

In the Spotlight – China

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China is said to have the longest documented history, for a country still in existence. According to history.com, the documented [history of China](#) reaches all the way back to 1600 BC, with the Shang Dynasty that reigned for over 500 years. Many historical figures are part of our current lexicon of knowledge and scholars, such as Confucius – the great teacher and philosopher (551-479 BC), as well as Sun Tsu – the great general and philosopher (544-496 BC). China is also recognized for its innovations and inventions (e.g. paper, pasta, gunpowder, and the printing press, just to name a few). Everyone knows about the Great Wall of China, and who has not heard of the silk road, that provided goods and knowledge to the Middle East and Europe.



Photo source . . . <https://www.virtualshanghai.net/>

China also has a history of allowing expats to run around the countryside, throwing paper, flour, and other materials on the ground. Yes, the Hash House Harriers first arrived in China in 1979, but there are reports of paperchase taking place on horseback (in Shanghai) as far back as 1907.

The first recorded hash club in Mainland China, was the **Beijing H3** when they set their first run on 9 July 1979. This club was founded by Brian 'Ewor' Rowe. Ewor (not an imaginative hash name, just his last name spelled backwards) was assisted by Phil 'Furkhand' Kirkland who had come up from the Sydney H3.

(Note: Phil Kirkland was originally credited with the saying "If you've half a mind to join the hash, that's all you'll need" in 1978. But as I pointed out in an article [Setting the Record Straight](#) back in 2021 . . . While reviewing a stack of old hash books, I found that very statement on page 2 of the [Melbourne H3 100th Run Magazine](#) that took place in 1974).



I had the chance to meet Ewor in 2009 on the Blue Danube Hash Cruise in Europe, the last major event hosted by 'The Wolf' before his untimely passing. (Pictured to the right (l-r: Hazukashii, Ewor, and The Wolf). Ewor was a jocular figure, always up for a laugh.

I had the good fortune to visit in 2002 for the Beijing H3 1000th Run weekend, which also was the first [All China Nash Hash](#). Looking through the event program, on page 10 there is a brief history of the Beijing H3 that points out the first BH3 that ran from Jul 1979 to Sep 1980, but then goes on to what was believed to be the 2nd iteration of the BH3 starting on 25 May 1982.



While reviewing my various resources, I found the shirt to the left in the [digital T-shirt Museum](#) . . . not sure how this Nov 1980 club figures into the previously mentioned hash clubs in Beijing, but it is apparent that there was limited communication back in those days, and hash clubs could pop up and disappear with little fanfare as highlighted in the [1000th run weekend program](#) . . .



In those days, whether it was 1979 or 1982, opportunities to go out drinking and eating were limited. Embassies figured prominently in all of the earlier hash runs, as it was always possible to get a drink on the premises. But bars and restaurants were restricted to only a few places such as the Beijing

Hotel, Jianguo Hotel . . . There weren't any restaurants or bars to frequent. "On-On"s took place at embassies, hasher's apartments, or picnic-style out of doors in the nice weather. Cold beer was a rarity and ice even rarer . . . Beijing and the foreign community were much smaller then. Hashers typically began their weekend at the TGIFs held at rotating embassies on Friday nights. That's where hash trash was distributed, and how the word got around for the time and place of the following runs.



As many hash clubs do now, in their early years the BH3 had a hashit award or as they called it, the "Bu-hao Award" as they describe it, also in their 1000th Run Magazine . . .

There have been various "bu-hao" awards over the years ("[bu-hao](#)" meaning "bad" in Chinese). Each week the person committing the most heinous crime on the run would be given the award and would have to carry it along for the next week. One such buhao award was a large (2-½ foot tall) wooden hand with straps attached, which had to be worn on the back.

For the harriettes, they had a different presentation . . .

Another famous “female” buhao award was made of a stretch bra, to which each week the offending criminal was obliged to add something new and vulgar. The offender was also required to wear this bra every day until it was reassigned the following week. Numerous harriettes managed to wear this accessory hidden under their professional attire, but as the bra became more “accessorized” it became quite difficult to find the proper clothing to wear over a bra to which were attached condoms, tampons, vibrators, Barbie dolls, dental floss, etc. A rather desperate harriette who was departing for a mid-Eastern country absconded with it.

Now that is punishment.



By the 1990s, they had evolved to the Ratchucker Memorial Cup, otherwise known as a bedpan. This award could be given out for almost any reason, but usually ended up in the hands of the FRB. Wouldn't you know it, on the 1000th run ballbreaker trail, I had the dubious honor of receiving this award as the FRB (when I was younger, and in my prime . . . *wink*). I still have the bedpan, one of the very few items I kept after purging my life of over 95% of everything I owned, back in 2019.

As you can see, despite all the government scrutiny, the Beijing H3 has had an interesting existence in China, as well as spawning at least 7 other hash clubs in Australia and Vietnam, to include more clubs in Beijing and other parts of China.

Beijing was home to the first 3 hash clubs ever in mainland China, but 3 more would pop up in 1984. The next city to have a hash club was Guangzhou, which is located about 2000 kms south of Beijing on the northern side of Hong Kong. The **Guangzhou H3** was founded on 10 Mar 1984 by Jon Savage who had come over from the Sherwood Forest H3 in the United Kingdom. He was assisted by Al Fermie who had previously hashed in Oman, and Andy Pepper who had hashed in Pakistan. There are three websites online for the Guangzhou H3, but all out of date. They run every Saturday afternoon and on Full Moons, but the most recent Facebook post is for their 40th

Anniversary weekend back in May 2024. Not sure if they have gone underground from a possible crackdown on hashing activity, or they have gone into recess. If you plan to be in the area, best to send an email in advance as shown on the [regional hash website](#).



The **Zhanjiang H3** was next, founded on 21 Sep 1984 by Philip 'Submarine' Picard who arrived from the Balikpapan H3 in Indonesia. He was assisted by Steve 'Dirty Dex' Dexter who had been running with Mother Hash in KL. Not much else is known of this club, if you have any details please contact me.



Also in 1984, the **Shekou H3** was founded on 12 Nov by George 'Bullwinkle' Steele (or Steele George?) who's previous hashing activity is unknown. He was assisted by Colin 'Tampon' Martin. This club was originally mostly oil workers and associated industry types, but in more recent times they have expanded to a broader array of hashers. They are still very active, and according to [their website](#), they meet every Saturday afternoon at the Shekou Sports and Social Club (a.k.a. "The Snake Pit").

Wrapping up the 1980s, the next hash club to form was the original **Shanghai H3**, founded on 4 Oct 1986 by Eva Stolitzer, who came down from the Beijing H3. She was assisted by Christian Burgmann, Larry Robinson, David Brooks and Steve Brooke. This club apparently did not last too long, as the final hash club to form in the 1980s, was the second coming of the Shanghai H3 founded by Robin 'Silver Fox' Cox on 24 Jul 1989, who also came down from Beijing, and was assisted by Jane Govier and Mark Jared. The Shanghai H3 is still very active, and can be found running every Sunday afternoon, according to their [website](#). Digging into their [listed history](#), they, like Mother Hash, have looked beyond the second founding and claim the lineage back to the original club in 1986.



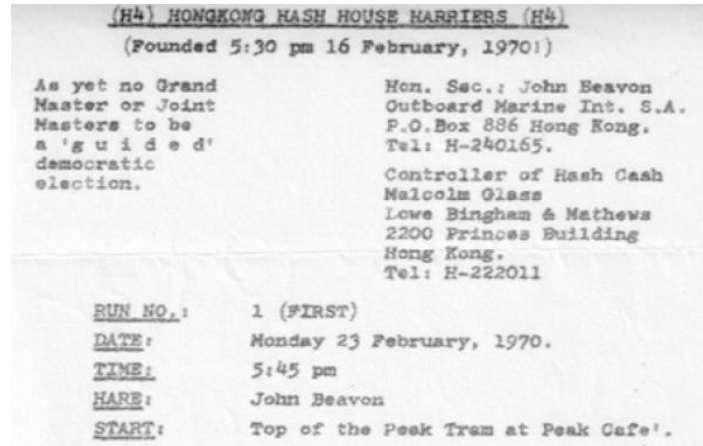
The first time I visited China, was for the Shanghai H3 500th Hash weekend in March 1999. As you can see in the photo to the left, at that time, Shanghai was a somewhat small city with rural areas close by. Since then, the city has almost completely been rebuilt and modernized.

Since the first hash club to form in mainland China (Beijing H3) back in 1979, there have been about 50 total hash clubs. It is often difficult to keep an accurate accounting, but as many as 30 are believed to still be active as listed on the well maintained [national website](#).

As previously stated, the Beijing H3 started the [All China Nash Hash](#) back in 2002, and Hong Kong will be hosting the [next one](#), and for the second time.

Speaking of Hong Kong, let's take a look at the recent additions to China. Through various treaties and leases, Hong Kong was a Crown Colony of Great Britain from 1841-1997, with the exception of 1941-1945 when Japan occupied the peninsula. Although not technically correct, many refer to the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997 as the day the sun set on the British Empire. One thing left behind after the turnover is the Hash House Harriers.

The **Hong Kong H3 (H4)** was founded by John Beavon on 16 Feb 1970 (they ran their first trail a week later), which consisted of a meeting of several other hashers that had relocated to Hong Kong, and various other expats that had been recruited to join in. The genealogy has Beavon listed as coming over from the Singapore H3, but he was never listed as a member of the Singapore H3, nor ever shown as a hare (so will have to do some more research on that one).



The first hash trash of the H4 included the basic guidelines for hares and hounds; how to set checks and false trails, overall trail length, and that the hares should have 12 bottles of beer and 12 large lemonades on hand at the finish. It also mentions that trail is to be marked with paper and chalk. I always take note of references to how things evolved with the hash world, and this is the first reference to the use of chalk (and writing) on trail that I have seen. He was the club's first Hon. Sec. and as we know from Mother Hash, the HonSec pretty much runs the hash. I also note the use of the term Grand Master, and this (from my research) is the first time (1970) I have seen the term used. Mother Hash has no Grand Master, only Joint Masters (a.k.a. the President and Vice President).



Following with the current traditions of Mother Hash in Kuala Lumpur, and Father Hash in Singapore, the H4 is a men's only club and runs on Monday evenings. One of the long-standing traditions of the H4 has been participating in the annual [Sedan Chair Race](#) for charity.



The H4 being firmly established, it was only 8 months later that the second club would form, and that was due to one member's office moving from the island up to Mongkok. Up to this point, the word had gotten out, and hashers were coming in to run the H4 from all over Hong Kong. It was soon determined that transiting the Kowloon Bay in a timely fashion on Monday afternoons was difficult, so something had to be done. Led by founder Chris Rowe (who was a very active member of the H4, and hared trail #3), he gathered up a group in a bar over beers, and thus they came to the conclusion that the first running of the **Kowloon H3** would be on 26 October 1970. It was announced in the H4 hash trash as . . .

"A Call from the Wilderness"

"A lonely Hashman, formerly from the Island, but "banished", as he puts it, "to darkest Mongkok" is anxious....no, desperate.... to start a Kowloon Hash. Chris Rowe, once one of Hong Kong's best rugby players, but now sidelined by injury, says he doesn't intend to start a rival organisation, but is keen to provide a run.... and beer.... for "people like myself who are keen to continue hashing through the winter months but are unable to go across to Hong Kong in time now that the nights are drawing in and runs have to start much earlier.



The fairer sex soon grew tired of the men having all the fun, and thus the fourth oldest recorded [Harriettes Hash](#) ever was founded by Hilary Prior on 15 June 1971. The **Ladies of Hong Kong H3** attracted 27 members in that first year as a ladies' only club, but a handful of men were additionally allowed as honorary male members (no pun intended).

The **Sek Kong H3** (potentially the oldest hash in Hong Kong) was the next to form. Sek Kong was a British Royal Air Force (RAF) base from 1950-1997. The Sek Kong H3 held irregular runs possibly as early as the 1960s, and is listed in the HHH Genealogy as being started sometime in 1974 by Military Intelligence Staff, but they self-report as officially starting in March 1978 on their [website](#). Although the direct military affiliation ended in 1997, the club continued on and is still actively hashing weekly on Sunday afternoon. They will run their 2400th hash in Jan 2025.



Nostalgia for the good old days in Sek Kong have been celebrated annually since 24 Aug 1991, when the Sek Kong Reunion H3 formed back in the United Kingdom. Although this club does not appear to be meeting any longer.

The **South Side H3** was founded on 18 May 1978 by Ashley Adams, with assistance from Stan Burrows. Although it took some time, the actual name was not decided upon until 31 Aug 1978, as the South Side H3. The name would be augmented in the late 90s as explained by

longtime resident and former GM Mark 'Hopeless' Hope. When asked when the Royal was added, he stated . . .

. . . that was the Coffin Dodgers holding on to the shirt tails of the British Empire.... pre-handover the "Royal" was removed from many institutions, for example RSPCA became SPCA. Royal HK Police became HK Police, etc. So 1 July 1997 it was mandated by the committee then to add "Royal" to the S2H3. About the only organization that kept the "Royal" was the Royal HK Yacht Club, main clubhouse at Kellet Island (no longer an island after land reclamation).

The South Side H3 held a grand event to exclaim out with the old, and in with the new, hosting the [Sunset on the Empire](#) hash weekend on 14-16 Mar 1997.



Pre 1997



Post 1997



Alternate

Over the last 50+ years, the fun of hashing has spread throughout the territory, and Hong Kong currently boasts of 13 active hash clubs. Not to be forgotten, just a short ferry ride away rests the two island **Taipa-Macau H3** that was founded by Rob "The Captain" Kirby on 2 June 1998. A short-lived Macau Men's H3 popped up in 2008 as well, but is no longer active. Without a doubt, the rich history of the Hash House Harriers lives in Hong Kong and through China. If you have the good luck to visit, make sure to catch up with one of the Hong Kong hash clubs. Details can be found on this [website](#).

Hong Kong also has another dubious distinction in international HHH affairs. The first invitational gathering of Hash House Harrier clubs was the 1000th running of Mother Hash in March 1966, when there was only about ten clubs total, and all in Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei. By 1973 many other hash clubs had sprouted and spread out beyond Southeast Asia, so Mother Hash repeated the effort for their 1500th trail that drew about 300 hashers to Kuala Lumpur. (Note: Mother hash runs weekly, with only a few extra events. So, if you are doing the math, you see that Mother Hash went from 1000 trails to 1500 trails in just 7 years. That happened because on the occurrence of their 1000th run event, they unceremoniously added the original 117 runs from the pre-war era of 1938-1941. The run immediately following the 1000th was 1118, and they have continued on from there).

Sometime in 1976, the Kowloon H3 thought they might host a major event (jokingly referred to as "The International Hash Unconvention"). By May of 1977, invitations had been sent for all good hashmen to come to Hong Kong for [INTERHASH 78](#). A reporter for the Washington Post, Jay Mathews, happened to be on hand and made this [report](#). Based on the success of this gathering in Hong Kong, Mother Hash stepped up to host again in two years, and the pattern was set for World



Interhash to be held every two years. China also hosted INTERHASH 2014 in Hainan. You can read more on the extended history on [INTERHASH](#), with a chart that shows where it has been held over the years. China also hosted Pan Asia 2019 in Zhangjiajie.



Finally, while researching for this article, I came across this interesting note . . .

The [Wanchai Hash](#) and its birthplace "The Wanch" pub in Wanchai were instrumental in regaining contact with the lost Gispert family when pub owner Dances With Dogs employed a barman by that name. As it was a fairly uncommon name, Dances With Dogs made further inquiries and determined that his barman, Charles Gispert, was in fact the Grandson of "G" who, until that time, had had no knowledge of the hash or his late Grandfather's role as the founder. Charles put Dances With Dogs in touch with his father / "G's" son, Simon Gispert, who was then sponsored by "The Wanch" to attend as a guest at "Interhash" in Phuket in 1992.

WANCHAI HASH

I will leave it at that for now, but will explain more about G, Simon, and other interesting figures in the history of the Hash House Harriers in my upcoming book.

China as a whole, with the return of Hong Kong and Macau, has had at least a total of 68 hash clubs to form since the first one in Hong Kong in 1970, and 39 are believed to still be actively chasing along on trail. There are so many great trails to be run

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