certainly wasn't there now. Maybe some security next year. He placed it on his mental list, along with several bags of carrots and some coriander. He was rather partial to gourmet food these days after getting hooked on Masterchef. Not keen on recipes for jugged... um, it that cannot be named, though. Or pies in which closely related nibbling creatures featured. All too literally. He shuddered and brought his mind back to the mound, or lack of it. The elves created it every year though even the white hare didn't know how they made it. The contents were magical, visible only to animals and the inhabitants of the Christmas caves. Except now, he thought ruefully, there were no contents. The mound had contained thousands of tiny, glowing markers that the white hare would lay all over the world before Christmas Eve as the most efficient trail for the sleigh (which boasted an ancient but exceptionally accurate automatic navigation system) to follow. The elves, in a misguided attempt at security had laid an enchantment on the pile so that it looked (and smelt) like salted cod. Global warming had ensured that every polar bear for miles was starving and the lure of the apparent fish pile was more attractive than magnetic North to a compass. They descended and scoffed the lot, leaving nothing but a hint of fish on the wind and certain 'places' on the ground where elves and hares feared to tread. Unless they were carrying a trowel for their boots.

So. What to do? The white hare wrinkled his nose in exasperation. Most satnavs wouldn't work at sleigh speed and hooking even the most powerful up to a system powered by reindeer droppings would be more than a little tricky.

He finally made up his mind, slapping the dusting of snow in the cave entrance with his right foot, making the flakes dance and sparkle. He hopped swiftly over to his own cave, ignoring the mass of scurrying elves, and rummaged under his little wooden bed until he found the items he wanted. One was a magic journey carrot, glowing slightly with its own self-importance and with a bite out of the end. Another was

a cylindrical silver object about six inches long and highly polished, rounded at both ends. The third was a pair of sunglasses. The white hare smiled as he held them up, showing two large, white front teeth.

“So, white hare. What do you want?” A slightly disembodied voice came from the carrot as he held it up in front of him. Before he could answer it continued, rather pompously. “And don’t forget you have only two journey wishes. You wasted the first when you ate a bit of me for that midnight snack. Hurry up then. I don’t have all day. Nibble and wish.”

The white hare sighed. Stropy magic carrots he could do without but he had no time to sign out another from the carrot vault deep underground. He placed the sunglasses on his head, in front of his ears, nibbled the already chewed end of the carrot and said, “I wish I was at NASA headquarters with the chief scientist.”

WHOOOSH! He always found the sudden lurch and accompanying flashing lights rather nausea-inducing but it was very quick and with a thump he found himself standing in a very modern office opposite an attractive lady who was standing there with her eyes almost as wide open as her mouth. Dr. Ellen Stofan had seen a few (scientific) miracles in her time but nothing to having a large white hare, holding a half-bitten carrot and with sunglasses on his head appear in her office.

“Wha... What can I do for you?” She eventually managed to ask.

“How do you do?” Asked the hare in return (for he had excellent manners.)

“Fine. Thanks. Pleased to meet you” She replied, remembering hers and sinking down slowly into her chair.

The hare lolloped up on to the chair opposite her. “I’m sure this is a bit of a shock to you...” he began.

“You don’t say.”

He continued. “... but I’m here on a very urgent matter.” He explained who he was, where he had come from, the business of the missing markers.

“...and so I came to you in the hope that you may have some high-tech solution to the problem. If I don’t fix this (he used an Americanism to make her feel more comfortable – he really was a thoughtful hare) the children won’t get their presents and Father Christmas...” He paused for effect, then added another Americanism. “... will have my ass.” He had never quite understood why Americans all had beasts of burden that had to be given away when they made a mistake.

Doctor Ellen was a dynamic, quick thinker who accepted and resolved the impossible on a daily basis. She leant forward in her chair, earnestness on her face.

“Well sir. You sure have a big problem there. We have the most advanced satellite navigation in the world here. We are working on, but haven’t solved yet, the opportunity of wormholes. We have people who are so smart it’s a wonder their brains don’t explode with all the knowledge they have in them. But I am very sorry to say that I don’t think we can help you, though I would dearly love to.”

The hare eased himself from the chair, pulled down the sunglasses over his eyes and held out the silver object in front of him.

“I’m sorry to hear that mam.” He was really beginning to get the hang of this American language. “So I will have to go elsewhere. But I thank you kindly for your time today.”

“Doctor Ellen stood up quickly. “Oh please don’t go. We have so much to learn from you. I mean, a talking hare from Father Christmas who appears by magic. Wow!”

“If you’ll just look right here, mam.” Said the Hare, flicking a tiny switch on the silver tube he was holding in front of her. A sudden flash of red light popped from an opening on it and the Doctor’s expression went blank.

“You did not have a talking white hare appear magically in your office today and you will remember nothing of your conversation with him. Er, not that there was one here, obviously.”

She sat down slowly. The white hare knew she would be back to normal in five minutes. Amazing, he thought, that most people still don’t know that Men In Black is part documentary. The flashy thing comes in very handy sometimes.

"Well that wasn't very useful, was it?" The carrot huffed. If a carrot could fold its arms and look away superciliously this one would have done it. The hare had to agree. Things were not going well and time was moving forward. He absent-mindedly munched a large piece of the carrot. "I've made a right hash of it." He mumbled, through a mouthful.

Now magic carrots, apart from being awkward, do not have either their hearing or their capabilities improved by having a large chunk bitten off them so what happened next was bound to be entirely unpredictable.

WHHOOOAAW! Thought the white hare, as the ground lurched beneath him, lights spun manically and he was suddenly deposited in the middle of a cold forest.

"Oh my goodness!" He exclaimed, realising that the carrot had misinterpreted his words for some kind of destination. "Where am I?"

He saw movement a little way off. The words 'wolf' and 'bear' appeared rapidly in his mind. Almost as rapidly as he skipped behind a large tree and pushed up his sunglasses before peering round it. Now he saw them. There were two... runners(?), he thought. But dressed as, he couldn't believe his eyes, hares! They were coming towards him and stopping every so often to lean forward to the ground. They also seemed to be drinking from flasks and laughing rather a lot. What on earth are they doing?

They stopped just behind the tree where he had hidden.

"Phew!" Exclaimed one, giggling. "I'm pooped. Wish we didn't have to lay the Trail as well as run it afterwards."

"Too right." Slurred the other. "Not sure the hip flasks are helping." And this hare onesie itches like nobody's business.

At this the real hare's ears pricked up. Hares? How could they be...? He stepped out from his side of the tree. The two floppy-eared 'hares' jumped.

"Whoa! You gave us a turn there pal. That's a wowser of an outfit you've got on. Even better than ours."

"But there are only two hares." Said his friend. "And that's us." They looked at each other.

"First things first." Said the white hare. "Can you tell me what you're doing?"

"We're with the Hash. Running group. We're laying a Christmas Trail and all the Hashers will follow it when they run through the woods. Look. We're using flour to mark the Trail". He held up a large bag full of white powder.

A mental light bulb moment allowed the white hare to understand why he had been brought here. The carrot in his paw seemed slightly embarrassed. A further mental light bulb moment, of lighthouse intensity, flipped on.

Flour!

There was tons of it at the Christmas caves. For some reason the elves loved Yorkshire puddings passionately and the dwarves (avid watchers of The Great British Bake Off) were forever making loaves and suet puddings. The white hare thought quickly. If the elves could magic up a mound of markers they could certainly do the same for a mound of flour. He could fill his bottomless sack with the stuff, be off round the world, lay the Christmas Trail (hah! Just like these chaps) and be back before you could say Good King Wenceslas.

"Gentlemen." He said, with a huge toothy grin. You've saved my, actually **everyone's**, Christmas."

The two Hashers looked at each other, a little blearily. "How do you mean?" Asked one.

The white hare had been looking forward to this bit. "Well, I'm actually a real, though magic, hare from Christmas Land. A bit like you, I lay a Christmas Trail. But it's magic too and for Father Christmas and the reindeer to follow so he can get all the children's presents delivered in time for when they wake up. I'd lost the means to mark the route but you...splendid gentlemen... have shown me how I can do it. Now usually I'd use this flashy thing, "he waved the silver object at their surprised faces, "to make you lose your memory of this but since no-one is going to believe you, I won't. Now, shake my paw, each of you."

The bemused Hashers solemnly stretched out a hand that was taken and firmly shaken. Something warm and furry entered their minds briefly while doing this. The white hare smiled. "Now I know that you," he pointed a paw, "have grandchildren, and you," he pointed again, "have children. There will be a special present for each of them by their beds tomorrow morning. Thank you both and goodbye."

He crunched the last of the carrot and with a theatrical (he just couldn't resist it) "To Christmas Land!" disappeared in a scattering of leaves.

One Hasher looked sheepishly over at the other. "Not a word. Right?"

"Absolutely." Came the reply. They clinked hip flasks, took a draw and set off again through the woods.

The white hare was, quite literally, back in a flash. The remains of the carrot had heard every word and set him down gently next to the Chief Elf to whom the hare explained exactly what he needed. The elfin chain of command is exceptionally efficient (largely due to an element of telepathy and an excellent team spirit) and in no time the white hare's bottomless sack was filled with flour that sparkled and crackled with magic while he stood by it. His special, Christmas magic carrot was brought to him by the youngest elf, who presented it and bowed low. No need to nibble this one, thought the hare. It knows exactly what to do.

"Well done everyone!" The hare shouted at the cheering elves, waving one paw while clutching the carrot and touching the sack with the other. The elves grew silent, knowing what was going to happen. Then, as one mighty voice, called out, "Good King Wenc..." And he was gone.

"... eslas." He was back. Sack empty and elves cheering more loudly than ever. It was curious, he thought, that time-telescoping enchantment thing. I've been everywhere in the world, laying invisible magic flour, yet I'm back here. And only just in time, his mind added. It's dark.

The stamp and clatter of hooves and the liquid ring of jingle bells outside quietened the crowd and a collective "Ohhh!" could be heard. The excited throng filed outside, to be met with the most magnificent sight. Lit by magic and the radiance of the snow against the star-filled sky stood... the sleigh. The reindeer in their silver and red traces snorted eagerly, shaking their antlers. In the rear of the sleigh stood a huge sack, full of the most magnificent children's presents that had been wrapped so carefully by the elves and the dwarves.

Even after all these years the white hare found the sight breathtaking. He stepped forward, nose wrinkling with his own excitement. There would be more than magic in the air on Christmas Eve. A man sat on the sleigh's driving seat, taking the reins in his hands. He was dressed all in red, with white fur trim. The hare was proud to think that every member of his family, for generations, had given a little of their fur when moulting and hare needlemiths had carefully stitched it into the cloth.

The harnesses tightened and the sleigh runners shifted slightly on the crunching snow as the reindeer strained to be off. Father Christmas turned his face towards the Hare's, his eyes twinkling a query. The white hare nodded. Yes, all was ready. The returning smile was radiant, with a friendly 'thank you' now in the eyes. The white hare bowed.

The reins snapped once, twice, and a crackle of magical energy flowed from the reindeer and the sleigh. Gathering pace rapidly across the snow, bells jingling, the animals surged forward. The elves cheered and clapped as the sleigh slid into the sky. Father Christmas leaned to look back at the crowd, waving a scarlet arm and with a laughing, echoing "Merry Christmas" they were gone.

The white hare stared up at the star-bright sky.

Whew! He thought. You ran that one close my lad. I suppose you could say (he smiled) that I laid a Trail... but I didn't make a Hash of it.



Trivia

Last week at the Christmas meal extravaganza, Slapper asked the following trivia conundrum at the Circle. Everyone scratched their heads and looked blank so I thought it might be helpful to (since Slapper kindly sent it to me) publish the answer.

The question was: Dame Maggie Smith turns 80 next week. She is one of only six people to win Oscars for both 'Best Actress' and 'Best Supporting Actress'. Can you name the other five?

Actress	Best Actress Awards	Best Supporting Actress Awards	Total awards	Total nominations
<u>Ingrid Bergman</u>	<u>Gaslight (1944)</u> <u>Anastasia (1956)</u>	<u>Murder on the Orient Express (1974)</u>	3	7
<u>Gate Blanchett</u>	<u>Blue Jasmine (2013)</u>	<u>The Aviator (2004)</u>	2	6
<u>Helen Hayes</u>	<u>The Sin of Madelon Claudet (1931)</u>	<u>Airport (1970)</u>	2	2
<u>Jessica Lange</u>	<u>Blue Sky (1994)</u>	<u>Tootsie (1982)</u>	2	6
<u>Meryl Streep</u>	<u>Sophie's Choice (1982)</u> <u>The Iron Lady (2011)</u>	<u>Kramer vs. Kramer (1979)</u>	3	18
<u>Maggie Smith</u>	<u>The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (1969)</u>	<u>California Suite (1978)</u>	2	6

Up and Coming

Run	Date	Grid Reference	Venue	Hares
1936	28Dec14	<u>SU610624</u>	The Pelican Silchester Road, Pamber Heath RG26 3EA	Spot
Unofficial	01Jan15 12 noon	<u>SU591636</u>	NEW YEARS DAY LIVE TRAIL Paices Hill Country Park , Aldermaston, RG7 4PG On2 Hinds Head , Aldermaston, RG7 4LX	Hamlet
1937	04Jan14	<u>SU625621</u>	The Calleva Arms Little London Road The Common Silchester RG7 2PH	Aqua JJ