



THE HASH HOUSE HARRIERS

CROSS-COUNTRY JOGGING AND SOCIAL CLUBS

An Introduction to our healthy, outdoor pursuit.

Whilst walking our wonderful Chiltern countryside footpaths during the weekends and holidays, have you ever seen small blobs of a white or blue powder dotted along the footpaths, and then seen circles, crosses, tees and other strange signs where footpaths intersect? Or, indeed, seen similar chalk marks along roadsides? You might have even come across us on Sunday mornings, or Monday evenings running in all weathers, and thought to yourself; "Who are these mixed bunch of nutters?" as we disappear into the distance with runners in the front calling; "On On!"

If you have, then we are the ones responsible! The strange marks are what we use to set our cross-country trails. So, they are not illicit marks to target property, they are flour and so bio-degradable, and certainly not poisonous to pets, wildlife or livestock.

Our hobby is a healthy, outdoor pursuit, that takes the form of a paper chase, with a 'Hare' responsible for laying a cunning trail with

the objective to test the 'Hounds' ability in seeking out the correct route.

We follow the Countryside Code, and use the latest versions of OS Maps and local Parish footpath maps to plan our trails, including making reconnaissance visits prior to the run date. Responsibility lays with the 'Hare' to ensure that the trail is clearly defined, informing farmers, dog walkers and others met en-route, of what she or he is doing. In the majority of instances, trails are laid from and finish at a public house, at other times trails can be laid from car parks at local beauty spots. However, due the continuing closure of village pubs, the former is becoming a necessity. The actual marking of the trail is laid either on the Saturday afternoon before a Sunday morning run, and on the Sunday afternoon before a Monday evening run, so it is essential that the marks must stay in place for a maximum of one and half days. Most times, the marks remain untampered with, except for a few being snuffed out by wild animals and livestock on open ground. However, it is becoming more evident that due

to the perceived threat of potential theft or vandalism, we are finding that our trail marks are now frequently being 'removed'.

This ingenious removal, has the potential for us to trespass, or cause unnecessary disturbance to livestock which we don't want to do, as we look for further marks to identify the correct route to take. So, please don't 'remove' our marks.

Our pursuit is known to the Bedfordshire CC Footpaths Commission, and to the local Police, but frequent changes in Parish Councils means the 'people in the know' leave, and we are back to square one again.

If you see these marks, and you are concerned, you have three courses of action to check their validity:

- Visit our website: Websites of other Hashing clubs that run in the Chilterns, Beds, Bucks and Herts areas are also available.
- Check with the local pub Landlord.
- Come along, and enjoy the fun and camaraderie!

Fat Controller. On behalf of the Hare & Hounds Hash House Harriers. Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire.