



10th November 2016

Run Number 332

The Little Owl, Chester

The Pack: Auntieyclone (Hare), Overdrive, Cleo, 10secs, VR, fcuk, Carthief, Compo, Snoozanne, OTT, Hansel, Victim



The eponymous owl

It had been raining and indeed hailing very heavily during the last couple of days but Auntie had made a steward's inspection of the course and promised us a short and shaggy-free (or was that shiggy-free?) trail; and it looked like being a fine evening whatever might be underfoot. We were all glad to see VR make a welcome return after many weeks absence.



After the usual group photo we were off, first along the by-pass



And then inevitably along the canal heading north



And eventually back onto Parkgate Road





The rain had made some of the markings a little obscure (see photo above) and the hare was obliged to go, well, haring off after part of the pack who had missed one of the checks. The real trail led over the fields towards the Countess of Chester Hospital and then once again over the fields (where the eye of faith really was required to see any flour in the wet grass).



We can't say we weren't warned...

We then crossed the main Liverpool Road and headed up Upton Road. The Chester residents started talking hopefully about the shortest route back past the Upton golf course, but Auntie still had a trick or two up his sleeve. We veered away north, and then started heading back along Heath Road but that was only a feint and we then made another wide sweep around via Gatesheath Drive and Wealstone Lane before definitively heading for home along Neston Drive and Bache Drive. Even then there was one final little flourish, over the railway to find the On Inn outside Morrisons car park—accompanied by a hieroglyph which we were assured had once been a picture of an owl.



Back in the pub car park the food was deployed, with the welcome novelty of a panettone cake which was ravenously torn into tiny pieces by the hungry horde. The circle was then called; though it proved impossible to prevent Compo first telling a few from his inexhaustible collection of owl jokes-e.g. "What do you get if you cross an owl with a cockerel?" to which the answer is "A cock which stays up all night". And yes there were indeed some hoots of laughter.

Down downs were awarded to:



Fcuk—for faulty equipment; the RA claimed that fcuk had lent her a broken torch but upon production of the evidence it proved to work perfectly. A down-down was thereupon awarded to the RA as well, for false accusation.



VR—for lost property; on her last appearance several months ago she had left a tin containing a cake-encrusted knife in the RA's custody. Once again this rebounded somewhat as it turned out the RA had left the evidence at home.



The hare: the trail was deemed too short and he was also taken to task for his understanding of the phrase “no shiggy” in the light of the generally wet and muddy nature of several parts of the trail.
(He e-mailed a picture the following morning showing what he meant by real shiggy.)



OTT, Victim, fcuk, Cleo: shortcutters



Don't you step on my blue suede shoes (and definitely don't pour beer on them...)

Carthief: he claimed he was not wearing new shoes but the evidence above speaks for itself.

Victim: he gave as his excuse for producing a set of dirty beer cups the claim that "the top one looked clean". He also revealed that he has been recovering from plantar fasciitis. At first we assumed this meant he had had a dodgy greek meal, but in fact it is an affliction of the foot, also known as "policeman's heel" (it says on Wikipedia...often reported in conjunction with so-called "suspect's head").

Hansel: FRB-ing in completely the wrong direction.

We then retired to the pub where we caused consternation in the staff by producing a whole series of free beer vouchers; Compo's description of the manager as a "happy laddie" proved to be nautical slang rather than an accurate picture of his sunny disposition. If ever proof were needed that the pack needs new blood, it was then provided by the first half hour of conversation which turned on the iniquities of the current pension system.

Eventually it turned to lighter matters though, such as whether Auntie had persuaded his partner to cycle 10 miles to the pub in the dark so she could drive him back home in the car (I think this turned out to be untrue, though the actual travel arrangements were far too complicated to understand or remember). We also remembered too late that at the last run in Chester OTT and Hansel had been awarded down-downs in absentia after being caught in flagrante on the same night, dressed up to the nines and going into a near-by restaurant.