

g with discomfort,
can have almost
choose the right gear
you there. Here are
list



estate a table and chairs too,
in daylight. Other bonuses with
to the living area, including a
a lamp holder and luminous
well makes an optional wall-

am Street, Dublin 2; LPC
Outdoor Leisure, York Street,



Running wild

With false leads, regular beer stops, humiliating punishments and a global fraternity, hashing is a unique form of running that's as addictive as it is strange, writes Jasper Winn

Hey, do you hash?" I was in Arusha, in the Tanzanian foothills of Kilimanjaro, on New Year's Eve, and a local safari guide was wondering what my plans were for the evening. "We're going to get together tonight. There'll be a good mix of people... it's going to be fun, if you want to come along."

The Hash House Harriers is a world-wide 'disorganisation' of well over 1,000 non-competitive hare and hound-style running clubs spread across 185 countries. Positioning themselves as a 'drinking club with a running problem', the HHH 'kennels' are predominantly the preserve of ex-pats and local co-workers with a sprinkling of in-the-know travellers, who get together to run and socialise.

The first HHH was started in the late 1930s by British expatriates in the

eponymous Kuala Lumpur 'Hash House' club. Since the 1960s groups have sprung up on all continents including Antarctica, and in countries from Albania to Zimbabwe. With the number of Irish consultants and development workers spread across the world, many kennels have a high Hiberno membership.

On Arusha's New Year's Eve run I was joining Ugandans, Tanzanians, Irish, Dutch, British and Americans. For lack of anything more suitable I was running in a pair of riding boots, swimming shorts and a formal shirt. My running kit was seen only as an amusing eccentricity in HHH terms, where odd costumes, zany accessories and an annual 'red dress run' day are the norm.

Before a meet, 'hares' lay a trail, using a code of circles and crosses drawn on the ground in flour, including an abundance of false leads. The super-fit speed ahead



notching up distance as they backtrack from each dead-end while the barely-jogging can catch up with the front runners as the latter arrive at the 'check' points where true and false trails diverge.

Ideally the slowest and the fastest runners will arrive at the finish within a few minutes of each other, ready to face the drinking 'punishments' meted out for transgressions of obscure Hash Bible law at the post-run 'Down, Down'.

Our run in Arusha was made more pleasingly chaotic as local children discovering the trail busied themselves laying false marks. A group of us front-running ended up lost on the edge of town amid small huts and gardens, with the kids who'd sent us astray banging drums and cheering us on as we

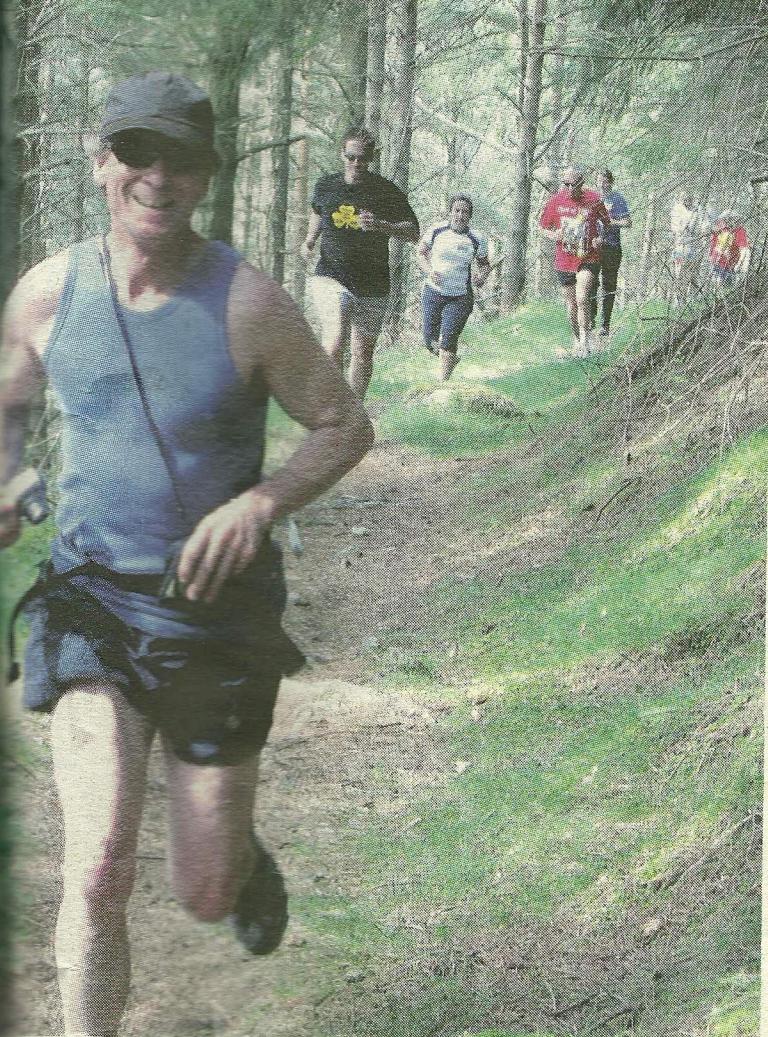
Road less travelled

By Martin Ruane

Trail name: Historical Trail
Recreation site: Monivea, Co Galway
Trail start point: car park
Length: 1.5 km
Time: one hour
Degree of difficulty: easy
Metres climb: 0
Attributes: loop trail
Trail way marking: red

This woodland, which was once part of the French estate, is situated 30 kilometres east of Galway city and 8





galloped around in the twilight. We kept going. There was still the half-way 'beer check' to reach and the all-night party – costumed in the same clothes we'd run in – to look forward to.

Each region and every individual kennel has its own atmosphere, reflecting the surrounding culture and often the particular pressures of living and working abroad. Jonathan Korowicz, from Dublin, was Grand Master of the Bishkek kennel when working with the UN in Kyrgyzstan.

He has hashed on three continents, and says that east Asia is still the centre of hashing with some cities, like Bangkok, running separate hashes for families, singles and unmarried men, each with a different idea of post-run fun. "But the

further you get out of your comfort zone, the more exciting hashing becomes," says Korowicz. "I met up with aid workers who were hashing in Kabul, and they were saying it was the only way to get out of their compounds, and to be a bit crazy, as well as really confusing the Taliban."

It's a bit of an anomaly hashing in your own country, but nevertheless Jonathan and I went out for a Sunday run with the Dublin kennel in Djouce Wood. Founded in 1986 and Ireland's only regular hash, the Dublin runs take place both in the city and outside. The Irish runners nearly all have aid and development work backgrounds, and T-shirts told of runs across Asia, Africa and the US.

Guests included a couple from



The Hash House Harriers in action

JASPER WINN

Kenya, and a Swiss woman. 'Wet And Ready', a typical innuendo-laden hash name, was on a week's course in Trinity and a regular hasher, who says: "When I'm going to a new city I just find the local hash, plug in and run – I didn't know any of these people before today, and now they're friends."

Dubliner 'Polly', a man in a Goa Interhash 2002 memorial T-shirt, had laid a commendably convoluted trail of loops through the woods with plenty of false marks leading to dead-ends at the top of gut-busting hill ascents. As we ran he encouraged both the fastest, and the 'knitting circle' at the back, with blasts on a bugle.

We arrived back at the car park en masse. Cans were opened as the group's 'Religious Advisor' donned a cowled monk's cape and awarded punishments – most of which were humiliating.

But no one outside the group will ever know just how humiliating they were, because, as Korowicz says: "One of the strengths of running with a kennel and just being silly is that whoever you are – the boss of a NGO, a local translator, a visitor – what happens on the hash stays on the hash."

Dublin's HHH Kennel meets in the city or the Dublin Mountains most weeks on Mondays, with alternate Sunday runs. Visit www.dublinhhh.com for dates and venues. Runners of all fitness levels can take part. If travelling or working abroad, find information on hash meets by city or destination on World Hash House Harriers, www.gthhh.com.



TRAIL GRADING

Multi-access Generally flat trails with good surfaces, suitable for less able users, parents with buggies or very young children.

Easy Generally flat trails with some gentle slopes. They can be described as 'muscle looseners' and can be walked in trainers or similar light footwear.

Moderate These trails can be described as 'muscle-stretchers'. They can include sections of national way marked ways, forest roads and mountain access routes. The going underfoot can be poor or rough, with some obstacles. Boots or strong walking shoes generally required.

Ffrench on the death of her father, Robert, in Naples in 1896. The Ffrench family lived on the estate and were local landlords since the mid 17th century. The mausoleum is a funeral chapel and is built of Wicklow granite. Kathleen Ffrench died in Manchuria in 1938 and is also buried in the mausoleum.

Further along the trail you will see the ice-house, which is beautifully restored with assistance from the local community through the rural social scheme. You can also read about the use and history of ice-houses from the information sign posted on site.