



REPORT ON RUN 434 ON 3rd SEPTEMBER 2023

The sun was shining brightly for this 8km run from Hawkley over Ashford Hangers National Nature Reserve to Oakshott and back. The run was a fusion of several Hash House Harriers with runners from Haslemere, Hursley, Bournemouth, Chichester, Portsmouth and Barbados. The fantastic hares were Alpha and Beta Blocker, Turnup Tony, K9 and Tequila Tequila who led the 35 strong band of runners (17 from H4) along beautifully shaded lanes, up steep paths bordered by tall conifer trees, down muddy footpaths and through overgrown tracks strewn with rampant brambles and stinging nettles. All good fun!

The run started outside the Hawkley Inn at 11am with an explanation from a hare as to the meanings of the different symbols.



Good to have this refreshed as we were introduced to a new symbol, 'the fishhook' which caught several of us out on a few occasions!



And off we went! Some of the participants followed Beta Blocker on a walking route whilst the runners took off down the lane. Almost straight away we encountered mud which broke the ice with our fellow runners who we hadn't properly yet met. Slipping and sliding in mud can only put a smile on your face and make everyone smile and laugh!



Soon the bridleways and lanes opened to reveal a stunning view across the South Downs which was an ideal location to stop and 'regroup'.



After another false start, we steadily climbed upwards along the lanes which revealed even more glorious views of the countryside bathed in warm September sunshine. Up another false trail and with a little bit of 'checking', we headed up the hill into the warm sunshine for a great group photo. We then headed up a narrow path and through a kissing gate where a patient e-biker waited for all of us to pass through.



Excitement flooded through us as we emerged out of the dimly lit forest into the bright sunshine as we spotted Oakshott Trig Point standing monumentally at 244m, the highest point on Wheatham Hill (one of the highest in Hampshire), proudly surveying the hills of the North Hampshire Downs around it. This is also the site of Cobbett's View, first discovered in 1822 when William Cobbett rode through and subsequently published 'Rural Rides'. He was also awed by the spectacular view.



After a few minutes rest and admiring the vista, we descended the hill through lush forest and along narrow tracks with forest dropping off steeply.



Climbing over styles, and passing through kissing gates, the track once again revealed stunning views of the countryside around us.





The runners seemed to split up at this stage with several taking the high route and others sticking on the lower path, only then having to ascend the hill steeply at Edward Thomas Memorial.



The Shoulder of Mutton Viewpoint, about 229m high, was the perfect place for a refreshment stop, with a member of the Hash House Harriers offering warm cider and beer, which tasted AMAZING! With panoramic views of the surrounding countryside, this was the perfect place to cool down under the trees.



By now many of the runners were beginning to flag, so onwards through more kissing gates, past chocolate-box quaint cottages and over bridges with trolls hiding under! Many runners took the opportunity to splash in the waters and cool down.



There was a final push to make it back to Hawkley Inn for a well-deserved cold pint and a bag of crisps in the beautiful pub garden!



What a fantastic run! Thank you for everyone who helped today! On on!

Sarah Lewis