

# Hash House Harriers

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The **Hash House Harriers** (abbreviated to **H.H.H.** or **H3**) is an international group of running/drinking clubs. The template for a hash run is for one or more hashers to lay out a running trail, which may include false trails, short cuts and trail breaks to keep the pack together regardless of fitness levels and has been frequently described as 'a drinking club with a running problem'..

The organization of the Hash House Harriers is completely decentralized, with chapters (also commonly called kennels). It has more than 1700 groups, with at least one Hash in virtually every major city in the world meeting on a weekly or regular basis.

Hashing in Kenya began in 1978.

## History

Hashing began in [Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia](#), in [1938](#), when a small group of British colonial officials and expatriates, a casual group who would meet after work on Monday evenings to run, following a paper trail, through the environs of Kuala Lumpur to get rid of the excesses of the previous weekend.

After running for some months they were approached by the Registrar of Societies, who advised them that, as they were a "group" they would require a Constitution (the aims of which are reproduced below) and a name. A.S. Gispert (known as "G") suggested the name. Hash House Harriers. As bachelors, they were billeted in the [Selangor Club Annex](#), known locally as the Hash House, because of its monotonous food. Their runs were patterned after the traditional British [paper chase](#). A *hare* was given a head start to blaze a trail, marking his devious way with shreds of paper, all the while pursued by a shouting pack of "harriers." Only the hare knew where he was going...the harriers followed his clues to stay on trail. Apart from the excitement of chasing the hare and solving the clues, reaching the end was its own reward...for there [thirsty](#) harriers would find a tub of iced [beer](#)

Hashing died out during [World War II](#) after the Japanese invasion of Malaysia, but started again shortly after the war, when the original protagonists, minus "G" who had been killed in the Japanese invasion of Singapore, re-assembled in Kuala Lumpur. Apart from a "one off" chapter, formed in the Italian Riviera, (now the [Royal Milan and Bordighera Hash](#)), hashing didn't take off until [1962](#), when Ian Cumming founded the 2nd kennel in [Singapore](#). From then on, the phenomenon started to grow, spreading through the [Far East](#), [Australia](#), and [New Zealand](#), as well as [Europe](#) and [North America](#). Hashing experienced a large growth in popularity during the mid-[1970s](#).

By the end of the [20th century](#), there were thousands of Hash House Harrier clubs in all parts of the world, with newsletters, directories, and even regional and world hashing conventions. This boom is owed largely to the power of the [Internet](#) to provide timely and accurate information on kennels and their events and points of contact. As of [2003](#), there are two organized HHH groups in [Antarctica](#).<sup>[1]</sup>

## How it is done

A typical hash kennel (local chapter or group) today is a loosely-organized group of 20-100 men and women, aka Harriers and Harriettes. Kennel members meet weekly or bi-weekly to follow a trail laid by a hare (the person(s) leading the trail who leaves the appropriate marks on the ground, trees etc. for the pack to follow). Generally any mark used to identify the trail is called a 'hash mark'.

Trails may be "live" - where the hare gets the head start (often 5-10 minutes) from the pack, or "dead" - where trail is laid entirely (or in part) in advance of the start. There may be one or more "beer stops" or "beer checks" along the way, with the hare either pre-caching a cooler of beer, or having the trail go to a prearranged meeting spot with the beer truck, which is generally a personal vehicle that someone is using to transport a keg or cooler of drinks, snacks and Beer.

To make the run interesting, the hare can set the trail through literally any kind of terrain, with only the imagination being the limitation. The trails can go through residential areas, forests, or swamps with anything off-road generally called "shiggy".

Often the hare will employ several tricks in attempts to slow the pack and to keep runners and walkers together. The hare may mark an intersection - generally called a "check" - that signifies that the trail continues within a 360 degree area from that point. Several false trails may lead from that check and it is up to the front runners to "solve" the trail by going out and determining what might actually be the correct path, or "true trail". The pack will generally carry whistles, horns, or other audible means of communicating in order to assist each other on trail and keep from getting lost. A member of the pack calling out "Are you?" means to know if another individual is searching for the true trail, typically near a check (or intersection), or is on the correct path. Someone will typically call out either "Checking!" to indicate that they are looking for the trail or "On-On", or blow their whistle or horn three times, to signify that they are on the true trail and that the pack should follow them.

A false trail may be marked one of several ways including a "bad trail" mark, possibly consisting of three parallel lines or other indication, a mark of "YBF" (short for "You've Been Fooled" or "You've Been F\*\*ked"), or a mark of "CB #" ("Count Back" with some number). The bad trail and YBF marks indicate that the runner must return to the most recent check point and then attempt to find the trail again. The count back mark means that the runner must count back the indicated number of hash marks and then use that

point to look for the next hash mark that might be hidden behind a tree, light pole, car tire, etc. An arrow on the ground with three parallel lines is known as a "true trail arrow" and signifies to the pack that they are on the real trail and are not following a false or bad trail. Other signs used might include a "BN" that means "Beer Near" - there is a beer stop nearby, "BS" signifying that the runner is now at the Beer Stop and should either look for the stashed beverages nearby or wait for the beer truck to arrive (depending on the instructions given by the hare before the start of trail), and "HH" - a "Hash Halt" command that tells the runners that they must wait until at least the first of the walkers show up so that the hare might have a bit more time to get ahead. Every Hash has its own set of marks and the names for these marks may vary widely, so Hashers visiting another pack should check the local signs before the run.

At trail's end hashers gather to drink beer and observe so-called religious ceremonies, the "Circle", which consists of drinking more beer; this time ritualistically. Circles may be led by the hash Grandmaster, the group's Religious Adviser, or by a committee of mismanagement. Traditions and the degree of rowdiness vary from hash to hash, but in general the Circle consists of awarding "Down-Downs" for misdemeanors real, imagined, or blatantly made up, and the recipients will most likely have been dobbed in by their fellow hashers. Generally the activities will also include the group singing of bawdy drinking songs of the type that can be heard in an old pub, fraternity party, military get-together, rugby match, or other such social gathering.

At the conclusion of the Circle, the hashers may head to an "On-After" or "On-On-On", which may be at a nearby restaurant or pub for grub and libations with which to wash it down. This is the social part of the hash, and the party may last from one hour to several hours, as they tell stories, have fun, and enjoy everyone's company.

Generally no reservations are required to join a group, and typically all that is needed is to find out the time and location of the start; either by emailing a current member, viewing the group website, calling the information phone line if available, and just showing up.

## **Traditions and naming convention**

There are said to be no rules in hashing, however several traditions have developed with a violation of such severely frowned upon and likely to invoke a punishment by way of a "down-down". A down-down is one of the oldest traditions and is a means of punishing or rewarding pretty much anything. Upon being called to do a down-down the accused must come to the middle of the circle and drink everything that they have in their vessel (generally a cup, mug, or other drinking device). They must do this without pause until they have consumed the whole quantity of drink (typically beer, but it can be of any drink they may have with them) or they must pour the remaining contents over their head.

Typically there are no new shoes allowed on the hash trail whereas being caught in a pair of new shoes may require that one drinks from the offending shoe as penance. Other traditions include a prohibition of pointing with fingers, requiring the use of elbows or

other appendages to indicate direction, and a proscription against the use of real names (aka nerd names) at any point around other hashers.

One aspect of hashing that makes the activity stand out (besides the running and general drinking of beer) is the use of names as assigned by the group. Though traditions may vary greatly among the groups, and some groups do not do this, it is common practice to give members a name. At their first hash, attendees will generally be known as "Virgin [Name]" or "New Boot [Name]" and will then be called "Just [Name]" until duly named by the group. The occasion of a member's naming by the group may occur after they have attended a specified number of hashes (e.g. 5), after they hare their first trail, or after they do something the pack deems noteworthy. Before a naming, the group may collect information concerning the individual or ask them a series of questions that can include occupation, most embarrassing moment, personal preferences, stories, or experiences. Others will then be allowed to share their own stories or knowledge concerning that individual in hopes of finding some aspect that seems to be memorable or noticeably sticks out regarding that person. Many suggestions may be offered, with the final name being chosen by vote or general group consensus with more often than not some humorous or debaucherous connotation being used.

The traditional symbol of the hash is the outline of the foot, with often the words "On-On" written upon it.

## Terms

"Are You?"	Question shouted by the pack to FRBs, meaning "Are you on the trail?"	Back hare	Hare who remains with the last runners
Bar	Trail mark indicating that the true true trail branches off prior to the mark	Beer Check	Beverage stop or trail mark indicating a beverage stop
Check	Trail mark indicating the true trail must be sought out from the false trails	Check Back	Same as false trail
Circle	Assembly of hashers at trail's end, normally for the purpose of conducting down-downs	"Checking"	Answer shouted by FRB to pack when asked "Are You?", indicating that FRB has not determined whether the trail he's following is

			true or false
"Check-it-out"	Invitation given to the hounds by the hare to find the true trail	Crop busting	Short-cutting across a field
DFL	Dead F***ing Last, Slowest member(s) of the pack		
Down-Down	The ceremony of quaffing a beverage (an honour)	Dust	Sawdust or flour used to mark the trail
Eurohash	International hashing event held in Europe in odd-numbered years	False trail	A short trail ended with the Tee sign, three lines, or other mark indicating termination, see also Falsies
Falsie	A false trail	FRB	Front-Running B*st*rd: Fastest member of the pack
Grand Mistress	mismanagement member; sometimes used as the title for a female Grand Master.	Grand Master (GM)	mismanagement member, ceremonial leader of the hash
Hare	Hasher who lays the trail	Hash Cash	Mismanagement member; the treasurer
Hash Horn	Mismanagement member; carries a horn or bugle on trail, blows it to encourage and guide the pack	Hash House	The <a href="#">Selangor Club</a> in Kuala Lumpur, meeting place of the Mother Hash
Hash House Harrier	Any hasher	Hare Raiser	Mismanagement member in charge of lining up hares for future trails

Hashit	offensive or embarrassing object given to a hasher for notable on-trail accomplishments, normally carried by the awardee on subsequent trails until it is awarded to someone else	Hash Master (HM)	Mismanagement member
Harriette	Female hasher	Hash Haberdasher	Mismanagement member in charge of T-shirts, hats, mementos, etc
Hashing	The act of running a hash trail	Hasher	Any Hash House Harrier
Hash Name	Nickname, usually bestowed after a set number of runs or in honour of a notable incident; not used by all hashes	Hash Mistress	Mismanagement member. Generally has no useful function, but it keeps the girlies quiet.
Horrors	Hashers' children	Held Check	Trail mark indicating an intersection where true trail may take another direction, but requires hashers to wait until ordered by the hare to 'check it out'
Hounds	The body of hashers in pursuit of the hare, see also Pack	Interhash	regional, national, or world hash gathering
Kennel	Local Hash Group	Knitting Circle	Group of harriers or harriettes (usually the latter) who spend more time walking and talking than hashing.

Ladies Check	Harriettes to 'check it out'	Live Hare	Hare who gets a nominal head start and is pursued by the pack as he or she lays trail
"Looking"	Answer shouted by FRB to pack when asked "Are You?", indicating that FRB has lost the true trail	Mismanagement	Hash officials; sometimes elected, sometimes appointed
Mutt	A hashers dog	Nash hash	A national interhash
Newies	Virgin hashers	On-Inn	Trail's end, also On-In; trail mark indicating proximity to end
"On On"	Shouted by FRBs or hounds to indicate they're on trail, sometimes used only to indicate true trail; trail mark indicating true trail	On Sec	Mismanagement member normally in charge of hash rosters, run records, etc
Puppies	hashers' children, see Horrors	RA	Religious Adviser/Advisor: mismanagement member normally in charge of blessing the hash and settling disputes over tradition; sometimes in charge of down-down ceremonies
Receding Hareline	list of up-and-coming hash events, normally printed in The Words	Scribe	Mismanagement member normally in charge of writing The Words
Shiggy	thick vegetation, streams,	SCB	Short-Cutting Bastard:

	etc; especially mud		habitual short-cutter
Shagpile	Hashname for a hasher of (alleged) extreme intelligence, good looks, sexual prowess but less than moderate fitness	Strollers	see knitting circle
'The Words'	Weekly hash newspaper mainly recounting the events of the last run, written by the Hare(s)	T(ee)	Hash mark indicating a section of trail going nowhere, designed to slow down the pack
Tradition	euphemism for "rule"	Virgin	Hash newbie

## Special events

### Special events

Sometimes a kennel will conduct a special event in place of a normal hash, that can consist of anything from a house party, camp out, or [pub crawl](#). One of the most famous events is known as the '[Red Dress Run](#)' and is held by most local chapters once a year. This tradition began in [San Diego](#) when a virgin (new) hasher showed up for a run wearing only a red dress (having been ill informed of what to expect). When she next returned, other hashers decided to wear a red dress as a joke; with it soon becoming an annual event and eventually spreading around the world. During this event, which can be either a normal hash run or a simple day-long pub crawl, everyone (yes, guys too) is to wear something red and dress-like, not specifically just a red dress. The idea is to just get crazy and have fun, with ideas ranging from red body latex paint to red duct tape, red sarongs, or a normal lovely summer dress, with all extremes being pretty well accepted. Hashers can usually be found digging through the racks at the local thrift stores a short time before the event. This is typically the largest event of the year for any kennel (local hash group) with attendance up to 2,000 (as seen in San Diego for a couple of years) and 500-600 in places such as Washington DC or New Orleans every year. Other variations of a theme can be seen, as kennels might also host a green dress run (often held around St. Patrick's day), formal dress run, lingerie hash, or even a clown hash where everyone wears the appropriate themed outfit for the run or pub crawl.

There are also bicycle hashes or BASHes, that have been formed, based on the same principles as the running hashes, but often without the ceremonial aspects. In many countries, there may be Children Hashes for those under 16, generally with soft drinks

replacing beer and many adult themes being toned down considerably. There are also "Hash-O" events that combine elements of hashing and [orienteering](#).

## [\[edit\]](#) Goals

The goals of hashing, from a 1950 club registration card for the Hash House Harriers in Kuala Lumpur are:

- To promote physical fitness among our members
- To get rid of weekend hangovers
- To acquire a good thirst and to satisfy it in beer
- To persuade the older members that they are not as old as they feel

## [\[edit\]](#) Worldwide International Hash

There are several international events, where hashers from different groups get together to run and drink beer together, but the most famous is the biennial [Interhash](#), where hashers from around the world gather. The 2006 [Interhash](#)— [Chiang Mai](#), offered runs in [Thailand](#), [Myanmar](#), [Laos](#), [Vietnam](#), [Cambodia](#) and South West [China](#). The next [Interhash](#) will be in [Perth](#), [Australia](#) [\[1\]](#) in 2008

- 1978 [Hong Kong](#)
- 1980 [Kuala Lumpur](#), [Malaysia](#)
- 1982 [Jakarta](#), [Indonesia](#)
- 1984 [Sydney](#), [Australia](#)
- 1986 [Pattaya](#), [Thailand](#)
- 1988 [Bali](#), [Indonesia](#)
- 1990 [Manila](#), [Philippines](#)
- 1992 [Phuket](#), [Thailand](#)
- 1994 [Rotorua](#), [New Zealand](#)
- 1996 [Limassol](#), [Cyprus](#)
- 1998 [Kuala Lumpur](#), [Malaysia](#)
- 2000 [Tasmania](#), [Australia](#)
- 2002 [Goa](#), [India](#)
- 2004 [Cardiff](#), [Wales](#)
- 2006 [Chiang Mai](#), [Thailand](#)
- 2008 [Perth](#), [Australia](#) -- scheduled 21 - 23 March, 2008 (<http://www.interhash2008.com>)