

# HASHINGS

2nd March, 1987

RECEDING HARE LINE

Run No. 107	Sunday 8th March	Hares: Never Again, Cleopatra & a little hindrance from Goldilocks
108	22nd March	Double Dutchman & John Cleese
109	5th April	Double Dutchman (alias Hash Masbchist!) & D'Animal
110	19th April	Gentleman Jim & Sanatarium
111	?26th April?	Blondie & Nag at HABARANA

Run No. 107: "WHO GIVES A DAM?"

Venue: Adjacent to the Victoria Power House, Hakuratale

Hashers to assemble in the first instance at 10.00 a.m. at the Viewing building where all can inspect and gaze in wonder at the two mighty catchment areas marked for easy identification LADIES and GENTS. For absolutely no charge you are free to marvel at this civil engineering masterpiece, admire the intricate porcelain claddings and be humbled with the knowledge that you are standing (sitting?) or even contributing to this mighty confluence. From this awesome source twin 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " alkathene tunnels bore their way through solid rock seeking and powering the mighty 4.5 kVa generators situated some 6 km downstream. In the unlikely event that your interest wanes, pause for a minute to view a concrete edifice, built by an unholy alliance of British contractors and consultants to commemorate this event; unfortunately situated it has completely blocked the natural water course, leaving aquatic life gasping on the dried out river bed and increasing sales of cassipoo and Paraquet to the broken, destitute downstream farming community. Suffice it to say that the great majority of these perpetrators have now been summarily despatched to other unsuspecting areas, no doubt to wreak their own peculiar brand of havoc, leaving Premier Jayawardene furiously scribbling page upon page, by the solitary light of a spluttering 60 watt bulb in darkened downtown Colombo, to the World Bank beseeching that no further aid be endowed upon his country.

NOW on to the main event - please note that the Hash does not end where it starts - PEOPLES with stuff for the picnic (barbecue units will be provided) are requested to hand over their stuff to Trevor Johnson who will, if can't sell it quickly, arrange to air lift it to the picnic site by hot air balloon (kindly contributed by IIMI).

HAVE A GOOD DAY - YOU SUCKERS.

Date: Sunday 8th March 2004

Time: 10.00 a.m. (Viewing gallery assembly point)

Approx. time to assembly point is 40 minutes - allow longer if you want to take pictures en-route, though there's no reason why you should because the reservoir is damn near dry.

MISDIRECTIONS:

From Digana Village set trip to zero (or if you have any sense go back to bed) and turn RIGHT.

- 0.6 km Take left fork in old Digana marked "Victoria Dam Site 26 km. "
- 18.5 km Turn right at junction.
- 26.8 km Immediately beyond security barrier take left (uphill) turn leading to viewing gallery.
- 27.0 km Viewing gallery - on leaving gallery retrace route downhill and turn left at junction rejoining main access road.
- 27.6 km Security barrier - proceed across dam and on-on to
- 28.8 Yet another security barrier (smile nicely - the guns ARE loaded).
- 32.0 Junction take sharp left (Note: Adhikarigama BBN R & R centre).
- 32.1 YES another barrier.
- 33.6 Good view of the concrete obstruction from lay-by.
- 35.0 Tunnel is approx. 400 ft. below you - if you see any holes in road do not drive over them.
- 37.7 After hairpins turn right onto unmetalled access road and proceed on and up ramp to BBCIL compound at
- 38.0 Large rock on opposite bank is where some ancient Kandyan king used to invite dissidents in early free fall techniques. (NB: the Mismanagement decline to comment on the rumour that this same rock will be used in après-Hash rites for the chastisement of Hares, FRBs, SCBs and other miscreants.)

Have you all given your car registration numbers to Neil or Tony?

RUN REPORT FOR No. 106: "39 STEPS"

Hashing has always been regarded in the Army as an activity for officers and government officials of an appropriate status. When informed by my daughter that she was a member and that I would be invited to join in when I visited her I felt suitably humbled.

On the appointed day we all congregated at the bottom of this river valley a few minutes outside Kandy. Still not quite sure of the rules we were split into two groups. My daughter explained that we would join the group on the "beer" run.

We set off along the river bank just like a cross country run but in no time at all everybody stopped and started milling around. Cries of CHECKING could be heard all around. All of a sudden ON PAPER was called by one of the pack near this fairly large hill. This was the signal for everybody to chase him up the steep hill.

By the time I reached the bottom of the hill with the Child and John Cleese the front runners had gone up the hill with such speed that all that was left

was a scorched trail. The run continued along a track and I settled into a steady run with the Carpenter, Mr. Pastry and the Pip just in front. Calls of CHECKING and ON PAPER could be heard from those in front. On reaching a large track junction we all caught up with each other. Whilst it would be improper of me to criticise an event on my first undertaking, I must however agree with STP who commented "not a b....y bar anywhere!" It was, after all, called a beer run.

At this point the front runners got further and further away and plaintive cries of WHERE ARE YOU? from the Child met with stony silence. We discovered that Meeni, Mynee and High Tension had accidentally followed a different route not knowing it was the lemonade run!

Some fine directions by Gaucho, and the Child, John Cleese, the Pip and I were nearly up with the leaders who for some obscure reason had decided to run in a great big circle. After crossing a somewhat precarious bridge and following along the side of a stream Running Bare was seen standing on the road above. Having obviously lost our way we used our initiative and climbed the bank to join him. Through no fault of our own we had taken another short cut. In gratitude Never Again gave Running Bare a cigarette and ran off down the road puffing.

To show that we had entered with the right spirit we set off down the road with renewed vigour. We were quickly overtaken by Neep, Dallas, Keep Fit, STP, Double Dutchmen and Damp Squib. We were subjected to what I thought were calls of abuse, the term used being "Downers for you". A quarter mile further and the run was over.

A liberal supply of beer and lemonade was available to all. There then followed a ritual chanting of praise for those who had done particularly well. Those recognised were the Hares Running Bare and Gaucho (who got my vote), those who had used their initiative and run a shortened route, those who had completed the run on this first attempt, and anyone sadly who was leaving.

My first attempt at Hashing was over. I found it tiring but enjoyable. It is unlikely that I shall ever compete again since I return to England before your next run.

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Before we proceed, let's all wish poor old Fish Finger a speedy recovery from the wee Hash Crash she had on the lemonade run. Hope it doesn't put her off Hashing in future.

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A reminder: get snapping for the fantastic photo competition to be held in April - details in last Hashings or ask Roger, Neil or Bee.

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Now for something completely different.....What do you get when you ask an eminent anthropologist to write up the lemonade run? Well, not a lemonade run report, that's for sure. Read on-on.

A Tentative Anthropological Inquiry into the Functions  
of the Present-Day Hsitirb Hash Ceremony Through a  
Comparison with its Original Form

Note: The following are initial impressions of the functions of the Hsitirb Hash Ceremony, which are based partially on field notes taken during and immediately after my attendance of three such ceremonies. The research methods employed were participant observation and informal interviewing; more formal methods, such as written questionnaires and various cognitive and psychological tests, were eschewed as being inappropriate and impractical, for reasons that will soon become clear. The main method of inquiry, however, consisted of textual analysis of the Hash Chronicles, the ancient account of the ceremony's origin written by a committee of the Hash GODs (which was the first and last time a committee had anything to do with a Hash). The author regrets that he is unable to divulge the location of these texts for purposes of public verification, for he has been sworn to secrecy, under penalty of having to forfeit his New Balance running shoes if he reneges. Also, this piece is to be considered as a sort of companion to the brilliant account of the later, Biblical history of the Hash, which was written some time back by Bumble. Since the Chronicles predate the Bible, which traces the spread of the Hash from the mythical land of Ayalam, after it was taken over by mortal men (and women), to the historic land of Tpyge, and finally to the Promised Land of Learsi, Bumble's piece begins historically where this one leaves off.

The Problem The Hash Ceremony consists of a number of members of the Hsitirb tribe, along with members of the politically allied and culturally similar Nacirema tribe, as well as members of a few others, running or walking together along a previously established course across scenic country-side. There are actually two parts to this course: the "beer run," which is typically longer and more difficult, and the "lemonade run," which tends to be shorter and less arduous. At the end of the course, the participants partake either in beer or lemonade, their preference being unrelated to which "run" they took. This is the time also for the Drinking Ritual part of the ceremony, which will be described shortly.

"Hashes" are held simply on every other "Sunday," the day of the week in the native calendar that is set aside as a day of rest from work and of formal observance of the main Hsitirb and Nacirema religion, which is normally held in "houses of worship," also referred to as "Hcruhces." This calendar is not lunar in nature; nor is it based on any other apparent natural phenomenon. It appears to be entirely arbitrary and to follow some abstract, secular principle that I have not yet been able to uncover. At any rate, this otherwise entirely secular calendar does designate at least one day of the week as being sacred, although attendance at the associated formal ceremonies is certainly not compulsory. Indeed, it is my impression that none of the Hash participants are regular attendants at the formal ceremonies, if at all.

In fact, when asked why they are participating in the Hash Ceremony, the devotees themselves invariably answer simply, "Because I like to," or "Because it's fun," which points more to the recreational rather than to the religious meaning of this day. But the fact remains that Hashes are held on the day of

formal worship, and at around the same time of these ceremonies, as well, and this lends the impression that they may be part of some heterodox cult, although it is premature to make this a definitive interpretation. Nor can we but speculate at the darker intentions of this cult, if indeed that is what it is, at this early stage in our investigation. For a key to understanding this phenomenon, however, we can examine the origin of the Hash and compare this ancient, hoary form with its present-day counterpart, as a means of determining how the later has changed, and thereby what its true (i.e., to the mind of the anthropologist, not to those of the natives) function is today.

The Solution As with any ceremony, the origins of the Hash are shrouded in myth, although we can be certain that the Hsitirb, or more appropriately, their divine ancestors, were the originators. The main Hash origin myth (there are minor variants) holds that the Hsitirb ancestors, the GODS ("Great Old Duffers"), in the mythical colonial land of Ayalam one day grew tired of their indolent lives of laying about all the time and eating their ambrosia, "hash" (thus, the name of the ritual, evidencing also the lack of creative flair these GODS possessed), as well as their ever expanding bellies and other somatic parts that resulted, and thus decided to take some exercise. But they decided that this exercise should have a certain structure. Firstly, being adverse to water and Jazzercise and Nautilus equipment not yet having been invented, they decided that it should simply consist entirely of running and walking. Secondly, they agreed that this running and walking should emulate as close as possible the beloved "fox hunt" of Naitirb, their homeland. Lacking foxes, hounds, and horses, as well as the proper royal family heritage to hold this exclusive event, they decided that they would have to make do with a course laid out by "hares" ("foxes" having been considered too close to the royal sport and as having an unfortunate sexual connotation when applied to humans), not by scent, for the GODS, although their powers were considerable, lacked the smelling ability of hounds, but by sight -- in the form of gold coins sprinkled at strategic points along the trail. Being GODS and thus immeasurably wealthy, these originators of the Hash ritual valued gold coins not as money but simply as pretty trinkets that shined brightly in the sun and were thus useful to mark trails with. When the ritual was later passed on to mortals, who did value gold coins as money, not being as uniformly wealthy or as materially satiable as the GODS, the participants kept picking up the coins as they passed, thereby destroying the trail for the ones to follow, and thus it was decided to use bits of white paper instead -- a practice that continues up to today.

The original GODly Hashers, also being of a fair and democratic persuasion, decided to divide the course into two parts, on the basis of length. The longer one was designed for men; who would be rewarded with a mug, or mugs, depending on their capacity, of fermented carrot juice at the end; the shorter, less arduous one was intended for women and children, who would partake in "straight" carrot juice when finished. But the later-day mortals mistook the GODS' kindness and consideration for women and children as sexist patronizing and so ended the exclusive division, allowing both women and children on what became known as the "beer run" and men on the "lemonade run" (the reason for the change in beverage will be pointed out shortly), according simply to their personal preferences. This gave "liberated" women, as well as older, better developed children, the opportunity to run along side the men on

the longer course and similarly "liberated" and less well physically maintained men the chance to run with their more traditional, less-athletically oriented wives and their younger children on the shorter, easier course. The first mortal hashers, craving more excitement and challenge than the GODs, also decided to lay false trails and dead-ends along the course, typically up steep grades and across difficult water passages.

But there was one thing the GODs were particularly adamant about: in keeping with their long-standing disdain for physical competition, they were determined that the Hash would never become a "race," in any sense of the term, but would remain simply as a bit of leisurely and genteel exercise -- a "social event," if you will, woven around the divinely ordained desire to lose weight and to get into shape. The first mortal Hashers, however, misinterpreting the GODs' original intention, did turn the event, especially the longer, "fermented carrot juice," run into quite a fierce competition, wrongly assuming that the GODs would reward the winners with free and quick tickets to Heaven. But by the end of the second generation, when it had been noticed that none of the winners had achieved Everlasting Bliss -- indeed, they had been "rewarded" with trips to the opposite place -- and after many Hashers had either been seriously injured or killed by falling, drowning, or heatstroke, it was decided to tone the event back down, to be more in keeping with the original, celestial form, where it more or less remains today.

In addition, because the GODs were somewhat hard of hearing, they had to use multiple repetitious commands, such as "On-on-on-on-on-on . . . ." (the signal that the right trail had been found) and "Up-up-up-up-up-up . . . ." (the command to drink up one's mug of fermented or unfermented carrot juice in one draft ["draught" to the Hsitirb]; more will be said about this command shortly). But the first mortals, most of whom were not hard of hearing and all of whom were more oriented toward efficiency than were the GODs, shortened these lengthy repetitions to only two ("On-on" and "Up-up"), except retaining multiple repetitions for "Up" while a person was draining his or her mug.

Another change has been in the manner of costume worn by the Hash participants. The GODs tended to wear loose-fitting clothing that would cover their entire bodies, save their faces and hands, owing to their desire to hide their unseemly rolls of fat, as well as to provide an assist in weight reduction by increasing the amount of sweat. The mortal Hashers, on the other hand, being in better physical condition than the GODs and wanting to display their more shapely legs, thighs, buttocks, breasts, and arms, adopted more skimpy articles of clothing, such as tight fitting "shorts" (short for short pants) and equally tight fitting "T-shirts" (origin unknown). Indeed, the original two mortals, Eve and Mada, wore no clothing at all, and decided to cover their "private parts" only when they realized that they were different from each other's and thus should be kept private and because they grew tired of being bitten by bugs on tender places while Hashing.

The mortal Hashers also decided to change the beverages consumed at the Drinking Ritual at the end of the ceremony. Not being able to develop a taste for carrot juice, fermented or otherwise, they decided to adopt beer and lemonade instead. But there is more to it than this. Beer and lemonade, both containing many more calories than carrot juice in either form, represent a

transformation from divinely created sincerity and desire for perfection to a cynical ambivalence toward self-improvement and an acceptance, and even celebration, of imperfection, which tends to characterize, in particular, the present-day Hash and, in general, humankind's fall from Grace.

The GODs also created a song to sing at the end of the Hash ceremony, at the "Drinking Ritual," otherwise known as the "Up-Ups." This ritual and accompanying song was intended to honor the two "hares" who had laid out and marked the course, as well as serving as a rite of initiation for first-time participants. In general, though, this singing was intended to celebrate the self-recognized, divine act of communal exercise and commitment to physical fitness. The generic form went like this:

Here's to the Hares/Novices, they are white  
They are Angels all right, all right  
They are Angels, so they say  
And they're already in Heaven today, today.

Drink it up-up-up-up-up, etc.

But the cynical mortals changed the self-congratulatory, divinely inspired message to one of wanton celebration of accepted and desired imperfection:

Here's to the Hares/Novices, they are blue  
They are bastards through and through  
They are bastards so they say  
And they'll never get to heaven in a long, long way.

Drink it down-down-down-down-down, etc.

Especially noteworthy is the transformation of "white" to "blue" (from purity to avarice), of "Angels" to "bastards" (self-explanatory), and of "And you're already in Heaven today, today" to "And you'll never get to Heaven in a long, long way" (also self-explanatory), all of which indicates mortal man's (and woman's) recognition, and acceptance, of their fall from Grace and natural state of living in sin and sloth. Also, in this same connection, is the change of "Up-up-up-up-up . . . ." to "Down-down-down-down-down . . . .," along with a renaming of the "Up-Ups" Ritual to the "Down-Downs," which was done by the second generation of mortals, when they became aware that winning a Hash was not a sure bet as a way to Heaven, and continues to reflect Hashers' basic preference for damnation over salvation.

A final piece of evidence pointing to the irreverence of the contemporary Hash is the great variety of honorific names adopted by the participants, to be used during the ceremony. Whereas the male GODs were named either John, Peter, or Paul, and the females, either Mary, Sarah, or Sharon, present-day mortal Hashers have such names as "Damp Squib," "Lancelot," "Gaucho," "Yankee," "Tick-Tock," "Running Bare," and "Appropriate Technology" for males, and "Bumble," "Flamenco," "Cleopatra," "Goldilocks," "Doodle," "Oil Drum," and "The Wife of Bath" for the females -- not exactly your run-of-the-mill, reverential, GOD-fearing appellations.

In closing, I should mention a point of similarity between the Sacred Hash of the GODs and the Profane Hash of the mortals, beyond that of their overall forms. Just as the GODs were basically athletically inept (thus Great Old Duffers) and would tend, regardless of their best intentions, to wallow about the course, stumbling and falling over themselves in the process, the present-day SATANs (Satisfied, Average, Tired-Arched Nincompoops) are not much better. But, again, here we can also discern a basic difference: The SATANs not only don't care that they are athletically incompetent, they are proud of it. They have retained the original, GODly-ordained non-competitive nature of the event, but have dispensed with the divine desire for self-improvement and perfection. They have thrown out the baby, in other words, but have kept the bath water.

We have thus arrived at the solution to our original problem: Is the Hash simply a time for the Hsitirb and Naciremas to get together and have a good time, as they themselves aver, or does their behavior in fact constitute a heterodox cult, with dark, unGODly intentions? The answer is, well, to straddle the fence in true anthropological fashion, both. While the participants are undoubtedly consciously motivated out of a desire for hedonistic camaraderie, at the same time they are driven unconsciously to repeat the ancient SATANic function of the ceremony -- namely, to celebrate man's (and woman's) fall from GODly Grace and to indulge his (and her) weak and imperfect nature. Either way, by GOD, or, rather, by SATAN, it's FUN.

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And finally one or two people have asked why we Hash on Sunday mornings.

Well, why not? But actually we used to Hash on the occasional Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon, but lots of people couldn't make it on a Saturday because of work, and afternoons are generally unsuitable in the wet season when it tends to be fairly dry in the mornings but pours down all afternoon. Also it is far more convenient for our friends from Kotmale to Hash on a Sunday morning, as they can then have lunch and spend the afternoon at Digana club and then get their children back home at a reasonable hour. OK?