

**AS IT WAS ON RUN 3849
SEMENYIH THERAVADA BUDDHIST TEMPLE
(21/8/2017)
HARE : ERIK BLOKHUIS
PHOTOS BY: KANA
SCRIBE BY: JONATHAN FRANCIS**

Preamble

Worth mentioning before I start is the strange circumstance surrounding your humble Scribe's second successive outing in as many weeks. Apparently last week's Virgin Hare outsourced his Scribe duty for Run Report to our esteemed President. Alas, as our esteemed President was unable to attend this week's run, he himself was saddled with the duty of 're-procuring' said Run Report. So, what solution do you think he proposed? Ha! Of course! He called the Hare, and suggested that he write his own Run Report! (Why wasn't I allowed to do that for my recent run?) Well, after he'd picked himself up and dusted himself down, our doughty Hare called Yours Truly, and begged me to Scribe for his run, kindly offering – in true Dutch fashion - to edit out the uncomplimentary bits before submitting it for the newsletter. So here it is – Fake News and All!

Run Report

Ominous clouds filled the sky to the south-east as John Dodgson and I drove down from KL, giving way to sheeting rain by the time we reached the runsite. A few of our expected companions had already gathered, demonstrating our good intentions to make an early start – 16:00 in this case – on what we all imagined would be a super-long run. However, our resolve was seriously eroded by the formidable rainfall, and furthermore, we were not yet all assembled.

On a side note, one could ask himself what our Dutch Hare and fellow Dutch co-hares had done today, for their pagan ancestor's God of Thunder, THOR, to lay his wrath upon the run site with such a fierce thunderstorm...!?!? Or had they made some sacrificed offerings to their pagan ancestor's God to test the Mother Hasher's spirits today...?



Anyway, John and I were the first to face the rain unshielded by poncho or umbrella, exiting the car only to be completely drenched in a matter of seconds. Roger Gregson took pity, seeing us standing shivering in the chilly downpour, and decided to bite the bullet and get started on the trail. Finally, we gritted our teeth and set off through the deluge at around 16:25; first along the road away from the temple, then sharp left at the first junction, climbing a moderate slope up the plantation road.

The heavy rain had turned the road into a series of flash streams cascading downhill, signalling the wild wet fun and games that were to come. It seems nobody was left behind – not even two dogs from the Temple, who had followed the pack, and were spirited across the water by Ah Kah! As I scrambled up the steep and slippery hillside, I realised with a slight sinking feeling that I was now committed to following the whole trail. Darkness was beginning to fall, and my eyes from here on were focussed exclusively on my next footstep – except where I caught my face on the many protruding branches and twigs along the trail. The trail was also beset by thorny creepers in places, and I duly tripped on one of these and fell full length. At a certain point the torches came out, and the pack made a straggling and eerie procession back home.

There are times on a trail when one feels exhilarated, buoyant, full of the joys of being at one with nature. There are times when, though almost exhausted, one is carried along by the sense of The road soon narrowed to a walking track around the back of the temple, and we arrived at the first check, at an open area with about five tracks leading off. Roger Gregson was in the lead, and went off to check down the first track on the right. Then I was caught up by John Dodgson, who went down the second track on the right – which joined the first track just a few meters down.

Because of the heavy rain it was difficult to hear any sounds such as hashers calling on-on, so instead of checking another track I stayed put to wait for other early starters who might be catching up. They soon came, led by Mike Kwan and Ah Mun, who went checking up a track to the left. Then I heard a faint sound of someone shouting through the rain from a distance, so I went slithering down the track to the right, and sure enough it was an on-call from Roger and John.

I called the other ten or so early starters on, and off we went, slipping and sliding along the muddy track, on the way crossing a creek that had swollen to an angry spate. A little further along, we crossed another gushing torrent that had likely been a track in dry weather, and then further on again, yet another. Thus, was the pattern set for most of the rest of the run: slippery mud, muddy water, and hidden rocks.

A few minutes further along the trail we encountered another check: it was immediately beside the track, with only a steep and impassable downslope on the left, and an equally impassable bank on the right. Trail therefore had to be either forward or back, though Roger bravely negotiated his way down the left slope to check as far as a narrow creek, but with no sign of paper. Roger also said he'd been to "the end" of the track, and still seen no sign of paper.

This raised my suspicions, because plantation roads don't generally just suddenly come to an end – they come to a junction, or the edge of the cultivated region, usually marked by a gate or some such. So I followed the track myself to see this 'end', coming upon a large tree that had fallen into a gully across the track. This, I was convinced, was a typical Dutch check, designed to test the mettle – or foolhardiness – of the pack. I pushed through the fallen branches a little, to investigate, and could see the continuation of the track on the other side of the gully. My companions had retreated along the track back towards the check and, not wanting to investigate alone and possibly get left behind, I called for assistance, which appeared in the form of Ah Mun. He bravely clambered across the branches of the fallen tree, perched precariously over the gully, and reached the track on the other side. A couple of minutes' walk brought him to paper, and he duly called On On.

Clambering over the tree was something of a challenge on account of it being of a thorny variety, and so trying to grasp at the foliage for support or balance resulted in being painfully pierced. True hashers that we are, we all made it across, and continued along the track, fording many more fast-flowing cascades along the way. I feel that, unfortunately, much of the impact of this intriguing check will have been lost on the main pack, since the early group had no option but to leave an indelible and obvious trail of broken branches and so on, through the fallen greenery. Never mind, boys – some of us were there to enjoy it unspoiled.

The next check we found at a corner on the track, hidden in some bushes off to one side. The trail continued on along the main drag of the track, and it was puzzling why the hares had put such a check at that point. Perhaps in dry weather we might have been tempted to explore the woods a bit, but, though the rain had eased up somewhat, my companions were evidently in no mood for such frivolities and simply followed where they – correctly – guessed the trail would continue.

Continue it did, down a treacherous slope with very deep ruts on either side, and practically no foothold to be had. We had to negotiate gingerly along the berm on the right side of the track, the way getting steeper as we went. As I descended I could hear a mighty sound of cascading water off to the right, signalling our approach to something big. Arriving at the bottom of the slope, we were faced with a river about 20 metres wide, and flowing at a furious rate. There was also a check beside a tree on the river bank – clearly meant to tantalise. Some debate ensued among the group, the general consensus being that the tempestuous water was too dangerous to attempt to cross at that stage. Roger expressed the view that if we waited half an hour

or so the flow would have abated enough to allow us to cross without getting swept away by the fierce current.

Some of the group split off to check back up the hill, whilst others, including me, checked up and down the river bank. No one found an on-trail, and eventually most of our group retreated back up the treacherous slope. I followed them for a while, but there was no apparent strategy amongst the group for continuing the run, so I turned around and went back down to the river. On my return, there was no sign of Roger or John, and for a moment I wondered if they had somehow managed to cross by themselves to the other bank, improbable though it seemed. At that point, I decided to await the arrival of the main pack, who might be able to mob their way across the current, which, though still pretty swift, had abated a little from its earlier forbidding strength.



After a while, sure enough, the front runners came barrelling down the trail. They spotted me in the woods along the bank, and first assumed that I was on trail – they didn't initially spot the check by the river bank, and I had to point it out to them, which quickly changed their tone. Suddenly they realized that some of their number were going to have to brave the current to check out the other side. A few brave souls ventured into the water, one or two being nearly swept away by the current, and having to be pulled back on the end of branches extended to them by the group. Eventually, four super-hashers made it across, swimming like Tarzan clones, led by Super Old Man, then Young Yap, Flying Man and Ah Soo. A few minutes recce up the steep slope on the other bank brought them to the continuation of trail, and On On was duly called. The crossing of the whole pack was a model of cooperation, and an absolute joy to behold! The first group crossed holding hands, then grabbing loose branches and extending them behind for the followers to catch hold of. Once a chain was formed across the river, the groups acted in relay, individuals catching up from behind displacing those from the front of the queue. What a contrast this is, from when the scent of roast pork is in the air...



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There are times on a trail when one feels exhilarated, buoyant, full of the joys of being at one with nature. There are times when, though almost exhausted, one is carried along by the sense of satisfaction of having met and overcome a prodigious challenge. There are times when, if nothing else, the thought of the first cold beer on regaining the run site, soothes the aching spirit and spurs the poor body on for the final push On Home. This – for your humble scribe - this was not one of those occasions. On and on and on we went, along trails alternately treacherously slippery and treacherously rocky, sometimes skating, sometimes crawling, occasionally yelping, always cursing... In the twilight, with the sky still overcast, and a miasma of mist rising from the vegetation, there was nothing to see on the trail back home, until a certain point where we had to cross over two kampong footbridges in succession. They looked pretty enough by torchlight, but I couldn't help reflecting how much more scenic they would be in daylight or at least with a little more light in the sky. I later learned from the Hare that we were allowed to cross the bridges by courtesy of the residents of the kampong, the original route back across the narrow river having been made impassable by the flood as the concrete slab had completely washed away and the current was just too high at that particular point.

At this stage, I had high hopes of being within striking distance of the run site, but – no such luck! Instead the trail meandered on uphill, across farmland, in and out of

swathes of plantation, and eventually gave out onto a broad track. At a certain point, strains of raucous singing – Song Number 5, no less! – wafted over what I was praying was the last hill, signalling that the Circle had already started, and that the Hare and Co-Hare were being treated to their Just Desserts. It was to be another 10 or 15 minutes – although it felt twice as long – before I finally regained the run site, where there were many hashers still showering and making ready, though the Circle was in full swing.

My misery was very soon dispersed when I met Dexon and a group of others, who told me that a bottle of Guinness had been saved for me: and so it was! Thanks to all my generous and thoughtful friends, who know just what a fellow-hasher needs at the end of four and a half gruelling hours on trail...

On On!!

I later learned from the Hare that they had planned for 6 checks originally but due to trail conditions caused by the heavy rain and subsequent slowdowns, they decided to skip the last 2 checks they had planned on the home trail and also to make the check at the river bank easier by continuing the paper trail already half way up the steep slope on the other side of the river instead of further in as it would become too late otherwise. The fallen tree I mentioned before was not there when the hares laid the trail earlier that afternoon only indicating the fierceness of the thunderstorm the hares endured in the afternoon. What had to be a 3:30hr recce turned out to become a 5:30hr recce for the hares. Apparently, they just made it back in time before the FROPs made it home around 19:50hr instead of the expected 19:35hr had it been dry.

Circle Report

This précis has been pieced together from bits and pieces gleaned from the Hare, Co-Hare and others, as well as the short part of the proceedings I was able to witness myself.

- Virgin Hare Erik Blokhuis gets his Mother Hash weskit. Huzzah!
- Playboy Choo gets a badge for 30 years of unstinting service to Mother Hashdom. Huzzaah!!
- Guests welcomed included: Wim, son of Roelof “Smokey” of Petaling H3); Father Abraham, Co-Hare extraordinaire and more; Francesco, of Petaling H3 fame – no fortune.
- OnSec: floated a proposal to raise subs to RM250; objection from Don Cheang. Undoubtedly there will be more discussion of this issue either in this newsletter or elsewhere. Finances are a current Hot Topic.
- Pre-bomoh, Peter Pan: Hare castigated for stapling paper to the trees – standard practice on other Malaysia hashes; Merdeka Run commented upon.

•Contract Bomoh, Billy No-Hair: introduced himself and disciplined the Circle – no talking allowed, though “whispering, almost like kissing” also not allowed; parking infractions – Young Yap; long comic diatribe on the Use Of Hands, with helpful examples selected from the Circle – Kana Kecil, Steven Leong stand-in; President went to help collect rubbish from the beach, presumably in aid of the environment; OnSec drinking shandy from a basin; non-river-crossing super-heroes, super-short ‘kwei-loh’s’ aka Playboy Choo, Arthur Hoi; John Dodgson, Kannot Kan, Roger Gregson crossed no problem, being tall kwei-loh’s; everyone else cooperated to make sure nobody drowned or bottled out.

•Erik Blokhuis: appeal for Scribes to do their duty, however short the Report; down-down for President’s stand-in for asking the Hare to do his own Run Report; those whose mother tongue is not English can write in mother tongue and use Google Translate. Song Number 5!

•OnSec: final words on Hash business. Hare announced On-On FOC – Huzzahh for the Hare!! At 21:32 the Circle was called to a close, and the hungry pack proceeded to the on-site on-on and feasted on the roast pork, chicken, fried kampong fish, rice and veggies. Many thanks to the generous Hare, Erik Blokhuis, for another really great evening. Definitely a run one surely will remember!

THANK YOU, JONATHAN FRANCIS