



28th April 2016

Run Number 317

The Plough, Queensferry

The Pack: Hansel, OTT (Co-hares), Cleo, 10secs, fcuk, Rebecca

A small but select pack gathered at the pub just by the Ewloe Hill out of Queensferry--the gateway to God's Country according to Hansel, though it was not clear in which direction one went through the gate... It had been raining hard during the afternoon and the Hares feared that the flour might have been washed away, so they promised an exciting innovation—the Audio Hash where blobs of flour would somehow be artfully replaced by audible equivalents. In practice this boiled down to Hansel bellowing “You’re On” where necessary.



Though it would later transpire that another important instruction was displayed on the sign in the background...



The trail led us up the side of the A494 and under an underpass where Cleo was found ruefully surveying a lamppost—apparently having narrowly avoided a repeat of the lamppost/head incident on Run 315. Then (with various degrees of elegance) into a field



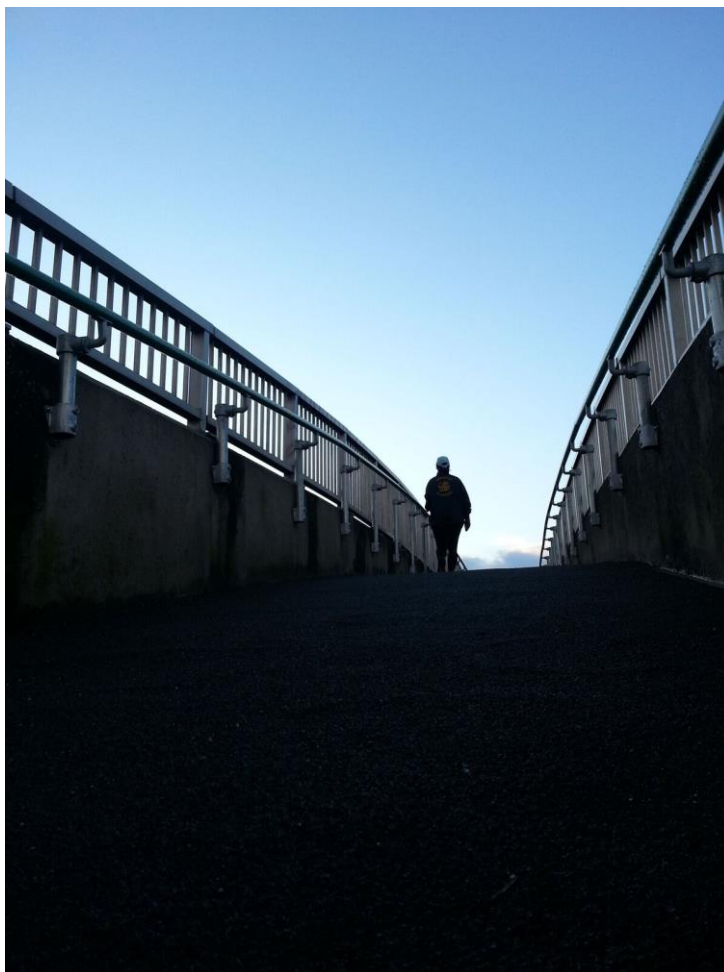
The trail led up a short stretch of disused railway and onto the Hawarden road. Here as we looked in vain for the trail we were passed (several times) by a pedestrian who told us he had been in a Hash in Somerset. After finally finding the trail (following some broad hints from the Hare), we shortly found ourselves in a playground which the hares told us was on the site of an old opencast colliery.



Playground sign



Rebecca can rarely resist the chance to go rock climbing...



Over the A55



The Celtic Twilight

The trail then passed over the dual carriageway and into an increasingly rural landscape. There was also an increasing amount of water and mud on the trail, to the frequent comment from the Hares of “It wasn’t like this this morning”. Many of the markings had indeed disappeared so the audio commentary from the Hares often took a slightly surreal form, eg “You’re “ON” to the right but after a couple of hundred metres you’ll find an invisible checkback”... Soon we were into fields proper, and we passed the spot where the Hares had apparently witnessed a cow giving birth as they set the trail. Then through a farm and over the road and it was hard to ignore the Country Park sign...

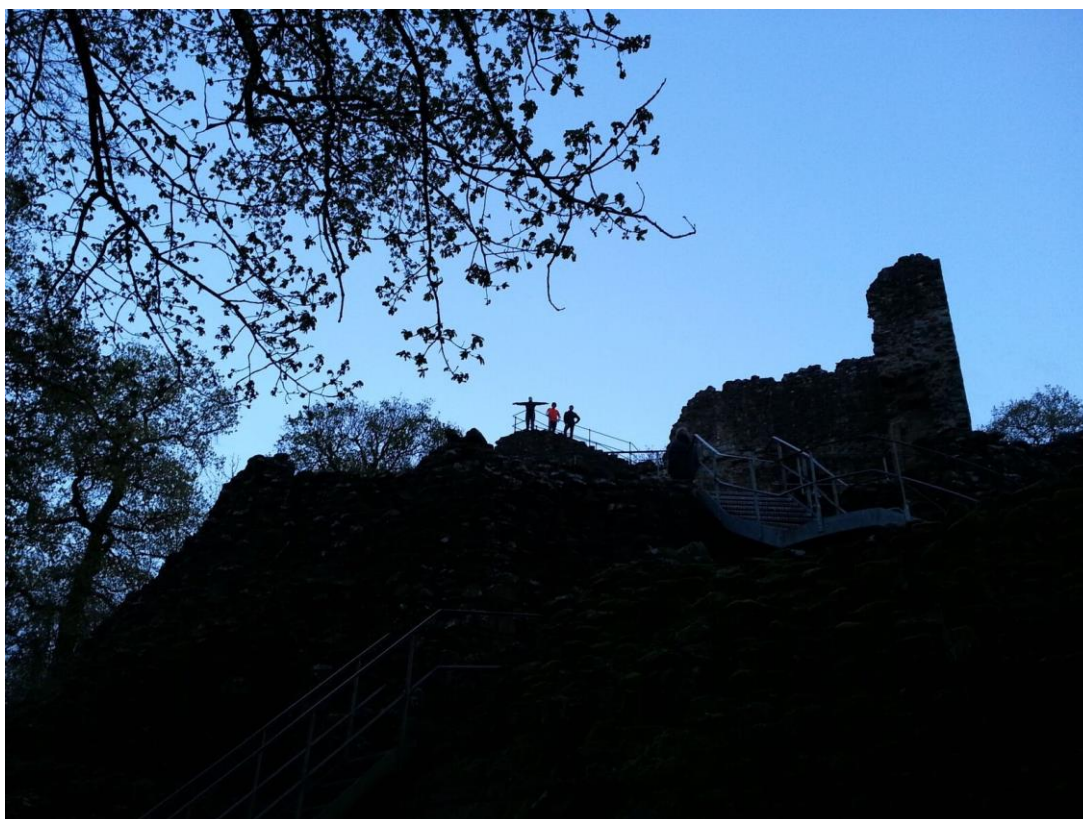




The castle walls

Ancient sandstone walls loomed through the dusk; the Hare informed us that this was Ewloe Castle, built by one of the Prince Llywellyns of Wales. But he had chosen a poor site for defensive purposes, in a valley overlooked by higher ground. Oh well, as they say, it's the fort that counts....

We couldn't resist exploring and found an internal staircase which led to the top of the walls. The Hare continued his historical commentary, informing us that it was on this spot that the Welsh princes would accept the fealty of their retainers; and that it was this very staircase which Compo had bounced down from top to bottom in 2003.



The obligatory “I’m the King of the World” photo

We proceeded on our way through the woodland, the air scented by the swathes of wild garlic. Emerging and crossing a road, we paused at a stile into a field. “Are we supposed to go through that?” someone remarked. What had appeared to be a rustic pond quietly reflecting the last rays of sunlight was in fact a sea of liquid manure. We did indeed have to go through it; though we found a very slightly more solid detour round the edge, and the Hare suggested we regard him as King Wenceslas and follow where he trod. It was not immediately clear how this was going to help. “Deep” maybe, but looking at this soggy expanse of well-trampled poo, the words “crisp” and “even” did not readily spring to mind. In fact the only option appeared to be to follow the instructions implicit on the sign at the beginning of the run... So to the accompaniment of a fair amount of squeaking as the slurry penetrated shoes, socks, trousers etc, we made it across. By this time it was getting fairly late and fairly dark, and as we crossed a further field the black clouds which had been rolling in for some time finally arrived and unleashed a prolonged flurry of hail. There was little demur at the suggestion that we should make a beeline for the On Inn, which we accordingly did.

Here we found that the Hares had laid on some delicious home-made leek soup and bara brith, both of which were very welcome. The advantages of a smallish pack suddenly became apparent as we were able to scoff the lot.





We enjoyed the leek soup so much that the last remnants were eked out for the downs, awarded to:

The Hares: Excellent trail, especially the audio accompaniment, though not enough shiggy.

Hansel: For a Senior Moment in addressing Rebecca as Roberta for a fair portion of the run (and Roberta, I mean Rebecca, for answering to this name).

Cleo: It was noted that after a slip in the mud, the resultant pattern of mud and flour on her nether regions uncannily matched the markings on one of the many Hereford cattle which we had passed on the run.

We then retired to the pub, for a conversation ranging over potential future celebrations for 10 years, 350th run etc, the nutritional qualities of Monster snacks and the intricacies of the Welsh language.