

Ride 459 Report – 15 December 2012

The Christmas Ride!

Hares: Time, Two Nipple Action, T I Joe, Whorenet

Location: Pulau Ubin

It has just been announced that the 12.55 flight to Heathrow, London will now be leaving at 14.00 due to engineering maintenance. Well that's an encouraging start to the hols. So ever the stiff upper lip, how to turn adversity to advantage - write a ride report.

Planning is clearly the key to success so instead of going to the previous Bike Hash event around the Dover Road area a few weeks back, I decided it would be a good idea to ride to Changi Village from Clementi, to check that all would be O.K. for the Xmas Ride on Pulau Ubin. This would also mean I could ensure that my route was clear and determine how long it would take to get to Changi Village on the day. When I arrived at Changi Village I ate my Roti Prata breakfast with relish (Changi is one of the few places in Singapore where Roti is cooked properly, unlike the crispy biscuit crap they cook in most places) and then proceeded to catch the ferry. I checked the car park to make sure nobody had turned up for the Pulau Ubin ride on the wrong day and was equally relieved to find no Bike Hashers queuing up for the ferry. Arriving at what would be the designated ride site I was the only Bike Hasher there. Excellent, nobody had been stupid enough to turn up on the wrong weekend. Reconnoitring the Pulau Ubin bike trail (in case the Hares used this) I found it to be in excellent condition, though quite slippery in parts, and thought the double black diamond rock garden may be a bit challenging for some if it was to be used. Satisfied that all would be well for the Xmas Ride on Pulau Ubin, I set off across the waters back to Changi Village and cycled the 32km home. The Xmas special should turn out to be plenty of fun.

Come the day, I had arranged to ride to Changi again with new member Matt. I forgot about putting Christmas bling on the bike, which was probably just as well as there is bound to be a license needed for riding a bike adorned like a reindeer. On the same basis and with regard to the old Chinese adage, if it has four legs eat it, we could have been run over and taken home for the pot. Lastly, but not least, we would pass within spelling distance of Little India and goodness knows what would crack off in the ghetto should a reindeer inadvertently run over a pissed Indian national.

Although Matt was complaining of a late night party hangover, it didn't stop him blasting along to Changi, so we arrived at 8.40am with ample time for the obligatory Roti Prata breakfast, which was yet again, excellent. Replete with ghee, flour and condensed milk tea we headed for the ferry which, I am glad to say, Hashers had remembered the correct day and were queuing for a bum boat. By kick off time were almost 40 riders, a great turnout for Christmas. Enter the Hares, Whorenet, T I Joe and Time, the former bleeding down one leg (ominous) who then explained how the ride would be on paper, chalk and every conceivable colour of tape, except tape with red and white stripes. An oral examination then took place and only those riders who could remember the precise instructions were then allowed to start the ride.

And so the pack set off, heading towards the jetty, negotiating the hordes of people who had crossed the water and were now blocking the way while deciding on what brakeless bike they would hire and wobble around the island roads on. Fortunately, nobody was killed and no riots ensued but the pack headed for the protection of the police station nevertheless. From the beginning confusion struck as the front riders headed straight past the pineapple garden into the forest zone, while the rest of the pack stopped as the cry, "Roger has found a piece of paper" rang out. Meanwhile the front riders had also picked up on coloured tape, not red and white, and were rapidly heading the waters edge. I found myself caught between the two groups and was expecting the main pack to come trundling along the trail but this did not materialise. Catching up the front riders as they encountered a T-check, more coloured tape was picked up on a trail forking off the main track.

The main pack had still not materialised by this time leading the front riders to wonder what the problem was.

The front pack of about 10 riders pushed into some great bits of jungle trail and road tracks, interspersed by numerous off trail sections that invariably ended up with T-checks. The Hares had warned us that various developments over the last year had curtailed some of our favourite riding sections leading to constraints on where they could go, so these abridged off road sections were difficult to avoid. This was a pity as I can remember how last year these trails linked up to great effect. The wild life was active with Goes Both Ways claiming a bee had stung her on the bum. Coo Chee Coo was not with the group so this may have actually been a bee. By this point we beginning to suspect that every diversion off the main trail would end in a T-check, especially if it went into trees and the tendency was to check ahead for paper before heading back to go down the trail, a tactic that took us past a big black snake to a point in the road that had Regroup and numerous arrows chalked out. Nevertheless, some riders still went down the false trail and exited further down the road oblivious of the regroup point.

Probably the most confusing part was a section that had us skirting the lake edges for some time where the paper ran out with seemingly no alternative way out. A tenacious Ditch checked back and found that paper continued the other side of a wire fence. A local fisherman showed that the easiest way of negotiating this obstacle was to wade across the tidal gully filling your boots with silty mud. This trail was fast and fun and eventually brought us out near to home as after a bit more riding we spilled out onto the netball court we had started from. 15km had been covered and still no sign of the main pack.



I decided to go and check out the beginning of the ride again to see where the paper had gone and see why the main pack had not been with us. Riding past the police pondok there was a piece of toilet paper lying on the right hand side leading to an entrance gate to nowhere rideable. Curiously, heading out towards the pineapple garden, as I looked back over my left shoulder I could see another piece of toilet paper hanging from a branch. This also led nowhere so there seemed no way to go other than forwards and along the trail that the front riders took.

Heading back to the netball court, the other front riders had vanished. It turned out that the 15km was not enough so they went and did the mountain bike trail. Apparently, part of the main pack also got confused and found themselves doing the mountain bike trail as well. Not knowing if the pack had arrived and taken to the boats or were still out on the trail, I headed to the jetty to get a boat back and head for Charlie's restaurant. A place that everyone knew except me; judging by the response before we set off on the ride. Wandering up and down the Changi Village Road, a small bill board at the junction said that Charlie's was at Block 2. Block 2 seemed to be the bus station with hawker stalls. Hmm, Christmas lunch is really going to be something! I managed to get through to Copy Cat who said that the pack were still on Ubin and were heading back on boats now. At last, the pack was found.

T I Joe was first off the ferry and Hash Brew also arrived and hurried to his car to provide the drinks. First question from Hash Brew was where is Charlie's? It turned out that it was behind Block 2 so the logistics of how to get the beer there without giving up the car parking space (which were in heavy demand) had to be worked out. Ditch did a great job commandeering a trolley and promising to return it to the restaurant.

Everyone eventually made it to Charlie's restaurant where the circle was called. Virgins Rollet and Jerome were called in. The Hares came in and were congratulated on their efforts, even if confusion reigned. There was hardly a scratch to be seen for Crash of the Day so Goes Both Ways was on downed for Sting of the Day. I was charged with going to the wrong run site the previous ride, a totally unfounded and fabricated accusation and a slur on my impeccable character. Coo Chee Coo also brought two charges; I think this was aimed at Too Easy for her injurious bike tricks recently and FCB, well for being FCB. I forget what the other charge was for. The GM was charged for assuming that everyone knew where Charlie's was; not the case.

Lunch was a Christmas special of everything from burgers to breaded fish and chips. Although there are arguably plenty of turkeys on the Bike Hash, there was not an edible one in sight. Before the mains were served, the GM announced the awards for the year. Tinsel Tits got best Singapore ride for the year, Slocum and Jack Off for best non Singapore ride and also the best On On award. Yours truly got best scribe award (only to ensure I did an Xmas write up) and Back Entrance, Copy Cat and I got crony awards.

As usual, this year's riding has been great fun and that is primarily due to the tremendous efforts of the Hares concerned. It was also the year we officially became the Bike Hash (Singapore) and are now a registered society in Singapore. This means we can now lawfully meet openly in public, in groups larger than four people, without fear of arrest and the need for masonic handshakes. I am sure next year will be just as good if not better, but this is dependent on all Club members becoming inclusive and putting themselves forward to assist in setting rides and supporting events, amongst which will be one or two socials next year.

With that thought in mind, on behalf of the Committee, let me wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year with great Bike Hashes to look forward to.

On On

Scribed by,
Wan King

