

In the Spotlight – Singapore

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The city of [Singapore](#) (a.k.a. Lion City) shares the same name as the country it is the capital of, and is the [20th smallest country](#), being just bigger than the Federated States of Micronesia, and just smaller than Tonga. On the other hand, with a population of just over 6 million, it is the second most densely populated country, coming in behind only Monaco with its paltry 36 thousand inhabitants. Singapore is a small island state, comprised of one main island, and over 60 smaller islands and islets located at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula. The population is seventy five percent Chinese, with the rest mostly Malay and Indian, and a mixture of other expats.

Modern day Singapore history dates back over a thousand years, when pirates and fishermen used it as an outpost. Over the ensuing 500 years, the lands changed hands many times until by the early 19th century, the Dutch occupied the island. Expanding its own trade routes, the British purchased the island from the Dutch in 1824, and would be named a Crown Colony in 1867 according to the [Encyclopedia Britannica](#). Like most of Southeast Asia, Singapore was [occupied by The Empire of Japan](#) during the Second World War, and the man credited as the founder of the Hash House Harriers, 2nd Lieutenant Alberto Esteban Ignacio Gispert was unfortunately killed in its defense on 11 Feb 1942.

Returning to British authority in September 1945, Singapore was named a separate crown colony in 1946. Singapore was included with Malay upon the establishment of the [Federation of Malaysia](#) (along with Sarawak and Sabah on Borneo) on 16 September 1963. After significant civil and political unrest, Singapore separated from Malayasia and became an independent country on 9 August 1965.

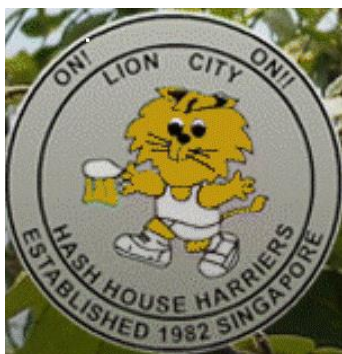
During these tumultuous years, a small band of brothers gathered to make their own history. When Ian Cumming and his wife moved from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore in 1961, Ian was suffering from a lack of social activity, and his wife suggested he organize a running club that he had been associated with back in KL. This club was the [Hash House Harriers](#) (HHH) founded in 1938, but was much like several other harrier clubs of the time. Taking his wife’s advice, Ian started talking up the idea with his mates and began planning. He sent a note to his friend John Vincent, HonSec of the HHH at that time, to help locate other former KL hashers in Singapore, and as Ian put it . . . “enquiring about the certificate of registration (required under the current emergency powers). I also phoned [John] to see what the relationship was to be between the two Hashes, and required reporting protocol.” John’s response was . . . "I donno. Do what the hell you like. Nothing to do with us. Let us know how you get on." This mantra from John Vincent would become the basis for what would become the worldwide expansion of the HHH, commonly referred to as *hashing*.

On 19 February 1962, the [Hash House Harriers Singapore](#) (HHHS) set their first trail on the island of Singapore on a Monday evening, which by then was the post WW II tradition (prior to WW II trails were run on Friday evenings). Ian Cumming, with the assistance of Geoff Jones, David Sayer, Mike Miall, Tommy Voice, Chris Verity, Harry Howell, Doug Smith, founded the club now referred to as the Singapore H3, establishing the second HHH club in existence. (Note: Harry Howell would go on to found the 4th ever hash club in Kuching on 21 May 1963). Now over 62 years later, and over 3200 hash trails run, the Singapore H3 club is respectfully called “Father Hash” and remains a Men’s Only club.



As HHHS began a slow expansion of other hashing clubs to form in Southeast Asia, it would be over a decade before another hash club formed in Singapore. Not satisfied with the men having all the fun, on 17 October 1973, the **Singapore HH Harriets** had their first trail. Founded by Caryl Gurney, with the assistance of Annabelle Tame, the Singapore Harriets became the 8th hash club specifically for women. They run on Wednesday evenings, and according to [their website](#) . . . “Men are welcome on our hash but must NEVER lead the run.”

It would be nearly another decade before a third hash club would form, when the **Seletar H3** was founded on 21 June 1980 by James 'Winnie the Pooh' Sandosham (a.k.a. Sando). Sando was an officer in the Singapore Military, assigned to the Seletar Military Camp, hence the name for the new hash club. Sando was on a trip to Kuala Lumpur for work, and often hashed there. On a visit in the spring of 1980, he was having drinks with Alex the Bear, GM of the Petaling Jaya H3, along with Martin 'Salami Mabok' Baptist, John 'Brewer' Chew, Ang Chuan Seng, Paul Ang, Avtar Singh, when the topic of starting another hash in Singapore came up. The inaugural run was set from Kingsford Bar, with all six men as hares (reportedly the most for any Seletar trail, as they did not want to take any chances on their first run). There were about 40 hashers on that first trail, and it turned out so well, the après party lasted until nearly noon the next day. The [Seletar H3](#) is still very active, and can be found running on Tuesday evenings.



By the summer of 1982, there were three active hash clubs conducting their weekly runs on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Monday and Tuesday were men only, and although the harriets on Wednesday allowed men, they were restricted. While on a hash with the Singapore Harriets, Don Nally thought that what Singapore needed was a truly mixed hash club. A meeting was held with Boo Moh 'Mad Chinaman' Cheh, Phil Wood, Mike 'Crotch' Croft, Mike '4 Skin' Cockman, and Don’s wife Veronica, to assist him in founding

the first mixed hash club in Singapore. Several meetings were held to coordinate this new club, and although 80 hashers initially signed up to participate, only 18 paid up. Due to this initial ambivalence, it was decided to hold 10 runs to gauge further interest. The first of those 10 runs established the **Lion City H3** on 26 November 1982, and it turned out to be a great success. During one of the final meetings at the Nally's apartment, according to Veronica . . . "Don was unanimously elected as Grand Hash Master and myself as Grand Mistress. Don however graciously said it would not be right for a husband and wife to hold these positions simultaneously in the new hash and said he would stand down." Mike '4 Skin' Cockman was asked if he wanted to be the Grand Master, and thus the committee was formed.

Just a few days after the Lion City H3 had their first trail, the **Singapore Hash House Horrors** had theirs on 30 November 1982, which is only the fourth such hash club (Horrors, Juniors, Kids) specifically for children (the first being in Penang [1975], Brunei [1979], Kuala Lumpur [Jan 1982]). There is little reference to this club, other than the founders being Meg & Paul Jackson, who brought the concept down from Penang and KL, so if anyone has more details, please let me know.



One year later, the first known monthly full moon hash club was established when Andy Bartlett founded the **Singapore Full Moon H3** sometime in 1983. Other than a listing in the HHH Genealogy, there is no other specific information about this club, but it is believed that this club held its last trail around 1999.



Singapore was also an early adopter of hashing on bikes, with the 3rd known bashers club being founded on 24 July 1989, when Evan 'Barf Balls' Jones and James Tay established the **Singapore Bike H3** (the first being in the USA [1988], and the second in Germany [Apr 1989]).

In total, the HHH Genealogy lists 13 hash clubs founded on the tiny island of Singapore, and 9 still appear to be active, including a hash specifically for dogs. See the listing of active clubs on the national [website](#).

In what turned out to be a one off event, in 1991, the GMs of the five hash clubs at that time (HHH Singapore, Singapore Harriets, Seletar H3, Lion City H3, and Singapore Horrors) assembled a committee to host the first (and only) [Singapore Nash Hash](#). This event has not been repeated, since each club hosts their own events that are quite large in nature. As an example, my one and only visit to Singapore was for the [HHH Singapore 2000th](#) Hash in 1999, and what a great event it was. There were many trails to choose from, but I ran the ball buster that was a



21 kms A-B trail through the park on the northern side of the island that included a swim across a quarry, a very memorable trail. The FRBs entering the quarry shown in the picture to the left.

I will be including many more specifics of Hash House Harriers Singapore in my upcoming book on the history of the HHH.



Following the lead of INTERGULF HASH (1979) and INTER AMERICAS' HASH (1984), Singapore set about to host the very first, and very successful [PAN ASIA HASH](#) in 1987, hosted by the Seletar H3. They would repeat the effort, hosting the 4th iteration of the biennial Pan Asia Hash in 1993. [Pan Asia Hash](#) will be held for the 19th time in October this year in



Johor Bahru, Malaysia. This event has become the premier hash event throughout Asia, providing an opportunity for all clubs in the region to come together for a fun weekend of hash trails and frivolity.

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