



**Coronavirus Virtual “Run” Number 428  
16<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

**Living rooms across Merseyside, North Wales, Grantham, and Julich**

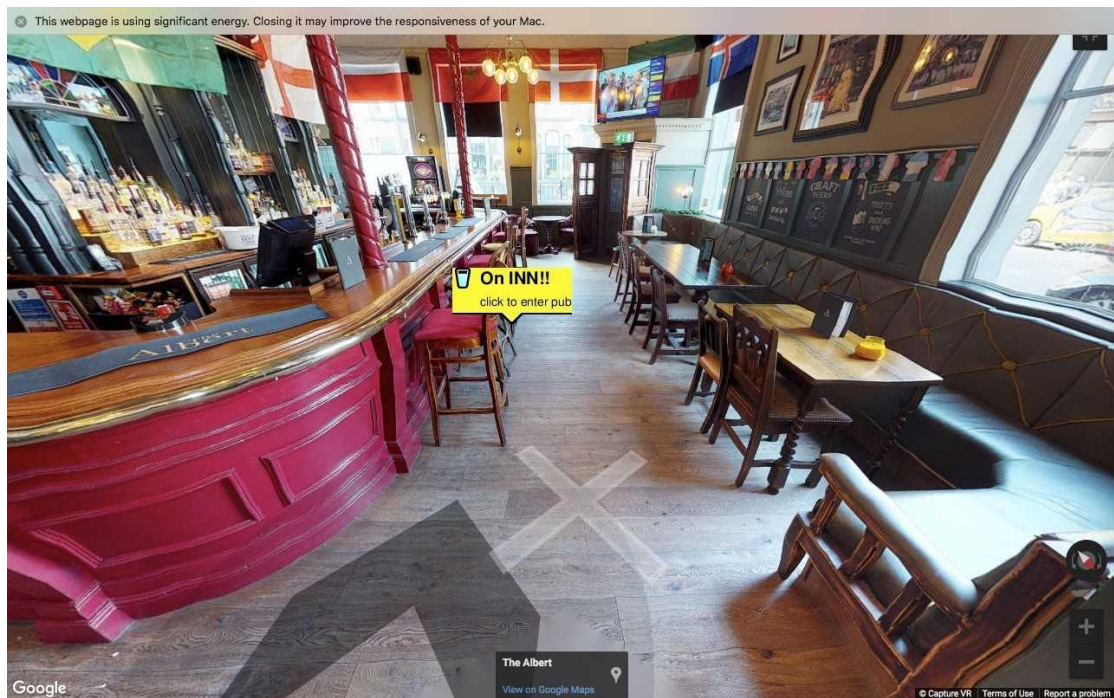
**The Pack:** Austin Powers (Hare), Compo, Snoozanne, Mad Hatter, Eccles, Overdrive, Cleo, 10secs, ET, Brookside, SMS, Grasshopper, BS, fcuk, OTT, Hansel, Carthief, JSL, Victim, Bimbo, Grutel, VR

This was the third of our virtual Coronavirus special runs, and a record turnout.





Austin Powers had promised us a real virtual trail if that's not a contradiction in terms; and he had really excelling himself in writing the code in conjunction with Google Street View. After clicking on the link he provided, we found ourselves looking at the view from the start of the trail, St Michaels station. Blobs of flour were indicated by yellow markers and checks by red markers with circles, falsies by red markers with crosses. It took a while to get the hang of movement and navigation (the experience depended on whether you were on a laptop or a tablet, and it took me a few panic-stricken minutes to get the markers to appear...) but it quickly became an astonishingly immersive experience. Grand Theft Auto had better look to its laurels... You could hear from the cries of excitement and despair that everyone was getting equally involved. "Should I be on St Michaels Street Road?" "I've just got stuck behind a bin lorry" "I can't get out of this cul de sac!" "I've just come to the park!" "Yes that's right, we're at the Beer Stop!" "I can't get past this bloody woman with a push chair!" etc. As time went by there were accumulating whoops as everyone found the Beer Stop which was a yellow sign on a rockery in Sefton Park. By this time Snoozanne and Mad Hatter had already announced that they were at the On Inn, admitting that they had used local knowledge. No pun intended, maybe... No doubt Mad Hatter had stopped to pick up some virtual chips on the way... Eventually most people had made it to the Beer Stop, though Grutel, BS and Brookside had retired injured due to insurmountable technical challenges, and OTT and Hansel hadn't yet made it to the park. The rest of us carried on, since time was marching on; I think by this time we were already on our second Zoom meeting slot of the evening. The big hurdle turned out to be the Eros statue where there was a 5-way check. The onward trail proved to be a slightly sneaky minor path (I think this was where the woman with the pushchair got in the way too...). Front runners such as fcuk and Overdrive dished out helpful hints to the stragglers and eventually everyone made it out of the park. A check was found by the turning to Lark Lane. By this time it was no secret that the On Inn was the Albert and the yellow marker could be seen in the near distance. Approaching and clicking on this, you found yourself inside.



At first everyone else appeared to be hiding...



...though soon they all emerged. Even OTT and Hansel had made it by now.



After a pause for the 8pm Thursday clap, Overdrive convened the circle. Down downs were awarded to:



The Hare for an excellent and very inventive trail. No doubt his program will be in great demand by subsequent hares. Even after the lockdown is over – after all, it never rains in virtual reality...



Everyone joined in raising a glass to his efforts.



...and notice that Hovercrap had made a brief appearance...



Snoozanne and Mad Hatters: Shortcutters (they claimed they were just enforcing social distancing...)

Returnees: JSL, Victim, Bimbo (who said she was completing a job application with the aid of a glass of prosecco) and Grutel (who by this time had come and gone)



The technologically challenged: BS, OTT, Hansel, Brookside, Grutel, and probably most of us at one point or another...

By this time the allotted Zoom meeting slot was nearly over and indeed we were cut off as we raised a final glass...