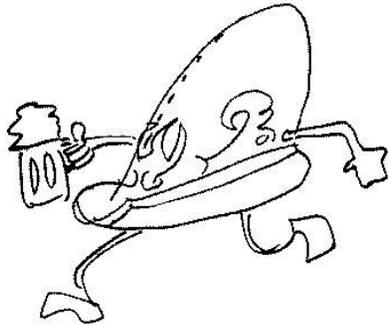


Bishkek Hash House Harriers



Hares' Handbook

(ALSO AVAILABLE IN RUSSIAN)

"Utterly stunning" (New York Times)

"I couldn't put it down [in French]" (Le Figaro)

"Noone else need apply for this year's Booker Prize"
(The Guardian)

July 2002

<http://www.geocities.com/bishkekhash>

Introduction

1. This Handbook is to help hares, especially first-timers, to avoid extreme punishment after the run. Follow the following principles, customs and advice and your fellow-Hashers will enjoy your run. So will you.
2. Read through the Handbook before you go out on reconnaissance and have it in your pocket all the time.
3. There is a reference section at the back, with a glossary, a list of calls, the principal Hash songs and the current Mismanagement Committee.

Hares' Responsibilities

4. There are usually 2 or 3 hares. It is helpful if one has a car. Together they are responsible for:
 - ♦ Buying something to lay the trail with. We usually use flour (2.5kg is about right for an average run; the cheapest I have found is 12 soms per kg) but on snow you need to be more imaginative. There has been successful use of sticks, stones and bottles laid in patterns; coloured cement; and torn-up red paper napkins.
 - ♦ Choosing the run-site. We usually go to the city outskirts or beyond - to the hills in the south, or to the forests and lakes of the many parks around Bishkek.
 - ♦ Notifying the Grand Master if the run-site is more than a 20-minute drive away, because it may affect transport arrangements.
 - ♦ Making a reconnaissance of the run-site. This may be done just before the trail is laid, but many hares prefer to do it on another day when they have plenty of time - eg reconnaissance on Saturday and trail-laying on Sunday.
 - ♦ Laying the trail.
 - ♦ Arranging a half-way "øl-stop" (optional).
 - ♦ Making any other special arrangements - eg hiding Easter eggs, clearing land-mines, arranging for food after the run...
 - ♦ Guiding the pack from the meeting-point to the run-site.
 - ♦ Running with the pack, ready to stop people getting totally lost but not helping unnecessarily. One hare should stay at the back of the pack to "sweep" tail-enders onto the true trail.

Trail-Laying

5. The principles to follow are as follows:
 - ♦ The run should last about 1 hour. Minimum 50 minutes, maximum 75 minutes. According to the terrain and the weather, this usually means a length of about 6km.
 - ♦ It should be interesting, with variety of terrain and view.
 - ♦ It should involve some challenge for the fittest runners but not be daunting for the least fit.
 - ♦ Everyone should finish more-or-less together. This may mean laying a separate trail for walkers, or offering them short-cuts. There should be at least 6 checks and some false trails, to slow down the front-runners.
 - ♦ The run should start and finish at a good place to park the vehicles and to stand around drinking and singing afterwards.
6. There are subtle variations in trail-laying conventions from one Hash to another. These are ours:
 - ♦ The trail starts a short distance from where the cars are parked: say 30-50m. The hares may point the pack in the right general direction, or let them fan out and search.
 - ♦ The trail is laid principally with handfuls of flour (or snow-friendly alternative) at infrequent intervals; but they can be closer together if there is no clear track to follow.
 - ♦ Over open ground big arrows may be used to keep the pack going in the right direction.
 - ♦ Checks (at least 6 throughout the run) are marked with a circle.
 - ♦ On a long run the hares may mark a "holding check" - a circle with a cross in the middle. This means that the pack does not move off again until everyone has arrived.
 - ♦ A 2- or 3-way check can be laid using arrows, to restrict the directions the pack has to check out.
 - ♦ After a check the trail should resume within 50-100m - less on difficult terrain or where there are no obvious tracks.
 - ♦ False trails should be as easy to find as the true trail. They must have no more than 3 handfuls of flour and there must be a cross at the end - large but not visible from too far away. I try to put the X just round a corner or on the far side of a rise.

- ♦ Close to the end of the run you may lay an "on-home". This is a bold arrow pointing to the car-park, with the words "On Home". Make sure you have enough flour left! An advantage is that you will avoid in/out trail confusion (see paragraph 13 below).

Things to Pay Attention to...

7. Allow yourself enough time to lay the trail. It generally takes me twice as long to lay a trail as to run it, after a reconnaissance.
8. Checks are very important. There must be enough of them and they must be carefully placed, so that the direction of the true trail is not too obvious. It is usual for one hare to start laying the true trail while the other hare(s) lay one or more equally plausible false trails.
9. You do not need false trails at every check, but a run without a false trail at all is like a woman without a smile. Make them numerous enough, long enough and arduous enough to allow the back-runners to catch up with the front-runners.
10. We call them "ø-stops" but water and soft drinks are provided too. It is your decision whether to have an ø-stop. If you do...
 - ♦ Do not put the ø in a too-obvious hiding-place and lose it before the pack gets to it. (This happened once!)
 - ♦ It is better to locate the stop near a motorable track and instruct a driver to bring the ø to it once the pack is out-of-sight.
 - ♦ Warn the Hash Dray in advance, so he/she can bring extra ø and drinking vessels.
11. Always remember that the run is meant to be fun, and following the trail is a kind of game. Don't lay a trail that is too easy to follow; or one that is just hard work. Do make full use of the terrain to give your run variety, interest and unpredictability. You don't want the pack to vote it the "Boring-As-Hell Run".
12. At the meeting-point (currently the Opera and Ballet Theatre) the hares should give the driver of each vehicle enough information to allow him to get to the run-site even if he loses the convoy. One hare should travel in the lead vehicle; and ideally another hare should travel in the last vehicle. If the run-site is hard to find, a sketch map for each driver is a good idea.

Things to Avoid...

13. Because it finishes where it started a trail is inevitably a loop. But it should not be too obvious. Use the terrain and changes of direction to disorientate the pack.
14. (It is not compulsory to finish at the start. You may arrange for the cars to move somewhere else once the pack is out of sight, if you wish.)
15. In/out trail confusion is an ever-present danger. Do not allow the pack to find the end of the trail before it finds the start!
16. Similarly, do not lay the trail so that parts of it get too close together and the pack may jump from one part to another.
17. Do not take the pack across growing crops or through private property unless you have the explicit permission of the owner. By international convention the Hash has the right to go wherever it likes, but we don't want to push our luck.
18. Do not finish the run at too public a place for the circle. If the cars are parked on a public road, identify a more secluded place within walking distance. (walking = walking-carrying-a-cooler-full-of-Ø).
19. Never leave the Hare-Raiser with a problem if you find that you are unable to fulfill your duties. Find a replacement - or at least give the Hare-Raiser enough notice to find one.

Live Hares

20. Occasionally we have a "live hare" run. This is where the hare(s) do not lay a trail in advance, but set off during the warm-up and lay the trail just ahead of the pack. They are given a head-start (typically 10-15 minutes). The trail-laying conventions are the same as for a normal run, but live hares do not have time to lay a lot of false trails.
21. There is a quaint Hash custom. If the pack catches up with a live hare, his/her shorts are confiscated.

Hares Run Free!

22. Everyone pays to Hash - except the hares. They only pay for the flour.
23. On the other hand they *know* they will be abused and down-downed after the run, even if it was the best since 1938. It's a Hash tradition.

Reference Section

Glossary

Back-runner	Someone at the back or tail of the pack.
Check	A discontinuity in the trail, marked with a circle on the ground. The true trail resumes some distance away; and there may be false trails too.
Circle	The orderly circle of Hashers which forms after a run at the Grand Master's command to witness down-downs and engage in other Hash customs
False trail	A short trail following a check, laid by the hares to confuse the pack. It ends with a 'X' after 3 handfuls of flour or less.
Front-runner	Someone at the front or head of the pack.
Hare	One who lays (or sets) the trail.
Hasher	One who Hashes - as either a runner or a walker.
Hash Trash	The Hash newsletter; also the editor thereof.
Holding check	A check where all Hashers remain until everyone arrives.
Live hare	A hare who is still laying the trail when the pack starts running; a live hare who is 'caught' by the pack loses his/her shorts.
Ø	The Bishkek Hash name for beer, in honour of Joern 'Prince Hamlet' Nielsen - a Dane and our first Hash Dray.
Ø1-stop	A refreshment point near the middle of a run.
On-on	The cry when a runner believes he/she is on the true trail; also the communal eating and drinking that some Hashers go on to after a run.
Meeting-point	Where the pack meets before a run: currently in front of the Opera and Ballet Theatre in Ul Sovietskaya.
On-home	The end of the marked trail: an arrow pointing to the cars and the words "On Home".
Pack	Everyone running or walking except the hares.
Run-site	The location of the run.
Short-cut	A deviation from the true trail which reduces the distance run. Short-cutting is a punishable offence unless you have been directed to a short-cut by a hare in the interests of keeping the pack together.

Sweep	One hare who stays with the back-runners or walkers to make sure that everyone finishes the run eventually.
Trail	The tortuous path marked by the hares. The true trail is the way to go; false trails are to be avoided.
True trail	This is too obvious to explain!
Warm-up	Muscle-stretching exercises at the start of the run - a local custom initiated by our first Hash Gash (medical advisor), Merete 'Less Caffeine' Nielsen.
2- or 3-way check	Bifurcated or trifurcated arrows to indicate that the true trail lies in one of only 2 or 3 directions.

Calls

Are you...?	Are you on the true trail? (If the call were "Are you <u>on</u> ?" it might be mis-heard as "On-on!" - with awful results.)
Checking!	I have come from a check and I am checking for the true trail.
False trail!	This is not the true trail, so don't follow me.
Looking!	Due to the malice and/or incompetence of the hares I may have deviated from the true trail, and I am looking for the next handful of flour. (This is not the same as "Checking!" which is called only after a check has been encountered.)
On-on!	I am confident that I am on the true trail. Follow me!
On-on called!	Someone ahead of me has called "On-on!". Don't blame me if he/she is wrong.
On back!	The same meaning as "False trail".
On 1, 2, 3!	I have come from a check and I have found the 1st, 2nd or 3rd handful of flour on what <i>may</i> be the true trail.

Two Hash Songs (there are many more)

Down-Down Song

Here's to [name], he's* true blue,
 He's a Hasher through-and-through,
 He's a piss-pot** so they say,
 Tried to get to heaven but he* went
 the other way.
 Drink it down down down down...!

* *or she or they.*

** *figuratively, a heavy drinker.*

Hash Hymn

Swing low, sweet chariot,
 Coming for to carry me home;
 Swing low, sweet chariot,
 Coming for to carry me home!
 I looked over Jordan and what did I see,
 Coming for to carry me home?
 A band of angels, coming after me,
 Coming for to carry me home!

Current Mismanagement Committee

Grand Master	Supreme ruler of the Hash	John 'Hardon' Standingford
Religious Advisor	Guardian of custom and ritual	John 'Madonna' McLellan
Hash Cash	Treasurer	Will 'Bypass' Hart
Hash Trash	Editor of the newsletter (and currently the website too)	Kathleen 'Kathy Come Home' Hinman
Hash Fash	Enforcer of the dress code	Elisabeth 'Lady Vey' Lundgren
Hash Flash	Official photographer	Andres 'Spiderman' Riggioni*
Hash Dray	Supplier of drinks	Tracy 'Old Rooster' Atwood
Hash Song	Leader of the singing	Tracy 'Old Rooster' Atwood
Hare-Raiser	Recruiter of hares for future runs	Svetlana Titova

* But Kathy Come Home is de facto Hash Flash at present, in combination with her Hash Trash duties.

"On-on!" Hardon, July 2002