

Pining for the Fjords¹

I am reliably informed by Hash Cash that our numbers on Monday past—having only been in the high teens for the previous couple of weeks—doubled to approximately 34 men and women, brave and true. A schooner² of hashers turned out to Telopea Park on what can barely—charitably (though that's stretching it a bit) be described as a crisp, brisk, Canberra evening. Colder than a [blank's] [blank] on [blank] (insert your own, extremely un-PC derogative in the appropriate spots, and chuckle silently to yourself).

Possibly it was the lure of the public toilets. Or the anticipated nosh by a man who makes his living at the stove (no pumpkin soup this night of nights!).

We even had returnees from abroad—Greenfinger and Black Dog—and, from a past so dark and dim they had been struck from the weekly record and had to be resurrected and re-etched into the tablet! (Freezerballs, Energizer). In fact, such was her euphoria at the occasion that Freezerballs even volunteered to set a run! (I mention this in case she forgets; it is now a matter of public record).

*...I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: All times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone, on shore³ ...*

And yet, and yet, our numbers are forever reduced by one (no, not Weatherman). The hare promised the usual hash markings except it was '3 and you're on' after both checks and 2-ways...WTF? There was some grumbling about hash rules and blah blah but soon we were off, passing by the Kingston Foreshore (where we could see how the simple folk live).

*...Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers...*

Rumour has it that some runners detoured to the Kingo and downed a cleansing ale, while we walkers trod the chalked path, using local knowledge to avail ourselves of a prudent shortcut. Thankfully, Kingston is one of the few Canberra suburbs absent of secret, sudden hills, and we were suitably grateful.

*...I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
For ever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!*

Just when some of us (okay, me) started to get a bit restless and cranky we happened upon the drink stop, tucked into the car park behind some units in Barton. Awaiting us was glugvine and chippies—two of the essential hash food groups, the former especially welcome in winter. The hare was a bit parsimonious in

¹ Really? You need a footnote for this? How pathetic are you?

² I hereby declare this the collective noun for a group of hashers.

³ Alfred, Lord Tenneyson, *Ulysses*

relation to seconds, being mindful that the runners hadn't yet appeared—and some of us even pretended to give a ship, grumbling under our breaths, and yet we moved on.

*...The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'T is not too late to seek a newer world...
for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.*

Without too much ado a fire was laid and set; beverages were opened and poured, and the circle was called to order. Whiskey and cigars were passed round (I had to wash my hash polar fleece; it stinks. Stinks worse than usual, to clarify), and we did pause to remember our absent friend.

*...It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles...
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.*

Our dear friend, Norway bound forever. But let us celebrate thusly: <https://youtu.be/ryvOjCGS6E4>