

# In the Spotlight – Antarctica

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Antarctica, the elusive seventh and least visited continent, has no permanent human population. Penguins rule the roost on this snow and ice covered landmass at the most southern point on planet Earth.

Where to begin? For me, the most amazing part of writing is the research, where I learn so much about the topics I am covering. This article in particular, has been one of the most amazing journeys yet into hash exploration. If we start with Earth’s last single supercontinent, [PANGAEA](#), there was a time about 250 million years ago, when no one bothered to talk about hashing on all the continents, there was only one. We’ll save the deep dive analysis of “plate tectonics” for another day, but it is a fascinating topic.

The big picture overview has Pangaea beginning to break up about 200 million years ago, according to [Live Science](#). First splitting into Laurasia and Gondwana, that moved into the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, respectively. According to [ThoughtCo](#), there could currently be as few as five, or as many as eight continents, depending on which definition is used. In general, though, the most common geopolitical standard is seven, with Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America.

Encyclopedia Britannica has a long explanation on temperature variations across the continent, that can range from  $-128.6\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-89.2\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) on the high inland ice sheet in the winter, to  $52\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $11\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) on the northern Antarctic peninsula in the summer. Additionally, according to [Intrepid](#), there are as many as 235 indigenous species that make Antarctica home, including penguins & other birds, seals, orcas, whales, dolphins, krill, and walruses.

You may be wondering if Antarctica is a country, and the answer is a resounding . . . No! Although Great Britain attempted to claim it after first arriving in the 1800s, due to the frigid environment, they never colonized it, according to the [World Atlas](#). Various other countries would also lay claim to various sectors. The 1959 Antarctic Treaty, sponsored by at least a dozen countries around the world, established three major stipulations, and they are still intact, . . . No military presence; No mining; No nuclear explosions. Although this treaty demilitarized the continent, and preserved it for scientific research, existing claims remained unchanged.

## The Arrival of the Hash House Harriers

The first recorded hash trail on Antarctica took place on 18 October 1982, as written by Eskimo Nell on page 90 in the [INTERHASH 1990 commemorative magazine](#). Since that source also has other fictitious stories, you can make up your own mind if it has any basis in fact. Unless someone can come forward and provide some credibility to this, I’ll let it bubble in hash lore.



The HHH Genealogy lists five hash clubs that were known to have existed on the ice continent, and after several attempts the following data was collected.

The first validated hash trail to be set on Antarctica took place on 15 January 1990, when the **Casey Hash House Harriers and Harriettes (CH4)** took on the cold for the fun of hash. The CH4 was founded by Ian 'Wheelbarrow' Potrzeba, who was a member of the Townsville H3 in Australia at the time. He mentioned he ran his first trail in 1977, but did not go back for trail number two until 1988, when he became a member. After a year of hashing in Australia, Wheelbarrow was enthusiastic about taking the hash to Antarctica.

The CH4 completed at least 4 runs in that first season, and according to Wheelbarrow, "Our longest trail was about 2km, our last winter trail would have been just short of 1km." He went on to say "It was a mixed hash which enabled me to call it CH4 (a.k.a. the 'Methane Hash'). I did create a log book of the hash runs that occurred down there. However I left it on base as part of the base history."

Wheelbarrow also was able to dig up an account of the first trail, written back in 1990.

*On the evening of January 15<sup>th</sup>, a momentous occasion occurred; sandshoes were being strapped to feet, heavy jackets were being shed, bare legs started to appear on the scene. High street was a buzz of activity. Random crazy postures were assumed by participants limbering up. At the call of "ON ON" sixteen hearty souls strode fearlessly down an unknown trail. And so commenced the inaugural Casey Hash House Harriers run. The trail was Previously set by Linda Clark and Elspeth Wishart. The hardy harriers jogged all around Casey Station in what seemed an uncoordinated gaggle, following trail. The cry of "ON ON" could be heard in the dim distance. Participating runners enjoyed themselves immensely and appreciated the half ay*

*drinks stop. In true Hash tradition all participants received their Hash names by baptism from the Hash Monk Rags. The run was organized by Ian Potrzeba (Wheelbarrow) from the Townsville Hash House Harriers Club with assistance from George Jaques (Variable) and Bob Sheers (Scissors) of Hobart Hash House Harriers. Runners included Kev Shepherd, Ian Raymond, John Tanusoski, Bill Bishop, Tom Fitzsimmons, Leo Johnson, Helen Quilligan, Paul Jones, Lloyd Payne, Helen Beggs, John Mellor, Rid Givney and Tony Larkum. A second run was held on the 29<sup>th</sup>, with more planned to follow.*

Wheelbarrow went to say that he applied for work on Antarctica. After being accepted, he completed his initial training in Hobart, Tasmania and arrived at Casey in December 1989 and stayed a full year. After talking the hash up a bit upon his arrival, with his fellow workers, he found George "Variable" Jaques and Bob "Scissors" Sheers whom had also hashed before, with the Hobart H3. With their assistance, the plan quickly took shape, and they soon had 16 potential hashers on board. As for marking trail, Wheelbarrow explained . . .

*Marking Trail. The usual chalk and flour don't actually cut it in Antarctica. I found a few jars of very out of date Pablo brand instant coffee. The instant coffee was great for setting trail as it stood out on the white snow and only a scant amount was needed. The drawback is that the dark coffee warms up in the sunlight and, depending on conditions, actually melts the snow it is in contact with and disappears into small holes in the snow where the coffee has been absorbed/dispersed. Hence the trail had to be set no more than an hour before the run should the sun be out.*

*The first trail was set by Linda Clarke and Elspeth Wishart (Summer Boffins\*) who did a sterling job. The trail was restricted to station limits, but we could still go around and between various buildings.*

*\*Boffin is a slang term for a scientist, engineer, or other person engaged in technical or scientific research and development.*

*The early runs were well supported by the summer and winter expeditioners. However, the departure of the last voyage left the station with just 26 personnel and just a handful of these were hashers. Variable and Scissors were summer staff and had also departed.*

Still a very active hasher, Wheelbarrow can now be found as a regular on the Bayside H3 and Halfway H3 in Brisbane, and claims to have about 1000 runs with each.

Several years would pass before the next hash club would form, this time at the British Antarctic Survey Base. The **Brass Monkey H3** was founded on 6 June 1998 by Paul 'Muthatuka' Cousens who had been a member of the Cambridge H3 in the United Kingdom. Attempts to contact Muthatuka have so far gone unanswered, but I understand he is currently back down on the continent.

In 1999, the **Antarctic H3** was founded by Michael 'Beefuck' Stachow. In conversation with Beefuck, he explained it like this . . .

*I arrived in Antarctica in August 1999. It is a place I wanted to go since I was six years old. Having hashed for 9 years by the time of my arrival, my immediate goal was to recruit some others and set a trail.*

*My iteration of The Antarctic H3 was founded on 9/9/99 and our first trail was fittingly postponed due to an expected Condition One. Condition One is a combination of minus 100 degree (or below) temperatures and minimum 100 mile per hour winds, and all outdoor recreation is forbidden. The delay allowed for additional recruitment, and our first trail ended up with 23 people. It turned out that several of the scientists on station had hashed at university. None were so gung ho as to get a hash going, but they were happy to come out for trail when there was one.*

*There were strict limits as to where we could venture when we were outside, so we decided to make the AH3 a monthly kennel to avoid rehashing the same terrain over and over. We managed to pull off monthly trails up until my departure in October 2000. our pack size averaged 9, with occasional spikes.*

*Beer was easy to come by, and as I mentioned hounds were few, but loyal. Trail itself became the hurdle. The research station is run by the National Science Foundation, and the continent is governed by the Antarctic Treaty. There are strict prohibitions against impacting the environment. Flour, or paper, left on the ground would result in the loss of one's job, removal from station, and a likely exclusion from the ability to return to the continent. Trail had to be marked with something that could be removed immediately upon conclusion of circle. The solution I came up with was inelegant but effective. Prior to trail number 1, I gathered a collection of smallish native rocks. I tied ribbons to them to differentiate them from other rocks we may encounter. The number and position of the marked rocks served as trail markings. A single rock meant 'on trail', and if I recall correctly a rock with 2 perpendicular ribbons was a check, 3 rocks across a path was false trail, etc. obviously, trail markings were sparse, just enough to be effective. No one wanted to carry around more rocks than necessary.*

*Haring was quite a job. Due to the relative inexperience of the pack, trails were pre-laid so the hare could run sweep. On the day of the hash, the hare would pre-lay, sweep, and run the trail a third time to be sure all markings had been removed.*

*All indications are that we were the first, and I believe still the only, year-round kennel in Antarctica. We also have the distinction of laying the first daylight trail of the 2000's. At the stroke of midnight 1999/2000, we ran trail on Scott Base, New Zealand's research station. Scott Base is in the first time zone across the international date line, the first to welcome 2000, and the only one far enough south to be in full sun. To date, I have not heard of any other winter trails in Antarctica. Winter-over populations are quite small, so it is not surprising.*

*As a side note, when my deployment ended, I cashed in my return airfare and bought an around-the-world ticket. On my way home I was able to hash 40 times in 8 weeks on the other six continents. I celebrated my 7th continent of hashing in early December 2000 by co-haring in Caracas, Venezuela. With a little digging, I'm sure I could find the exact date.*

Next up in the genealogy is the **South Pole H3** founded by Tony 'Beat Me Up Scotty' Black, with the first trail taking place on 6 Mar 2003. No other information is available for this club. If anyone has contact with Beat Me Up Scotty, or details of this hash club, please contact me.

The last of the five clubs noted in the genealogy was the **Deep Freeze H3**, founded by Aeon 'Rock Hard' Jones and setting their first trail in September 2003. Rock Hard had been hashing with the Bitburg Area H3 at the time, and also participating with the D.R.I.F.T.E.R.s (Drunk Ramblers in Foreign Territory Every Run) while serving with the US Air Force in Germany. Rock Hard currently lives in Nevada, and hashes with the Viva Las Vegas H3. I was able to track him down and he gave me the following information.

*It was my first season on the ice (of 4 total) and I wanted to start a club. I was working at McMurdo Station on Ross Island as a radar systems technician Monday-Saturday. Trails were laid by tying orange caution tape around large fender washers and using a sweep Hare to pick up every last one. Circles were held in a common area inside because beer just froze.*



*It's not easy to get non-hashers to do anything for a long period outside in the sub-freezing temperatures and we only got 1 day off a week, which meant if the hash got into serious drinking there was no recovery day. You're going in to work on Monday with a hangover. Tough luck, sucker! So once the trail was finished and circle completed people usually meandered over to the day bar or back to their dorms. Can't remember dates but we met monthly for the season and hashed 4 times (I think). Our average pack was around a dozen Hashers bolstered by a strong component of US Coast Guard personnel.*

Additionally, I scanned various other sources to find some more reputable accounts. In Magic's old records there is a listing for the **Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition or ANARE H3** with a POC of Richard Cane, that existed at some point prior to 1997. If anyone knows this hasher, I would like to make contact to get his story.

### Hashing All Seven Continents

Within hash circles, you can occasionally hear some chatter about having hashed on all seven continents. The earliest claim I have uncovered to have achieved this feat, was Gopher, most recently from the Ft Eustis H3 in Virginia, USA. He stated he was on a Naval vessel in 1992, and there were several scientists onboard conducting research. They had the opportunity to go ashore one day, and Gopher took this as a chance to throw in a ceremonial 'one off' hash trail. He said "To call it a trail would be generous, short and sweet with a couple of beers. But it was cool to just be there." He would go on to hash and in 1999, at the PAN AFRICA HASH in Victoria Falls, achieved the ultimate crown of having hashed on all 7 continents.

There are no records being kept for those hashers who achieved this feat, many who have hashed on Antarctica, have not gone on to claim the other six. Maybe Half-Mind might add columns for continents . . . also, as far as I know, there is only one hasher who has both hashed on all 7 continents, as well as hared on all 7 continents. Got any guesses who?

In December 2022, 84 hashers took a two-week cruise out of Ushuaia, Argentina to visit the Ice Continent. Within this group, there were at least 20 that checked the block on their seventh continent of hashing when the **Thinking Drinking H3** hosted their (ironically) 77<sup>th</sup> hash trail. Known for their pre/post lube trails in conjunction with INTERHASH, PAN ASIA, or the MEKONG INDOCHINA HASH, this was a stand alone trail, and the first time on Antarctica. A full account of the adventure can be found on their website: <http://tdh3.gotethehash.net/trash/77.html>

As you can see from the various accounts listed, hashing on Antarctica is in no way similar to hashing anywhere else in the world. Except for the coffee used by the Casey H4, all other runs have followed the strict guidelines of "leave no trace" other than your footprints.

When hearing of our recent trip to Antarctica, Rock Hard said "I wish a hearty congratulations to all those who attended the Antarctica hash and a heartier one for those that got their 7th continent!" He went on to say that he had only hashed on 5, missing out on Africa and South America, although he said he does not travel much anymore and didn't think he would get to either of those continents anytime soon, he added . . . "who knows!, accidental successes happen every day."

Many thanks to all the contributors for this historical article. In closing, if anyone has additional details to add to this story, please send them to me at [GoToTheHash@gmail.com](mailto:GoToTheHash@gmail.com) and they will be appended to a future revision.

