

Ride 448 Report – 05 May 2013

A Piss-up in the Jungle Ride!

Hares: Hashbrew and Back Entrance

Location: Jalan Bahtera off Lim Chu Kang

The area promised to be good; it was just a question of whether Hash Brew would make it round or have to have the rangers sent in to recover him. In the event, Roger was well on top of his game, but others, including his better half were not.

Having checked on Google maps the exact whereabouts of Jalan Bahtera, I could see that it was slightly to the right of where I turn left off Neo Tiew Road on the Kranji Loop road bike course, if that sounds clear. A mere inch on the screen; a doddle, no problem to ride there. So there I am en route to the ride on a very hot morning, thinking that once I have passed the open road section of Lim Chu Kang (the bit that doubles up as an aeroplane runway in the event that the Japanese cheat again and invade Singapore by mountain biking down through Malaya instead of invading by sea – (I know that will be lost on everyone below the age of 45), just a few hundred meters and I will be at the run site. Having reached Neo Tiew Road junction, things occur to you that you have never thought about before. For instance, it never dawns on you when you reach the junction coming the other way DOWNHILL on Neo Tiew Road, that when you look right each time to check for oncoming lorries with half asleep drivers checking the SMS messages that it is quite a long steep hill. Just what you want before the mountain bike hash. The second thing you realise is that Jalan Bahtera on Google maps is not one inch from the junction; it is nearer 5 inches (the Froggie contingent and associated EU partners will have to do the conversions). The map shows a gated road that enters army land and is closed, but in fact it isn't. After beginning to think that I actually would be fending off the Japanese before long, I reached the ride site somewhat more knackered than I had intended.

Not much of a crowd yet, but already the antics are beginning. It is the norm of the Bike Hash for Crash of the Day to take place during the ride. On this occasion, one of the newbies was testing out his bike and tried out a new alternative technique to brakes to stop his bike. This technique basically consisted of riding into the side of a car then collapsing in a heap by the side of it. Very spectacular and impressive but somehow I don't think the Shimano sHare price is going to suffer. There was some pathetic whining about a broken front brake or such like but nobody was listening above the hoots of derision. Lars had arrived with his 29er bought through the agency of Stiffy. The trouble with these incentive driven arrangements is quality control. With 5 minutes to go before kick-off, all the gear cogs fall off the bike in a heap. Needless to say, this is not a problem providing you have special tool XVTUH37865, available from all stockists of this tool, or else, according to agent Stiffy, all you need is a rubber band. Did he have one? Judging by the fact that Lars was not seen again, draw conclusions.

Eventually, the bike crowd had assembled and the Hares told us that the ride would be on paper and chalk. Off we set down roads that, for some reason, the military had sent bulldozers to widen over recent weeks. This took us to the adventure park area and into a ride that was characterised by looping off roads, much of which seemed similar and gave you the feeling that you had been here before. At certain points this was true as we came across previously traversed trail a few times but fortunately, the pack was above average IQ this time and a major FU was avoided and my (and Lars') life time award of biggest Hash FU remains intact. The trail was mostly open though we did venture into some jungly area which may have been rideable once, but was quite wet and slippery when we went through and most had to contend with pushing their bikes. About half way round, rain began to fall, which was more an irritation than a hindrance. We eventually came out to the junction on Lim Chu Kang road where the scribe had particular difficulty in dealing with the road curb and toppled over, right in front of Hash Flash. At this point, Fat Crashing Bastard began having an attack of Touretts Syndrome, banging his handlebars and shouting, Fuck, Fuck, Fuck, Fuck, Fuck, Fuck, Fuck...!!!! At first I thought this was a form of Morse code for the sexually repressed, but in actual fact, if you look this phrase up in the Bike Hash Guide to Bicycle Repairs it translates as "I have a puncture".

It seemed some while before the circle got underway. In the meantime, it was becoming apparent that on a relatively uncomplicated trail there were still people not back. How can this be, it was quite straight forward, who could possibly be lost? At this point Hash Brew's phone rings. After a brief pause, "Well where are you!?" The look that came over his face, recognisable to all married men, was clearly one that said, it's the wife, what has she screwed up this time. A clearly dejected Hash Brew, buckled up again and went off in search of his better half. This was all quite intriguing as Fiona had indicated that she was going to ride up and down the in trail (or is it out trail?) road from the ride site 50 times and not stray. How she got into the Ulu is still a mystery.

Meanwhile the circle carried on without a key Hare. Back Entrance was on downed for his role in the day's events. Crash of the day went to Lawrence and the Scribe. There were a few charges brought for misdemeanours real or imagined, amongst which, Stiffy was charged for his Captain Mainwaring reaction to some heavy vehicle noise at a check, "Tanks, tanks, take cover, take cover". Probably the Japanese coming down the East coast again. The missing riders began appearing from all directions and Hash Brew came up the road from a different direction. "Where's Fiona?" "She's following..." spoken in monotone, resigned fashion that meant there's nothing I can do about it.

The circle over, everyone departed for the On On at Choa Chu Kang, at which point an almighty thunderstorm started. If you were in a car, this was not so much of a problem outside of the normal practice of Singapore drivers crashing the moment a few drops of rain hit the windscreen. But this downpour would have had Noah polishing his surfboard. If you were on a bike as Ditch, myself and another newbie were, it was like riding through the rapids. When we reached the airstrip at Lim Chu Kang, the surface water was 3 or 4 inches deep and the thunder and lightning show was in full flow. Open road, surface water, lightning, ideal conditions for conductivity experiments. There was another rider in front of us but this twat was riding in the middle of the road. When I eventually caught up with Ditch the rain was beginning to abate but still quite heavy. Eventually, we reached the restaurant where a few beers and some very tasty Chinese food ordered by the Hares was never more welcome.

Verdict: Great ride, full of entertainment.

Scribed by,
Wan King

(No map this time.....)