



Run Number 537

9th November 2023

Gallagher's, Birkenhead

The Pack: 10secs (Hare), Snoozanne, Mad Hatter, fcuk, OTT, PA, Overdrive, Sticky Rice



Heavy rain was forecast for this evening and the hare had already had one soaking just coming back from the shops with the food, but an intrepid few had turned up – and it was good to see Sticky Rice again after several weeks absence.

Oddly, the pub was lit only by candlelight, possibly so Liverpool supporters could hide their tears as they watched their team beaten by Toulouse. PA remarked that he was shortly off to Lyon to meet his mum. fcuk commented that this was the gastronomic capital of the world, whereupon 10secs, who had a bad memory of eating andouillettes, said sourly "Only if you like boiled tripe". Snoozanne then rather surprisingly boasted that she had eaten tripe all over the world. "And talked it", she added. It turned out that Mexico was one of the many places where she had sampled this delicacy.



Anyway by this time we judged that everyone we expected was here, so we went outside for the photo. The hare explained the markings saying that Hamilton Square was said to have more listed buildings than just about anywhere in the country, and in honour of this the

trail would tour round a selection of Birkenhead's architectural wonders, with an "L" at a check to signal a listed building before the next check. He also promised a couple of "Wimp/Rambo" splits but said that he later realised that he had got it the wrong way round so the Wimp version was actually longer. "So it's a TCU - a total cock-up" said Snoozanne.



But in any case, the Hare added that this was all in the realms of fantasy since almost certainly the recent deluge had removed all the chalk.

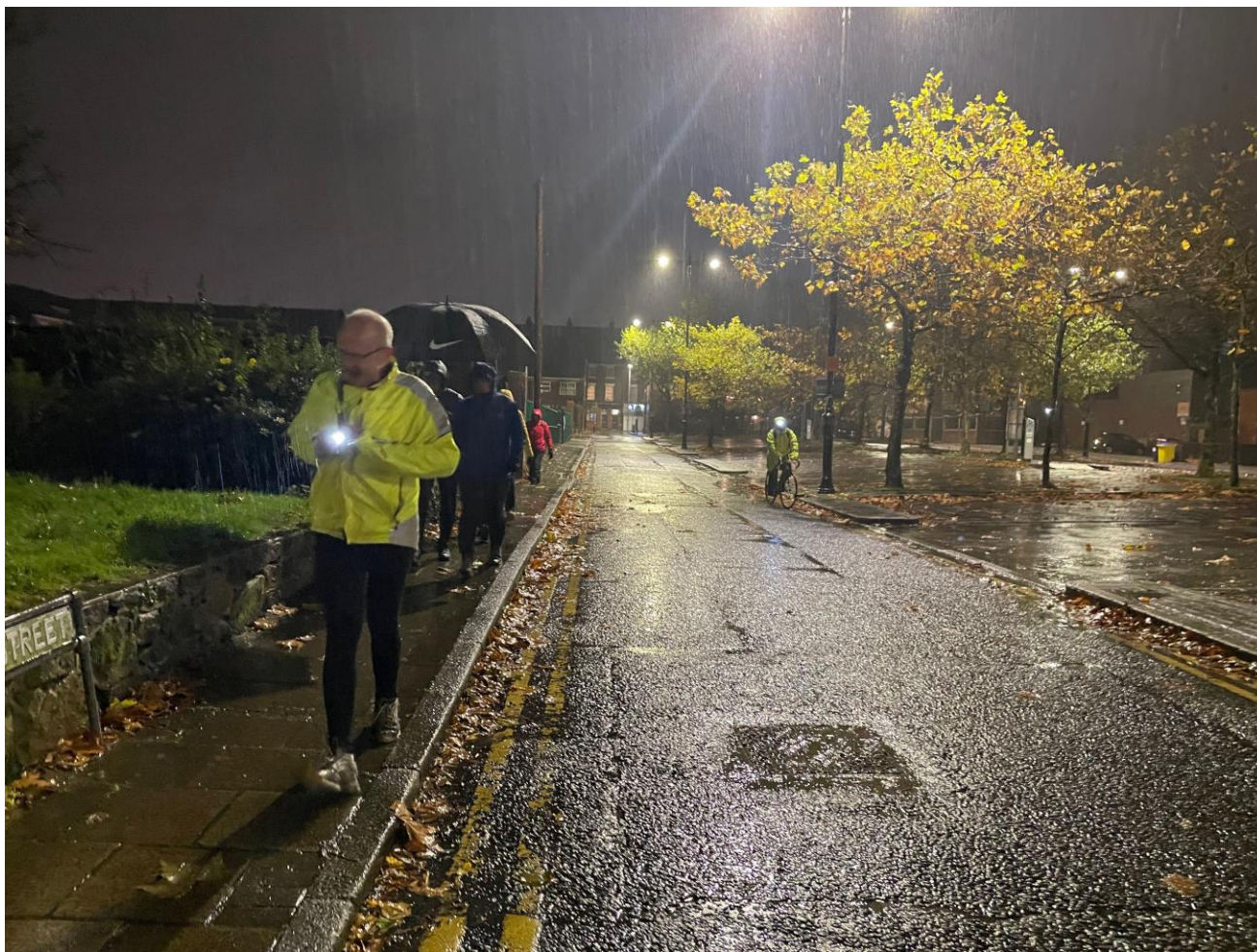


There had been a lull in the rain but as we set off it came on again with a vengeance. Here Mad Hatter is gallantly sheltering the Hare under his umbrella. At this point (about 5 minutes into the run) we passed The Swinging Arm and there were already some hopeful suggestions of a Beer Stop.

But there were listed buildings to see all along Market Street and the Hare insisted on pressing on.



Here is the Hare ruefully pointing out the barely-visible vestiges of a check.



The trail headed towards the Mersey tunnel entrance...



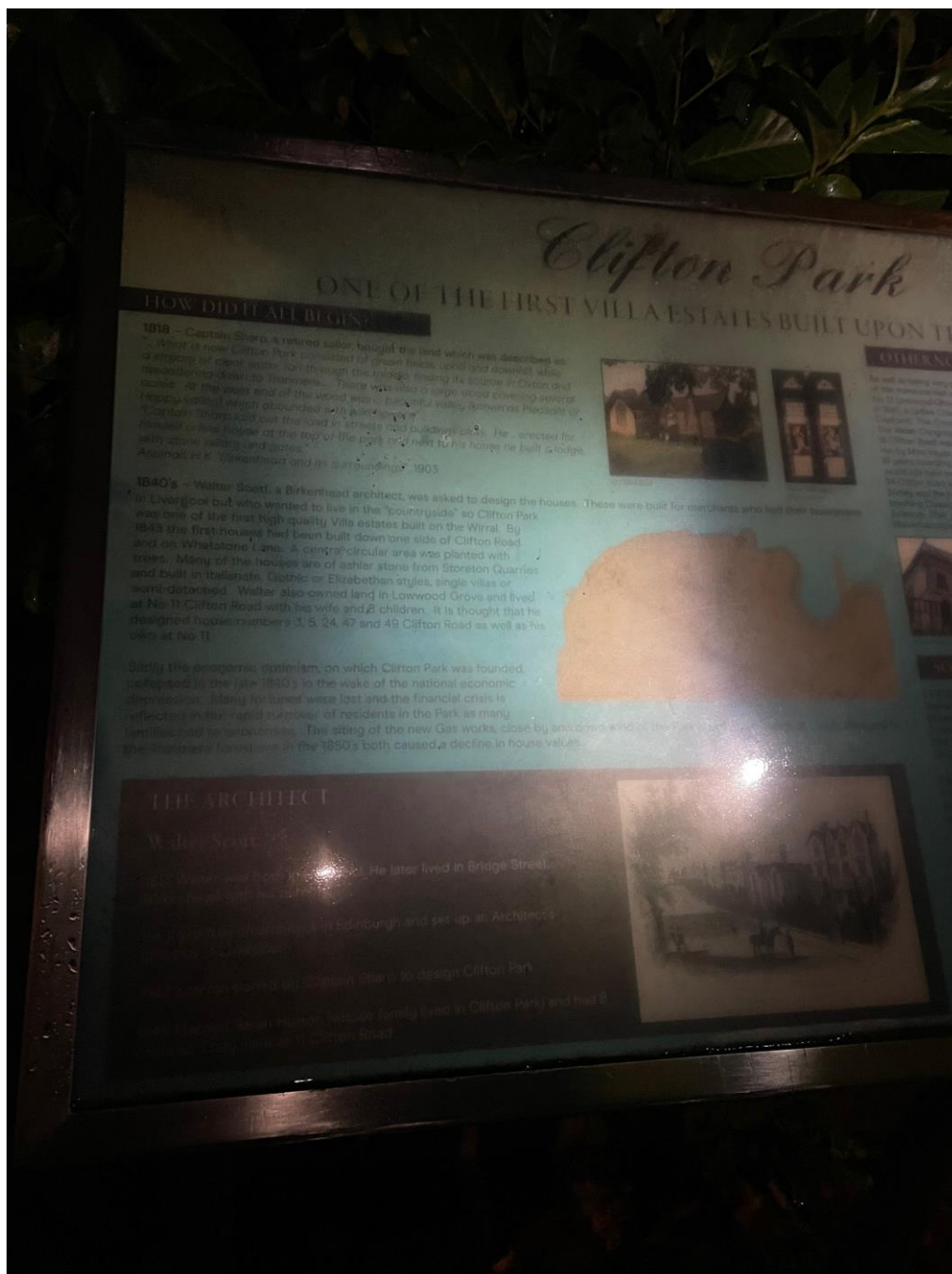
...before cutting through the shopping precinct...



...to emerge at a check (now washed away) by a tempting cut-through.



But in fact the trail led on and up Clifton Street, where almost every building was listed. Many of them were like Italian palazzos and there was an imposing Masonic Temple. Most had been designed by Walter Scott (no relation!)...



...and there was an information board also listing neighbourhood residents such as Wilfrid Owen and F.E. Smith (Lord Birkenhead). But the rain was still pouring down and there was a suggestion to take a photo of the information board for later perusal in the pub. Later research revealed that there were more buildings planned but they stopped selling when a near-by gas-works was built (I vaguely recall the gasometer looming over Central Station many years ago).

Here's some photos showing what we should have seen...





Anyway, the trail led down Whetstone Lane...



...where this time it did take a cut-through, to emerge near the Central Library, also a listed building.



But Overdrive was more interested in the motor-bike shop over the road, where he said he had passed many a happy hour in the past. This itself was quite an imposing building...



...and Mad Hatter spotted the plaque on the wall.



Nearby a check was spotted, which was the only conclusive proof that the Hare had ever actually set a run that day.



Shortly after the Hare announced that there had also been a check here, near the entrance to Birkenhead Park; but the spot was about to be engulfed in fast flowing water. Not even the Hare's mention of various marvels such as one of the world's first cricket pavilions could tempt the pack into the Park; and we set a course heading straight back to the On Inn.



On the way we spotted this pub. Some of us recalled a beer stop there on a run set by Compo. It turns out to have been Run 346 back in 2017 – it seems that Compo had already been setting a nautically-themed run when he happened to spot it.

Luckily the misleading Wimps/Rambo split had also been washed away by now; it was right by The Stork, another old favourite which was now closed though the Hare was sure it had been open earlier in the evening.



And then we were back in Hamilton Square, and luckily by this time the rain had stopped. Snoozanne and Mad Hatter had had the forethought to bring a table, so we set the food out by their car. Someone (Overdrive?) fashioned a handy lantern out of a torch and a water bottle, though early prototypes were prone to crashing down and sweeping food off the table.

fcuk called the circle. He regretted his own failure to sacrifice enough seagulls to ensure dry weather. He said very poetically that lithium was described as white gold and this evening we had been prospectors criss-crossing a wet Birkenhead in a search for the even rarer L in white chalk. Down-downs were awarded to:

The Hare: special mention was made was of his navigational failings in confusing a short cut with a long cut; leading to

Snoozanne: inventing a new Hash acronym, the TCU. She was also commended for her global gastronomic experience in sampling tripe wherever it was to be found.

Sticky Rice: was welcomed back as a returnee.

By this time the thought of heading in to the On Inn to dry off and warm up was taking hold, so most of us headed back to the pub, where at least the lights were back on.