



What's that ahead? B-E-N. L-O ... Ben Lomond? A pub! I'm saved!

Five to Seven Kuai. That's when Google says I should arrive for my first hash of the new year. New year, new me and all. I'll show them! Oh, shit! I *am* going to have to r*n! Three minutes should do it. Just a trot. Nice that the hare has been kind enough to lay a trail for us from the metro! Who's that ahead? Youngish and he's got a sports bag? Flip-flops?!

On time! There you go, everyone! Not a minute past seven! Still need to get changed but they all need to drink up. Frog's Porn?

—Just came to check that you hadn't fallen down the toilet!

Five Past Seven Kuai and we're on. An open check. Alright. You can all r*n off. I'll just do up my laces and wait for Pimp to call you back. East it is then.

It is a sociable hash, isn't it? Pop and Speedbump in front. Me and Cinderella right behind. More following close together. All chatting away. Like a peloton pedalling

away.

That's definitely a 'T', Pimp! We all thought it was!

Right, well, I'm warm now. Oh, No Relief wants to race to the FRB's, does he? I'll get involved with that. I won't tell him. It's not very Hash-like behaviour. Not that we'd get called out for it. Let's go! Wonder if he has noticed me? I'm right behind you!

OK, an open check instead.

-I'll check right.

There's the mark.

-On On!

Actually, who's going to hear me? We're way ahead. We were pretty much sprinting up to that checkpoint.

Over the crossing and another mark. A holding check. A bench. I guess I'll just have a little sit-down then. I must be a couple of minutes ahead. Dunno what No Relief is doing.

-R U?

No? Anyone?

I'm on the trail. Where is everyone? We weren't *that* far ahead, were we?

Best head back to the check then. Not backmarked? Fine. They can only have gone one way. I don't see anyone but I should be able to hear them. They're a group of hashers!

Is that the metro? It can't be. It looks a bit like a metro station but the metro's the other way. And isn't that the river? Fuck – where are they?

Markings. OK. The trail goes along the river. Yeah, that makes sense. What's that smell? Is that a bottle of cider as well?! Classic. And is that cider or piss that's trickling down towards the river? Don't mind me, boys! I wonder if Counterfit has ever had any White Lightning in the beer truck.

-Have you seen a group of runners?

-I think they went in the tunnel-thing but I'm not sure.

Tunnel-thing? What? There's no tunnel here. It's dark. I can't make things out so maybe there is some kind of archway over there.

There's no tunnel here! What did he mean? Too high to make any sense! Kids!

It must be back along the river. Shit! It's cold down here. I should've worn my alpaca fingerless gloves! A fence? I have to go right. There better be a gap in that hedge. I'm not going back. There is one. Here's the main road I've come from. I'm doing a fuckin' loop!

Let's start again. There's the last check. Ohhh! There is a fuckin' tunnel. I didn't know that. I've been Mislead! Speaking of ...

Hashers! Mislead! No Relief! The whole Sab clan. And InnConts!

-Where've you been?

-I've been on the trail! Where've you been?

Now, everyone's here. Did they even know I wasn't with them? Cheers, guys!

Yes - the sensible thing would be to just r*n with everyone now I've found them. But I wanna do the whole trail like everyone else. I know I've been r*nnng around on my own for 15 minutes but still. Plus, I've never run under a river before. I'll catch up. They said they're going to backmark.

Down I go. Just like China – escalators that don't work! County border? I was in Co. Durham?

Woah! That's a big pit bull! Yeah, you just wait there! I mean, thanks for holding your dog back but should you be out in public walking your dog if you have to hold it back when people approach?

Fuck it! I'll cheat. I'll take the lift up. There's a mark. Turn back? Can't be. Already? Well played, Pimp! Fair enough - I like that! I'd probably do that. Make us r*n through to then just have us r*n back!

I'll r*n up the steps this time! 10 minutes behind? The chase is on! Good - the checks are backmarked.

Actually, I think those steps have taken something out of my legs. I feel like a r*nner now, not a hasher. I've not got as much energy as I thought I had. Shit! Maybe I should've just stayed with them when I saw them.

I know this bit from the tunnel. There's that bench. Here's where you were all meant to meet me. How far is this pub then? *The Royal Oak*? Doesn't seem like a Newcastle Hash pub. That looks like a Foster's and John Smith's kind-of-pub. I would stop here though. I could do with a nice, cold beer.

More teenagers sitting around. Are they going to say anything to me? Yep.

-Are youz doin' a sponsored run?

-It's a bit hard to explain.

-Your doin' mint!

-Thanks!

Really? Is that what the hash looks like to people?

OK, this is nice and easy to follow. Parallel with the grass. Right turn and here's a residential street. Cheeky FRB's.

Over a roundabout. I don't feel like I'm running towards beer right now.

Right onto another residential street. *Croft- something*. Wait - where are the marks? It was definitely right, wasn't it? No marks on this side of the street either. Fuck! Not the time to go the wrong way! That was, like what? Three minutes down that street? It was straight on! Obvious. Idiot! What I was thinking?

I'm tired now. That banana I ate at Monument has definitely worn off. Where are they? Get me a beer! I'm thirsty! I'd even drink fuckin' water right now!

The trail is opening up a bit. And some downhill. Thanks, hare. What's this? We're going off-road. Sharp right and on-up into ... Great! I haven't got a torch! Or a phone. How long is this path then?

I am definitely slowing down now. A park? Look at how it goes on and on! I could be on open moorland. Not got the legs for this. They're not trees either. They're giant bottles of beer. I want a drink!

8 o'clock. A bus! The bus to South Shields! And a junction with traffic lights! I'm getting close to something now. Right at the junction.

Co-op Funeral Care? 24-hour service? 0191 489 ... The others might need that later if I carry on at this rate!

Ohh. I'm back at the metro. I could just head straight back from here. No. I said I was going to catch them.

So, this is downtown Jarrow then. Surely the beer stop is around here. This is the High Street. What's that ahead? *B-E-N. L-O ... Ben Lomond?* A pub! I'm saved! That's gotta be it! Surely? Where's the 'BS'? Turn left? Come on! Look at all those people inside drinking their beer! I'm thirsty.

If I saw them come out of the tunnel around 7:30 and I came out about 15 minutes later and it's now almost 8:10. Am I going to miss them at the beer stop? How long would they spend at it?

This looks too residential and too quiet for a pub. These are the markings from the metro. There's definitely no pub then. Where was the beer stop? I've followed the whole trail.

There's that bridge and this road takes me down to that that industrial park. Did I just get heckled? No idea what you said, mate! But yeah, I'm a fuckin' hashier! On On!

I'm not going to catch them up. They better still be doing the Circle. I'm not missing that as well. I've got charges to make!

Last stretch. Come on, Doug!

Done! On Inn! Why can't I hear them? They're already inside? No!

Counterfit! Counterfit's here! I know his ways. If it's just him here then that means ...

-The Gin - something! About a quarter of a mile back that way on the right.

I'm making that beer stop and I'm having a drink with everyone! I'm not spending an hour on my own and not!

But where's the pub? I've done the whole trail. Turn right at the industrial estate? There was nothing here. Are you going to heckle me again? I'm going to end up back in the town centre. Left around this corner.

-Where've you been?!

-Where've you been?!

Epilogue

A wise Newcastle hasher once told you've got to have those hashes out in the snow or rain when it's freezing cold and no one else is out to appreciate the good hashes. Sometimes you're the one sat on ice in winter whilst everyone throws beer and flour over you. Sometimes you're the one that gets lost.

On On!

We did the pub quiz by the way. With all of two other tables in the pub and both of them playing, it would have been awkward not to play. We won. And won to the extent that I don't think they'd want us coming back and playing every week.



