

Present (or at least those that shouted their name out in the pub!): Spiderman, Grasshopper, Rover, Gary Glitter, No Handles, Rudolf, Swampy, Beetle. Dumbo, Tussauds, Chippy, Snake Hips (on down only), Denim, L2bL, Crusty, Miranda and Indie

Apparently I have the dubious honour of writing these words about this, only my third hash with Drake, because my mullet makes me look, in the eyes of Rover at least, like Mullet. Now in the past my widow's peak has been likened to Quentin Tarantino but to be likened to someone who I am not sure I have even met is a bit weird . . . but then what is hashing if not a little weird.

The tale starts in the back of No Handles' car as fumbling around on the back seat I am asked to find my headtorch so I can assist Gary Glitter to put new batteries into hers. Her excuse is that despite 'having her eyes in' (I presume she meant contact lenses) she could not see close-up to do it herself. Said head torch fixed the three of us left the cosy confines of the car to brave the cold and wind. I was quite glad to see Spiderman and Rover wearing shorts too as most other people looked far more wrapped up than me.

After a few perfunctory words from our hare we crossed the road and followed dots towards the old railway track. Spiderman commented on the 'quality' sawdust. For me this was another weird comment - after all surely sawdust is just bits of sawn up wood. Can even a boatwright really tell the quality of the timber from which it has come as you run past it in the dark?

Unfortunately this being only my third outing with Drake I don't really have a clue who was running around with me. What I can say was that we had an excellent twisty trail that weaved its way cunningly through the moorland between North Hessary Tor, Foggintor Quarry and the Hart Tor brook. At night you soon lose sense of where you really are - especially since most of the run was truly over open ground not even bothering to follow what few sheep trails there were. I was loving this - hashing as it should be and so different from what my home hash (Ashburton) has become in recent years - but more of that later.

I think there were a few fallers, some wet feet in the boggy bits and there was a momentary halt at a back check. On the whole though the hash flowed really well and the two loops for the longs kept the pack together beautifully. The only moaning I heard all night was from Rover as we had to go back down to the road by the Devil's Bridge having gone up to a check that was on what turned out to be a false trail - is that really allowed. He muttered something about a road run or tarmac or something like that but thankfully we were soon back on open ground and heading for the huge 'On Home' written in sawdust.

Although the run lasted only 40 minutes I thought it was fantastic and probably about the right length given the fairly chilly evening. Back in the pub I found myself on a table with Spiderman (known to me from Ash Hash) and Swampy and Rudolf. A discussion ensued about the differences between various local hashes and I had to admit that the Drake experience for me was far closer to what I imagined hashing to be really about.

So thanks for letting a newcomer get involved. I hope I will still be welcome after this my first attempt at the words too. By the next time I get asked to write them hopefully a) I will know many more of you and b) that my mullet will be properly identified not as Mullet but as Grasshopper!

On on!