

Dear Matilda,

Right now, you probably think your parents are the centre of your world, but one day you will develop this terrible affliction (teenageritis) whereupon your parents will become creepy old people with diminishing relevance and No Life.

Well, I thought I would let you know that your parents do—or at least, by the time you read this, did—have a Life, and a part of this Life included Hash House Harriers.

Your Ps have aliases—Hello Kitty (mum) and Friskies (dad). You, darling girl, are Kitty Litter. With any luck, some of us may be around to remind you of this at your 18th birthday!

So, on this particular evening—Monday, 16 March 2015—it was your dad’s turn to set the run—he was the hare—and he decided that the starting point would be near where you lived at the time, in Watson, in the car park by the Academy of Interactive Entertainment. And, let me tell you, he chose well, because, among all of us, we are academic, interactive, and extremely (well, mostly) entertaining.

Your mum brought you by the pre-run circle and of course we were captivated by your sunny disposition, enchanting smile, lovely bright eyes—clearly your Ps are doing something right because you are a happy, charming little girl who has stolen all our hearts. We only hope that, once home, you are not flinging peas upon the walls.

Your dad told us about the run while your mum whisked you off home and no doubt to prepare for the drink stop. There was a lot of talk about white arrows and coloured arrows while your dad waved vaguely in a particular direction (while heading off directly opposite) and we all—a patient, considering bunch—prepared to declare the run a total fustercluck before the first 100 meters had been cleared.

But, what do you know...somebody found trail! All was (temporarily, at least) forgiven as we set off on our appointed task. Now, bear with me: we have runners, walkers, and former-runners-who-now-walk-the-run. I am one of the latter, and was pleased to be accompanied on my perambulation through Watson (and Hackett) by Gnash. This means that at some point, we lost sight of the runners, but were still in front of the walkers, so were in our little world of inner-north, whale-saving, beard-wearing, Volvo-driving city dwellers.

I lied. I didn’t see any Volvos (nor any cars up on blocks in the front yard, so clearly we weren’t in boganville), nor any beards. Nor any tangible evidence of whale-saving desire. But Gnashie and I were utterly charmed by the quiet of the tree-lined streets, the meandering Places, Crescents and Circuits, and had to bestir ourselves to check for arrows (coloured, of course).

All this by way of saying, NFI what the runners or walkers were doing, but Gnash and I had a fine outing, and every time our path seemed to be heading ever upward to Mt Majura, those blessed arrows turned in a downhill direction.

This run was set on the eve of St Patrick's Day, so there was a bit of the wearin' o' the green, and outsized leprechaun hats, fake Irish accents, a bit of 'faith and begorra' and 'sufferin' jaysus', and some jokes (I do use the term loosely) that were virtually unintelligible.

The RA looked like he borrowed his Irish grandpa's green dressing gown but, on the plus side, he kept the weather at bay and seems to have expanded his song book.

Most of the hashers who had been off gallivanting in WA for Nash Hash were back (except for Suellen and JR—must have been big doings at Southfork), and requisite charges were proffered.

There once was a man from Nantucket...

Yes, there were lots of limericks, most of them unprintable and some of them quite chuckle-worthy.

Your dad (and, presumably, your mum had a hand in this) offered us a fairly traditional Irish repast of corned beef and cabbage. Okay, sauerkraut, but kind of almost the same.

Awards, more charges, complete and utter blathering...

Crackers' 600th run, and you would have thought he might have dredged up some completely inedible cracker from one of his postings but no, it was a pedestrian Shape. So disappointing.

Well, Matilda, in the annals of Canberra hashing, this was neither the greatest nor the worst run ever. But, it was a lovely evening—good company, good weather, good food. What more could one ask for?

As we say—in the hashing world—on out.

Hey, Matilda, your Ps are tops. Totes. (Do they still say that?)