

In the Spotlight - **Thailand**
By Ed "Hazukashii" Howell
30 Jun 2023

Krung Thep is the capital city, but Bangkok is the more common term used for international reference. Some believe the name goes back to before it was the capital, and is derived from . . . bang / mekok which roughly translates as . . . village / of wild plums (or olives). Although the history is rich with detail, the modern Bangkok Metropolis was formed in 1972, when the districts of Krung Thep and Thon Buri were merged, a.k.a. krungthepmahanakhon, according to the [Encyclopedia Britannica](#). Another theory, according to [Prachachat Online](#), is that "Bangkok" refers to the lazy zigzag of the Chao Phraya River as it flows past small islands in the river, called "Bang Koh" or "Bang Khok." In general terms though, the city is mythicized as 'City of Gods' or 'City of Angels.'

Last year (2022) the Royal Academy (of Thailand) actually made an announcement that the English name "Bangkok" was going to change to krungthepmahanakhon, keeping Bangkok in parentheses. They later relented after public uproar, that both names could still be used. The official full name for Bangkok is actually 168 letters long, and is recorded in the [Guinness Book of World Records as the longest name](#) of a place. The good news is, there is also an official shortened version that is only 111 letters long. You can see why sticking with Bangkok remains popular.

The first hash club in Thailand, according to the HHH Genealogy, was **Ubon Ratchathani H3** organized by members of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) 75 Sqdn that had been deployed there from Penang in 1966. The Penang H3 was founded on 10 May 1965, so that part checks out that they would have been introduced to hashing there. Ubon Ratchathani province is located on the eastern border, along Laos and Cambodia, so quite likely military personnel involved in the Vietnam War. There is no indication for how long they ran, or how many trails they set. The longest **active** club in Thailand is the Bangkok H3.

The **Bangkok H3** was founded on 11 June 1977 by William 'Tumbling Bill' Panton, of the World Bank, who had transferred from Washington, DC to Bangkok. With the assistance of Jim Stewart, they conducted recces around the city to assess the viability of hashing. After the third reccé, it was determined they would go forward, and Bill set the first trail, with 10 hashmen in attendance. Read the [full account of the founding](#) as recorded by Tumbling Bill (actually, his hash name came years later).

According to Tumbling Bill (TB), he was under the impression that the Royal Bangkok Sports Club's running section had attempted to start a hash in the early 1970s, but had failed to gain traction due to running on Monday evenings. Apparently at that time, the traffic was miserable in the late afternoon / early evening during the week, making it difficult to reach run sites in a timely fashion (where have we heard that before?). To avoid this struggle, TB chose Saturday afternoon for the Bangkok H3, and it was very successful. COVID be damned, the BH3 has run every Saturday since run number 3 in 1977 and has racked up over 2350 runs.





Once hashing was established in Bangkok, the hash soon spread to Chiang Mai and Songkhla in 1981. The **Chiang Mai H3** was founded on 25 May 1981 by Charlie 'Radar' Graham, who had previously hashed in Bangkok, and he was assisted by Ian 'Calves' Law. This club runs on Monday evenings, and is still very active.

The **Songkhla H3** was founded on 26 Oct 1981 by Al 'Crawback' Sigmund who had previously hashed with the Balikpapan H3 in Indonesia. He was assisted by Graham

Cowley, Mike Hall, and Khun Panom. The Songkhla H3 is still active, running every Saturday afternoon and has completed over 2150 hash runs.

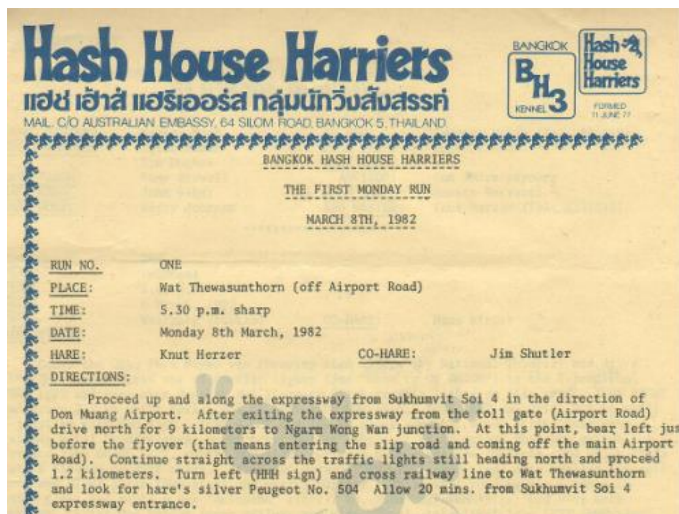


Hashing then multiplied in Bangkok with the founding of the **Bangkok Monday H3** and the Bangkok Harriettes, both founded in March 1982. As previously mentioned, the Bangkok hash had initially run trails on Saturday due to traffic, but in 1982, the opening of the new elevated 'superhighway' out to Don Muang Airport changed all this. As a branch of the Bangkok HHH, the 'Monday Hash' began running biweekly as they were not sure if it would take off, or possibly conflict with the Saturday runs, but it had an immediate following with no significant issues.

After 50 runs, they had gained enough momentum to run weekly, and have done so since. Founder's credit goes to Terry 'Pinky' Moore, with the inaugural run taking place on 8 March 1982. Directions in early hash trash all started with "Proceed up and along the expressway" or "Head out along the superhighway" or "Proceed to new expressway" . . . towards the airport. Originally a Men Only hash, the Bangkok Monday H3 became a mixed hash on 15 May 1984 (run #56) when Wichanee 'Imelda' Charuthas became the first female 'new boot'.



The first shirt for the Monday Hash





Announcement for run #2 in the Bangkok Post, 24 Mar 1982

Just one week after the Monday Hash started, the **Bangkok Harriettes** had their first run on 17 March 1982. Having previously hashed with the Jakarta Harriettes, the founder . . . Janet Baker, with the assistance of Christine Morf, immediately set about to get the Bangkok Harriettes up and running on a weekly basis on Wednesdays, which they continue to do to this day. There was a brief period where they changed their name to the Bangkok Wednesday Hash, but that lasted less than a year, returning it to Bangkok Harriettes.

Often referred to as the 'Friendliest Hash in Bangkok, Janet Baker explained the founding like this . . .

"Tony 'Godfather' Erswell urged Christine Morf and me to start the Bangkok Harriettes, as he felt there were a number spouses of active Members of the All Male Bangkok H3 who would like to run and who would enjoy the spirit of the hash. We talked it over and deigned to give it a try. However, we really didn't think it would fly. We decided to lay the first five runs in Lumpini Park until we got the hang of the whole thing. We had quite a group for our first run, but it was padded with female staffers of the Bangkok Post! Well, we got some good publicity out of it!"



Although the Bangkok Harriettes started out as a women's only club, eventually men were allowed and it became a mixed hash. Christine Morf was a regular in the beginning, but departed Thailand after the 50th run, she commented that "After 2-3 months we had trumped up a pack of around 20 harriettes, but I don't really remember when we allowed men to join. Maybe it was after I left?"

Hashing then spread to Pattaya, with the establishment of the **Pattaya Mixed H3** on 7 Jan 1984. Founded by Molly Kirgis who had just been exposed to the Bangkok H3 on an outstation run, she was assisted by Bill 'BJ' Jones and her husband Hans. The written description of hash number one stated that the trail would start from Jomthein Beach, and included waterways, bushy nature, ponds covered with water lilies, and buffalos who fortunately were far enough away that they did not interfere with pursuit of the finish. After creating their thirst, they proceeded to the home of the GM to quench it with beer . . . and thus inaugurated the Pattaya Mixed H3.



**Hash House Harriers
Pattaya, Thailand**

Hashing biweekly for the first year, they celebrated their first anniversary in conjunction with the 25th run. One hundred hashers gathered in Rio Park for the event, and it was at this point that founder and GM at that time suggested that Frank 'Whorerator' Benfield become the next GM. Years later, assistant founder Bill 'BJ' Jones is quoted as saying "It was after that the hash began to change from the mixed hash, that had originated a year earlier, into a more macho type atmosphere." This probably saw the elimination of 'mixed' from the name, resulting in simply the Pattaya H3 as they are known today. The Pattaya H3 celebrated their 2000th Hash last weekend.

It's been a long accepted fact that the Pattaya Hash had its "Beginning" on January 7, 1984, with the help of the Bangkok Hash on an outstation run, one Molly Kirgis and Husband Hans having recently moved to the Pattaya area, joined together with a semi-large contingent (12) of the BKK HHH and started what was to be in its in-fancy, The Pattaya Mixed Hash. The reason for callin' it mixed was to make the girls feel as welcome as the guys and it turned out to be a good idea!

Other notable locations that hosted hash clubs in Thailand through these early years include Khon Kaen (1980), Lampang (1981), and Phitsanuloke (1983 and 1985).

Soon after the Pattaya Mixed H3, the **Pattaya Dirt Road H3** was founded as a men only hash in Jun 1984 by Robert 'Prince of Darkness' Finch, with the assistance of Derek Miller. This hash club runs Monthly, and is by invitation only.

By the beginning of 1986, a dozen hash clubs had come (and some gone), prior to the first hash club appearing in Phuket. The **Phuket H3** was founded as a mixed club on 14 June 1986 by Alan 'Dubai' Cooke and his wife Marie, who had arrived from the Medan H3 / Medan Harriettes in Indonesia.

In the first hash trash / invitation, Dubai described hashing as . . .

The Run usually takes 45 to 60 minutes, depending on the type of country, the distance would be about 6 km or a little over. The trail for the run is laid in such a way that the strong front runners cover a greater distance than those who walk and run just a little, (I'm in the latter category). If the run has been well laid the fast and slow runners should come in within a few minutes of each other.; It's fun and costs only as much as you care to spend on a few drinks.

Alan Cooke, 30 May 1986.



Ten more hash clubs would form up (**Bangkok HH Horrors, Phuket Marauders H3, Pattaya FM H3, Pooying H3, Phuket Tin Men H3, Bangkok Friday Thinking Drinking H3, Chiang Mai Saturday H3, Pattaya Dirt Bike H3, Bangkok HH Bikers, Phuket Pooying Picnic H3**) in the cities already mentioned, as the popularity of hashing continued to grow.

Out of that list, of particular note, is the Bangkok Friday Thinking Drinking H3, or more commonly known today as the **Thinking Drinking H3**. Founded on 8 March 1991 by trailblazer, Wichanee 'Imelda' Charuthas, as a special traveling hash for weekends away from Bangkok.



In more recent years, the Thinking Drinking H3 has evolved into a special event hash, hosting prelude events in conjunction with various INTERHASH, PAN ASIA HASH, and MEKONG INDOCHINA HASH events, and recently set a [trail on Antarctica](#) for over 50 hashers.

In 1997, hashing finally reached Koh Samui. The **Koh Samui H3** was found by John 'Captain Squall' Stall on 15 February 1997, after having run with the Bangkok H3. The [Koh Samui H3](#) is a mixed hash, and is still actively hashing on Saturday afternoons at 4 pm.



Since 1997, an additional 32 hash clubs have formed, expanding in the cities already mentioned, as well as expanding to Udon Thani, Hua Hin, Hatyai, Chiang Rai, Cha Am, Hua Cha, and Korat. In all, there have been 62 known hash clubs in Thailand (and likely some not yet recorded), of which 34 are currently active.

On the international scene, Thailand has hosted world [INTERHASH](#) three times, in Pattaya, Phuket, and Chiang Mai.

- Pattaya Beach hosted the fifth [INTERHASH in 1986](#) with 2143 attendees.
- Phuket hosted the eighth [INTERHASH in 1992](#) with approx 2500 attendees.
- Chiang Mai hosted the fifteenth [INTERHASH in 2006](#) with approx 5800 attendees.

Two of the most widely known hashers from Bangkok are Tumbling Bill Panton, whom I have written about on many occasions, with his [creation of the HHH Genealogy](#), and founding the Bangkok H3 (also the DCH3 in Washington, DC). The other hasher is Tim "Magic" Hughes. Longtime editor of Harrier International magazine, as well as produced several editions of his World Hash Handbook that listed all the known hash clubs around the world, with club and contact details for traveling hashers. Magic was

the GM for Interhash 1986 in Pattaya, and also a major contributor, in coordination with Tumbling Bill, on the HHH Genealogy. Magic was actively involved with Bangkok H3 mismanagement, and Chairman of the 1000th run celebration in 1996. Probably Magic's most significant contribution to the hash world at large, was his book ***On-On A Golden Jubilee 1938-1988*** that provide the most substantial recording of the history of the Hash House Harriers. Unfortunately, both of these great hashmen have now passed on.

On - On!

HHH 1938-1988 - A Golden Jubilee

50 YEARS OF THE HASH HOUSE HARRIERS

This superb publication traces the history of the Hash House Harriers and is lavishly illustrated with photographs from all over the world. Tim Hughes went to the U.K. to meet the surviving founders. He got the real story from the original Joint Masters of the 1938 Kuala Lumpur Hash, Cecil H. Lee and Frederick "Horse" Thomson. "Torch" Bennett has also contributed from far-away South Africa. Plus discover the fascinating inputs from Frank Woodward, Llew Davidson, Dr. John Reid and John Haskins, D.F.C.

Thailand has also hosted several MEKONG INDOCHINA HASH events which rotate between Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. And who could forget [PAN ASIA HASH in 2013](#) in Pattaya? Possibly the worst and most poorly executed hash event on record. But then again, as they say, it's only hashing.