

Ride 501 Report – 13 March 2016

St. Patrick's Day - Luck of the Irish Ride!

Hares: Bunny Tool, John Hoomoedt, Ted Bogucki & Puffy

Location: The Colbar

As 10am neared on a clear Sunday morning, the small but enthusiastic turnout of riders were test-driving their wheels along Whitchurch Road. All were chomping at the bit to explore what the Hares had in store for them in this classic Hash territory in and around Portsdown Road. The scenic heritage houses and expansive grasslands have long beckoned Hashers, and for good reason. This morning we were on a futile search for a 'leprechaun' that eluded us at every turn.

The course made full use of residential streets, leaving no slope, drain, or trail neglected. Although the route was not technically demanding, a few among us managed to take a spill. At the end of the day, there were no tears shed or legs bled. Ditch, Janus, and Jascha collectively shared the 'Crash of the Day' Award. Ladies, they're all right, they're all right, they've got a....

It was at one of the numerous circle checks in the vicinity of Canterbury Road that the scribe pedaled down Cornwall Road and, noticing some paper leading into the woods, called out "On On"... I found myself traversing steps and slopes which ultimately led me to Alexander Road. At this stage, there was not a soul around – either I was exceedingly fast and left them far behind (unlikely), or perhaps I was following trail from another Hash? It was a mystery that would only become clear later that morning.

I pushed on into Gilman Barracks and had the trail completely to myself – a nice experience, but I missed the organized chaos that comes with every Bike Hash – the assorted grunts and groans that come from our riders handling bumpy terrain... I'll say no more on that point.

After emerging from the shiggy and onto the parking lot and sleepy roads of Gilman Barracks, a large arrow in white chalk pointed into the woods. Make no mistake, it was clearly a Hasher's signage, but the toilet paper markings led further and further into nowhere. Surely this has the signs of being a running Hash, I thought, and as I bumped against my third or fourth tree with no end in sight, I turned back and made my way to where I had last seen the other riders. I found their trail – no more than about 500 meters from where I began my 'solo' Hash at Cornwall Road - and could even hear some distant 'on-ons' being shouted. After descending a grassy slope, I was pleasantly surprised to see Ted's fluorescent lime-green backpack cover. In fact, that moment was the closest I got to spotting a

leprechaun that day (Ted is, in fact, not from Ireland but hails from the 'other' island and will have to suffice anyway).

Ted was sweeping and doing a diligent job of collecting the toilet paper trail – well done, Hares, for making a truly 'clean and green' ride! It was among the most environmentally friendly rides I've been on, so apparently we [Americans – Ed.] have something to learn from our EU brethren.

Arriving just after the circle had started, I was on the receiving end of a few down-down's – from TI Joe and Ted for borrowing Kiyoko's deluxe carbon fibre Specialized and leaving the basic aluminium frame for her. My feeble excuse was that the Specialized is a man's frame while the other is a woman's frame... but I accept the verdict of guilty as charged!

Our Virgin Hasher that day could be described as being a 40-year old virgin from France... but is there such a thing, you ask? Actually, no, because Olivier pointed out to me afterwards that he is actually from Belgium and not from France. So the Frenchmen's reputation for *l'amour* remains intact. Mais oui!

As if already singled out for harassment for borrowing the better bike was not enough, the scribe was hauled into the circle yet again and shamed for wearing 'unfashionable' shorts. Finally, let it be known that the baggy, lifeless shorts that were purchased from Coo Chi Coo's Dempsey Hill bike shop 10+ years ago have been properly disposed of and are now on their way to becoming landfill at Pulau Semakau. The Sugoi shorts served their original purpose admirably and had a second life as the 'butt' of many Hash jokes...

It was then On-On to the Colbar, a beloved Hash institution that serves all manner of Western fare served lovingly by a granny and her clan. Savoring my 'eggs on toast' washed down by a London Pride, it was a fitting end to a wonderful day.

Graeme, the bike Hash's most studious reader, passed out some paperbacks to Hashers who, in turn, put them in plastic bags to avoid the heavy showers that followed. His nephew, Regan, only bothered to show up at about 1:30pm to have some food and drink at the on-on. He had his full cycling gear on, but somebody please buy him an alarm clock for the next ride.

As the skies darkened and with our stomachs full, Bunny Tool mounted his bike for a final sweep to remove any remaining toilet paper as I stood up and walked through the Colbar to my waiting bike. I moved slowly, with one hand covering the sizable hole in my shorts that I received during that morning's ride. Fortunately, no one spotted my misdemeanor and everyone's mid-day meal was spared from nausea and indigestion.

Three cheers to the Hares for scheduling the rain to only start after the wonderful food and fellowship at Colbar. And until the next SBH ride, happy trails...

