



**SOMERSET THIRSTDAYS
HASH HOUSE HARRIERS**

Run Number 479

2nd September 2021

The Masonic, Garston

The Pack: fcuk (Hare), Cleo, 10secs, ET, AE, SMS, Grasshopper, BS, Gill, Grutel, SF, Glad Rags, Sticky Rice, Eugene, Liam, Ruth, Esther



This would have been Compo's birthday run and we knew he had planned to set a trail in L24, which as usual signified $L=50+24=74$. fcuk had nobly stepped in to create an appropriate run. We gathered outside the Masonic, joined for a while by Hannah who had dropped Ruth and Esther...



...and took this undercover photo before driving off.

There was no beer in the pub, or at least no real ale, but that aside it was a welcoming venue as would become even more apparent later.



The hare deputed 10secs to carry the pink(ing?) shears to deal with the promised scrambling; also AP's homemade RA helmet which AP had bemoaned as lost during the "Compo circle" but which had been unearthed in 10secs' office; and which could be awarded to mark any transgressions en route. The hare then explained the markings. Some were in chalk and some (in a bid to placate dog walkers) would be in shredded paper rather than suspicious white powder. All was plain sailing until he drew three lines and said "Does anyone recognise this?" "It's a triangle!" someone exclaimed proudly. But it was more than this – it was a "Chico hook"! Any FRB encountering this would have to stand on one leg until the rest of the pack caught up.

And they were off.



The trail led down past the NHS Centre...



...to the first Chico hook. Then under the main dual carriageway and towards the wasteland near the docks.



Here Ruth found the second Chico hook. From here the trail led up the bank in the background.



Here the shredded paper took over but in a disturbing Blair Witch style twist, someone had been setting fire to it. Near here there was a regroup at the end of an embankment with sweeping views over the Mersey. From here the first of the promised scrambly bits led down to a dry channel, presumably once part of the docks.



Exploring here led to various bits of old playground equipment. This photo was taken shortly before the old trampoline catapulted 10secs sideways through the air. Extricating himself from the trampoline framework he decided to nominate himself the first recipient of the RA helmet.

Meanwhile the rest of the pack had found the correct trail heading up the bank on the other side; but most had gone too far and were chided by the hare for missing the huge regroup sign in the middle of the “helipad” as he called it – a large circular area of concrete. Here there was a “wimps and rambos” split.



Most of the pack elected to be rambos and after dropping off a hidden wall found themselves forging through a very tangled area of undergrowth,



and then climbing another wall to escape. Sadly 10secs had forgotten he had the shears by this time as they would have been very handy.



BS deploys her famous double V-sign

Emerging into civilisation again we skirted between abandoned factories and terraced housing...



...until 10secs came across his second Chico hook of the run. By this time, standing on one leg appeared to be infectious.



Glad Rags found another Chico hook and passed the time waiting for the rest of the pack by performing some traditional dancing – who knew she was such an expert in the Highland fling 😊?



...and here she can be seen, still at her post waiting for the stragglers.



The trail then took a right alongside a huge area of wasteland which appeared to have once been one enormous factory – a tannery, Gill said.



Emerging on Blackburne Street, the trail at first appeared to head along the road...



...but there was actually a well-concealed path just across the road.

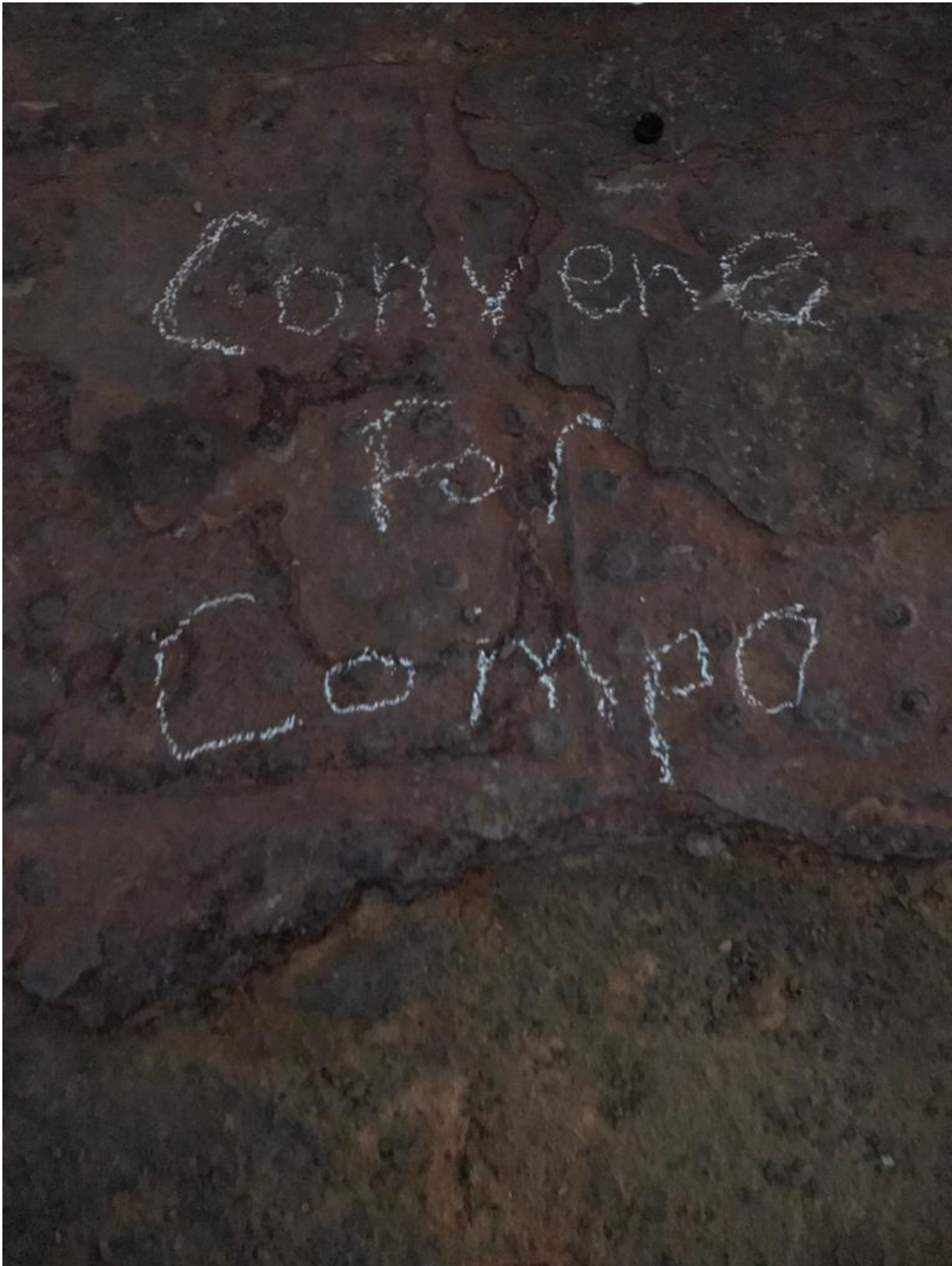


This headed down to the river where there was a final scramble up to a grassed over metallic structure...



...which looked like it may have been the remains of a ship. However, further research indicates it may be the remains of a ship-breakers' jetty. See for instance:

<https://www.webbaviation.co.uk/aerial/picture.php?/29365>



fcuk had chosen this as a fitting nautical location for a toast to Compo and marked the exact place overlooking the river.





A SAILOR'S PRAYER

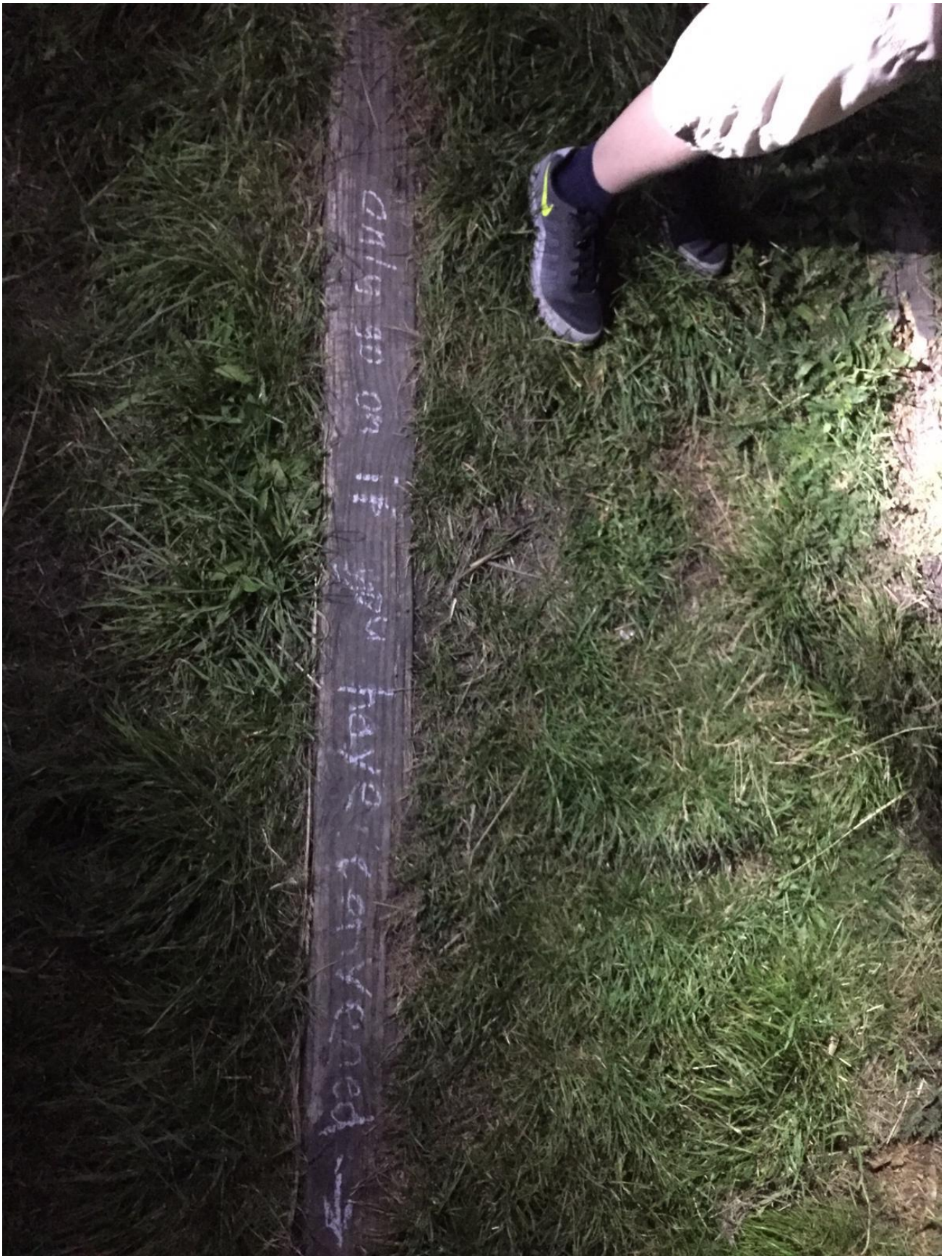
Now I lay me down to sleep,
Pray the Lord my gear to keep;
Grant no other Sailor 'll take
Shoes or socks before I wake.
Lord, please guard my slumber,
Keep my hammock on its number;
May no clews or lashings break
And let me down before I wake.
God, protect me in my dreams,
Make this better than it seems,
And in the morning let me wake
Breathing scents of sirloin steak.
Grant the time may go on skates
'Till I reach the dear old States
And that snowy feather bed,
There I long to lay my head,
Far away from all these scenes
And the smell of half baked beans.
Take me back unto that land
Where they don't scrub down with
sand;
Where no demon typhoon blows,
Where the women wash my clothes.
God, Thou knowest all my troubles—
From scrubbing decks to pushing
shovels;
O, Lord, take me safely home
And I promise the seas no more to
roam,

Amen!

At this point Overdrive who was at a conference in Oxford was summoned into our midst by the magic of Zoom and recited a Sailor's Prayer in memory of Compo. Finally fcuk produced the rum which had been provided by Cleo and poured a tot for each of us – except Overdrive, not even Zoom has a Share Drink option. As we raised our glasses he asked us to remember Compo and also other loved ones who had passed away this year and at this time in past years.



We were now instructed to retrace our steps as far as the path junction, and there turn right rather than straight on the way we had come. The scrambly bit was even harder to negotiate on the way back, especially since by this time torches were required. Even on the fairly level path after this, there was a muffled oath and Grutel disappeared from view but clambered to his feet none the worse for wear.



only go on if you have recovered

A gate finally brought us into the L24 area; the constraints of selecting a suitable starting point having meant that most of the run had been in L19. The hare had made sure to set a portion of the onward trail in L24, with a sign to make sure that earlier FRBs did not stray this way (see above); but time was now marching on and the hare decided to introduce some shortcuts. Even so, Grutel was at risk of missing his train and so set off back for the On Inn, accompanied by SMS and Grasshopper who had his coat in their car. Round about this point the hare started giving us a quick virtual tour of the things we were missing by short cutting – in Grutel’s case “a lovely green oasis in the middle of the industrial estate”. The rest of us carried on; shortly the hare was inviting to admire a large area of subsidence in the pavement. Was this the lovely oasis? In any case, we were promised that the best was yet to come.



And so it was...soon we were approaching the Plaza Hotel, which had once been the old airport buildings and where a couple of vintage planes were parked on the tarmac. As someone said, they looked quite eerie in the last rays of sunlight, the more so as from certain angles there appeared to be spectral lights in the interior.



Going around the hotel we were quite soon on the main road into Liverpool and passing the old Match Works, now a climbing wall. fcuk introduced a further short cut, though the virtual tour was limited to something like “housing estate, church, bit of road” which didn’t sound as appealing as the “green oasis”. So we all took the shortcut and quite soon were back at the On Inn. Here the landlord Tony very readily agreed to let us use the outside tables for our Down-downs and even (I think) switched on the outside lights specially for us. Some of us went inside to buy some drinks while AE brought out a sumptuous spread of hash food and Cleo brought out her delicious St Lucia cake, based on bananas and pineapple and made according to a vegan recipe. We made short work of all this ...



...as can be seen (or rather no longer seen) in the photo; and then fcuk donned the RA helmet and convened the circle.

He reminded us once again that it was Compo's birthday run, and gave us a couple of nautical sermons in honour of the occasion.

The sea captain and the punk rocker with a Mohican

An old sea captain was sitting on a bench near the wharf when a young man walked up and sat down. The young man had spiked hair and each spike was a different colour ... green, red, orange, blue, and yellow.

After a while the young man noticed that the captain was staring at him.

"What's the matter old timer, never done anything wild in your life?"

The old captain replied, "Got drunk once and married a parrot. I was just wondering if you were my son!"

A colourful crash

A boat carrying red paint crashed into a boat carrying blue paint and the crew were marooned.

Opinions varied on whether Compo himself had ever given us these sermons, but as fuck read them it was certainly easy to imagine Compo relating them and having a hearty chuckle.

Time was by now running out since people had trains to catch, and so the down-downs were somewhat curtailed. But the hare was nominated (there were comments about the run being too short). BS was nominated for "enjoying a trip" at one point in the run, and she was invited to show us her injuries. SMS nominated SF for "unannounced builder's bum" while climbing over the wall near the helipad; with the disquieting implication that he would have welcomed the display if only he'd had some warning.