

MTH3 RUN 17- A Tale of Tortoises and Hares and a Dark, Dark Night

Hares: Snoozanne, OTT, plus Slot Machine and One One Eight

Pack: Bacardi Spice, Car Thief, Debbie, Lady Penelope, Peter Pan, Sergeant Pecker, Whinger

Apologies: on the phone with no excuse (its raining! Ahh!) : T-Bag
later with valid excuse (baby-sitting duties): Posh Frock

Before you frantically scroll down looking for photos of yourself looking stupid, I apologise that there aren't any, as they, rather quaintly, are still in the (old-fashioned!) camera. So it just a few words cobbled together this week, very inferior to R. T. Fuct's normal illustrated and annotated masterpieces!

Hares no.1 and no.2, both fit and toned from 5 and 4 hashes in 7 days respectively, were aided and abetted in setting this week by 2 apprentices: Slot Machine and One One Eight, who subsequently became known as 'the Tortoises'. Aware of the need to appeal to a younger age group (the average hasher is 48 apparently!) the Hares were attempting to train these young apprentices in the work-place so they can carry the hashing torch (or rather flour) (or both on a night like tonight!) forward in future years.

The first lesson was on False trails, but this didn't go well as it was soon noticed that they were starting the false only 10 yards from the check. The '2 blobs and you're on ' and 'if you're not on flour you're not on the trail' theories followed, allowing them to save time by not having to put down any 'Fs' (the hares subsequently forgot to tell the pack this variation, which led to disarray later).

The third lesson was 'don't dawdle and hurry back to catch up with the real hares, and don't forget the instructions about where the trail is really going....', they failed miserably here and at one point Hare no. 1 had to retrace her steps for about 500m. to find them milling about, lost.

However their skills improved over the course of the trail and eventually they were given the responsibility of a loop of their own to set while the Hares short-cutted to the pub stop.

Since the trail-setting didn't get started until 5.30p.m. the Tortoises and Hares were late back to the meeting point behind The Town Crier, only to meet Debs walking away along the in-trail and whinging that she thought she was in the wrong place as there was no one else there... Debs, Debs, this hash is an offspring of WCH3 and has inherited its slack tendencies, surely you know that by now...

A pack of 7 gamely showed their loyalty to MTH3 (AP you should be proud!) by turning up in the pouring rain. It can't have rained on an MTH3 run before as Debs

and Sergeant Pecker were totally without any wet-weather gear; however Hare no2 was able to help out from the pile of damp and smelly cagoules she keeps in her boot (that's trunk to you, AP).

The run went pretty well to plan through the back streets of Hoole and along the canal out of town, returning through the Grosvenor Park (fortunately just before the gates were shut- when exactly is dusk anyway?), around the Apprentices' loop along the Dee and on on to the pub stop at The Albion. Despite an arrow and a PS sign the pack didn't spot it at first and ran on round the city walls; this was a very poor example to set to the apprentices. To emphasize how well-hidden it was, Whinger and Lady P admitted that they'd never been there before, despite its reputation in Chester as one of the best real-ale pubs.

By now it was pitch black and the Hares realised they should have had some in-service training themselves on 'Setting a Trail in the Dark'. However the pack was kept together by Hare no. 1 staying at the back, and we made our way via the Town Hall Square, the Walls, and the canal tow-path back to the start.

In the absence of the RA Peter Pan undertook circle duties and attempted some of the requisite songs, even though he could hardly read the words in the dark, and didn't know the tunes either. Sorry, AP, although there were virgins we passed on the 'Cherry' song...

As a qualified vocational assessor, Hare no. 2 was also pleased to announce that the Apprentices had reached the required standard and were awarded NVQ Level 1 in 'The Basic Skills of Trail-laying'. They can now go on to Level 2 to study the intricacies of back checks, regroupings and fish-hooks.

Although it was damp, it was warm enough to sit outside the pub and enjoy a post-run drink. There's certainly scope for another 'run-in-the-dark' in Chester with many warm and welcoming pubs to divert us from the trail on a Thursday night, so look out for the next one. On On!

OTT