

OXFORD HASH HOUSE HARRIERS

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR HARES - Iss. 2

The hash survives from week to week as a result of everybody taking his or her turn to be a hare and lay a trail. It is a real challenge to research and lay a good trail with the aim of outwitting the pack of runners - the hounds. It can then be very satisfying to watch them find their way around your trail. The overall aim should be to keep together a pack composed of different standard runners through judicious trail laying and the use of short cuts.

The objective of the hash is to lay a circular flour trail from the pub to form an interesting run that ends up at the beer stop - a short distance from the pub. The trail should take between 1 hour and 1¼ hours to run with well-planned checks and the occasional more difficult check to allow the slower runners to catch up thus keeping the pack together. A re-group can also be incorporated to bring the pack back together - further instructions can be issued there as necessary. Trails should be laid by pairs of hares and not singly.

As the Oxford Hash always runs at 7pm on a Wednesday evening we have two distinct types of trail:

Winter runs - City based making use of the lit streets and interconnecting footpaths where the use of a torch is necessary.

Summer trails - Daylight runs starting from pubs in surrounding villages making use of country footpaths and other public rights of way.

Hares' Responsibilities

- Research and lay a trail starting from the appointed pub to commence at 7pm
- Check with the pub landlord well in advance that it is acceptable to use his pub as a hash venue. Warn him that there will be up to 40 people guzzling his beer and ask him to make the necessary staffing / stock arrangements. Some landlords will provide free plates of chips or sandwiches for the group if cajoled gently - don't push this point too hard though.
- Inform the Cellarman of where the beerstop for that week will be. Also let him know where on the trail it is possible for him to shortcut back in order to set it up.
- Brief the runners of any hazards on the trail such as livestock in the fields and of any unusual trail markings.
- Keep pack together
- Make sure everybody gets back home to the pub.
- Mark the trail for latecomers. Carry some flour with you on the run to lay arrows from the pub.

Researching the Trail

- Pick a pub where you think you can set a good trail from (if the hair-razor hasn't already picked one for you). The Pub should also sell good real ale and be prepared to put up with 30 or 40 noisy hashers.
- Obtain a map for the area - Use the Oxford A-Z for the city runs in winter and in the summer use the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 scale map of Oxford (Explorer 180).
- Plan a route using the map picking out suitable places for checks, re-groups and short cuts. The trail should be approximately five miles long.
- Walk or run the trail several times to familiarise yourself and your fellow hare with the trail. Remember that a one hour hash will take over two hours to walk.

- Plan the trail around footpaths, bridleways and other public rights of way. The use of private land must be by consent only. Where footpaths cross farmers' fields containing livestock or crops it is only courteous to inform him that 30-40 runners will be using the footpaths over his land.
- Use the geography of the area to confuse the pack's sense of direction and always ensure the pack can't see the pub or beerstop from any point on the trail.
- Avoid long straight runs between checks, as this will just space the pack out.
- Include a few loops for the faster runners to keep the pack together.
- Checks should occur every 300 - 500 metres or so but at varied intervals and, if possible, at natural check points. The trail should start up again within about 30 - 50 metres and anywhere in a 360° circle, i.e. "BACK CHECKS" are allowed.
- Pick a safe location for the beerstop and plan how the Cellarman can leave the beertruck there or shortcut to it during the hash. Hasher's back gardens make ideal locations.

Laying the Trail

- It will usually take two hares at least 3 hours to lay the trail and will use at least 5 bags of flour.
- If possible lay the trail immediately before the hash. This will eliminate the possibility of it being washed away, sabotaged or eaten.
- Before laying the trail consider hiding some flour en-route so that you have less to carry with you.
- Lay the trail with cooking flour - only 9p per bag from Tesco or Sainsbury.
- In damp conditions trails can also be laid in sawdust, chalk or whiting (used to mark the white lines on football pitches - available from Jewsons under the brand name "Snowpak" at £7 per sack). The latter two can be mixed with flour for economy. For health reasons do not be tempted to use Lime.
- Do not use chalk on the city pavements as it will still be there many weeks later - very confusing for subsequent hashes.
- Flour blobs can be on the ground, fence-posts, trees and garden walls etc. and should be every 20 or 30 yds. In open country the spacing needs to be closer - especially when changing direction.

Markings

*	BLOB	four consecutive flour blobs indicate the correct trail.
O	CHECK	from which the trail can go off in any direction.
X	FALSE	found after three blobs from a check.
RG	RE-GROUP	wait until all the runners have arrived.
→	ARROW	indicates the correct direction of the trail.
	ON INN	approx $\frac{1}{4}$ mile before the beerstop - indicates that the end is nigh.

On the day

- Brief the runners of any hazards on the trail such as livestock in the fields and of any unusual trail markings.
- Mark the trail with arrows from the pub for latecomers. A fairy liquid bottle or cycle water bottle can be very useful for this. On some terrain the check circles can be cut in the direction of the trail.
- There should always be two hares - one in the middle to front of the pack and one bringing up the rear looking after the slower runners.
- If in doubt - consult the hair razor or ask an experienced hasher for help.

Remember - The main objective is to keep the pack together.

Ladybird Sept'02