



Basherama!

No. 71
March 2001

The Official Newsletter of the Kuala Lumpur Mountain Bike Hash

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FAREWELL TO THE EMPEROR

The time is at hand for all of us here to bid farewell to H.R.H. King Richard "Ye Crafty Bastarde" (aka "Vibrator") of Aubrey(e), **Founding Member**, Emperor and Dictator for Life of the KLMBH. How did he come by this title, you ask?

Well, the KLMBH as we know it today has come a long way from the first Bash held at Sedgerley Estate (now known as Putrajaya) where a small group of "headbangers, nutters and people who just like to get dirty!" turned up to have some fun on their mountain bikes. Thanks to Richard's efforts in keeping the KLMBH as a going concern over the years, there are about 50 members presently and we regularly see more than 60 people turn up for each Bash.

In Richard's own words, "it all started as a sub-set of the St. Georges Society, (basically an English ex-pat 'club'). However, after two or three bashes it was obvious that participants from St. Georges were about as thin on the ground as rocking horse dung, and we decided then to form a club in our own right - Hence the birth of KLMBH."

Richard was the one who turned out the Basherama in the early days and I'm honored to be the one to carry on his legacy, albeit with a vastly different sense of humor and wit.

He has always been there for the Hash, either as a Committee Member, the Grand Bashmaster cum Hare Raiser or even the guy who lights up the barbecue grill. Anything to keep the KLMBH alive and kicking.

He's been known to pull off feats of greatness such as setting Hashes single-handedly with a broken seatpost (!) (Actually, he rode back to the car, drove to Bike Pro, got a new seatpost and drove back to the On On site cross-country!), bunny-hopping poisonous snakes in a single leap and being a 12 time hare!. He will always be found at the front of the long run pack and will be one of the first to go checking while the others mill about like lost sheep at the checks (baaaa!).

Richard is a rider of great talent both off and on the road. He lives for long rides and can ride the pants off most people I know, all the while looking as cool as a cucumber. I can only hope to be half the rider he is when I am his age.

I'm sure Richard has many fond memories of his 12-year stint in Malaysia but none more fond (besides family ones, of course!) than those of his baby, the KLMBH.

Thanks for everything Richard! The KLMBH will truly miss you! Don't forget to write! Bon Voyage and Au Revoir!

Ed.

DIRECTIONS TO THE APRIL FOOLS/FAREWELL TO THE EMPEROR BASH @ LADANG ELMINA C – 9.30 a.m., 1 April 2001

Option 1 – Via North-South Expressway

From KL, head North on the North-South Expressway. Exit at Sungai Buloh. Turn left after the tollgates heading towards Kuala Selangor (Route B54). Zero tripmeter at traffic lights.

Option 2 – Via Damansara-Puchong Highway ("LDP")

Take Jalan Damansara (Damansara-Puchong Highway or LDP) from PJ, going past Bandar Utama and tollbooths. (Note: this is NOT the Plus Expressway. If the toll operator hands you a ticket, you are at the wrong tollbooths!) At the end of the highway, filter left at the traffic lights. Continue straight on, passing under the North-South (PLUS) Expressway to the traffic lights just after. Zero tripmeter at traffic lights.

Options 1 & 2

Continue straight on towards Kuala Selangor. At about 8.4km (Proton Wira distance; Land Rovers and Jeep Cherokees somehow measure 7.9km) turn right onto unmarked gravel track with boom gate (This is the entrance to Ladang Elmina Bahagian C) and continue straight on along the main track. Park off main track at 5-way intersection at 9.3km, leaving room for estate machinery to pass.

Hares: Chew, "Hulk", "Rainman" and Special Guest Hare Paul "What, him Again?" Sweeney

www.bikehash.freesevers.com

The Long Bash, 25 February 2001, North Hummock Estate

Hares: Melody Tan, Charl Bester and Paul Sweeney

So, what makes a good bash? Speaking of my personal preference, a good long bash should be one with **varied scenery**. The February bash was excellent on this count, with sections in the shady oil palm estate, open areas, and tight twisty sections of rubber. The scenic vista at the top of one of the one particular long ascent was particularly rewarding, as it gave something for the eyes to settle on when I was hucking my breakfast out and spitting out bits of lung.

But more than just the scenery, the **technical quality** of the trail is important too. The February bash had this in spades: the marvelous singletrack descent through a plot of rubber trees was positively titillating, especially when one had to contend with the rocks that were poking out between the morass of rubber tree roots. Huuwahh! The section of trail that went along a barbed wire fence at the fringe of an oil palm grove was also memorable for its unforgiving nature. And the bit near the end where you had to descend the oil palm terraces with your butt waaay off the back of the saddle was equally effective in getting the old adrenal glands pumping past its redline.

Of course, a good trail should also be **physically challenging** as well as technically challenging, although in most instances these two come together because you'll need to climb uphill first before you can enjoy those long descents, whether they be of the high-speed variety or tight, technical, singletrack, butt-off-the-back variety. In this respect the February bash was not at all wanting, particularly in the open section of oil palm when one had to contend with the interminable hills and well as the hellish heat.

The scenic quality of the trail, its technical quality and the physical challenge it poses all comprise the element of **trail selection** by the hare. The trail selection at the February bash by the hares — Melody, Charl and Paul Sweeney — was nothing short of excellent.

The second element of a bash is of course the **trail-laying** itself. For those who have hared, you will know what hardship it is to keep rubber-side down when riding a mountain bike one handed while throwing down bits of paper with the other hand. When I co-hare, it generally takes us 4 hours to set a Long bash, and two to set the Scenic. This will give roughly 1.5 to 2 hours of riding for the Long, and about an hours' worth on the Scenic. If you were to set a Bash solo, expect to spend about 2 hours more than that. As you can imagine, at the end of 6 hours' riding, you will get pretty wobbly.

Some hares prefer to set the trail **on foot**. This addresses the frustration of having to lay paper and ride the bike at the same time, which can be quite impossible on technical sections. But to lay the whole trail on foot will take far too long, so instead 2 hares can share 1 bicycle. While one lays paper on foot, the other cycles along ahead for some distance, hops off the bicycle and continues laying on foot. When the first hare reaches the bike, he hops on it and then proceeds to overtake the 2nd hare to lay the paper further ahead. By leapfrogging each other in this manner, you can quite effectively cover a lot of ground pretty quickly without the frustration and danger of attempting to lay paper while riding. The disadvantage of this system is when the hares do not quite match each other in inseam length, and so will have difficulty in sharing a bike.

However, **laying from a bike** can be quite effective on trails that are wide and flat. But you don't want to set a whole bash on trails that are wide and flat. If you have no choice but to lay from a bike (for example, when you are setting the bash solo), you can do the non-technical sections from the bike, and the technical sections on foot. Stop just before or just after the technical bit, get off the bike and proceed to lay the paper on foot. After finishing the section, run back to the bike and continue cycling. This has the advantage of allowing you to enjoy the descents, which will be impossible if you had to lay the paper as well.

Laying the paper on foot also gives you much more accuracy in **paper placement**. No, I'm serious. Okay, okay, you can stop laughing now. Go wipe your drool. Ok? Now, paper placement is very important in giving the hounds visual clues on the direction of the trail. Imagine coming up to junction, and spotting a stray piece of paper on the right hand trail. You will immediately turn right, and only realise the wrong turn about 20 yards later. You then make a U turn to discover that, "well, in fact the trail went left, and the piece I saw on the right was just a stray piece of paper that was mislaid. Bloody hare!" Consistently mislaying stray paper will get the hounds' goat, I assure you. Admittedly, to some extent stray paper cannot be avoided, as the wind and the rain can blow and wash the paper away from its original location.

Paper placement is also critical at junctions and turn-offs where there is no check. Make sure that you lay more paper than usual at such locations, especially when the trail turns off into a much smaller one. If you anticipate that the FRBs will be going fast (for example, on a downhill section) then again more paper will be needed to clearly mark out the turn.

Back to the review of the February bash: the paper placement was good most of time although there were at least 2 occasions on which paper seemed to go in both directions at the same time. If you were bringing up the rear and playing catch-up with the FRBs, this can be quite confusing.

Another component to the trail laying is the **check placement**. Again, the February bash was mostly good, except for one of the first checks at the bottom of the tarred road leading up to the pump house. The checkpoint was laid too close to the in-trail, and was found by a leading group of hounds. They then proceeded to ride the rest of the long bash backwards, turning the excellent technical downhill sections into hike-a-bike uphill! Some of us realised that we had found the in-trail because the trail seemed to led up an unusually steep slope that was definitely not rideable (and Paul had said at the briefing that the trail was almost entirely rideable: one good reason to pay attention to the briefing).

Cont'd >>

The Long Bash Cont'd

This fuelled some suspicion that this was the wrong trail, which were confirmed when Richard and I went back along the trail to find that the paper had led in both directions at the point where the leading group had found the trail. Moral of the story: if you find paper leading off into both directions, check both! If one path leads back to the check, you're ok. If it leads off into the blue yonder, then it's the in-trail!

Having said that however, it was just a small detraction from an otherwise brill hash. So well done the Melody, Charl and Paul for a good hash, which was also Melody and Charl's first hash as hares. Bloody good first effort.

Joe

Am I Lucky or Not.....??? (Sunday 25/02/2001 Bike Hash at Meru)

It's was drizzling at about 7:00am in the morning, I was awoken by Edward call, he decided to call it quit for today's ride. Kor-Yong also decided the same as he has a late night yesterday. I thought of doing the same, the temptation of continue sleeping was so strong.

But after calling Linda, my plan of sleeping out has to be cancel, as usual, her urge to ride is always stronger than us. So the little rain doesn't bother her at all. And as I promise to lead the group to the hash site, I has to sacrifice my temptation to sleep on.

We reach the hash site quite earlier, 9:00 am. It was still raining softly there in Meru even though in PJ the rain already stopped at 8:20 when I left. I decided to sit in the car to wait b 4 the hash starts at 9:30 am. A lot of riders were already setting up their bikes in the rain, their enthusiasm to ride wasn't deterred by the rain at all. Today's turn out was quite a surprise, 40 plus rider by rough estimate, maybe more. Maybe majority live in KL and PJ and didn't know the rain hasn't stop in Meru.

While waiting in the car, I had lots of time to decide what to carry, GPS -of course, handphone - shouldn't be a problem, new digital camera - not sure as it was still drizzling, I said to myself maybe if the rain stop at 9:20 I'll bring it along, hash ride is always good to shoot some shots as there were so many riders. By 9:20, the rain was almost 99% stopped, all around every angle there were water, I felt wet even b 4 the ride starts, the muddy clay road doesn't look inviting at all. So my last decision is not to carry my digital camera.

Suprisingly, the terrain being so muddy, and with cow dung here and there, the ride wasn't that bad at all. With lots of monster climb and interesting downhill, the most memorable part must be the tar road climb to the water catchment hill and straight ahead to a heart throbbing off road downhill.

And after doing a 2 hour loop, on the return journey, without noticing, we are actually climbing back this same hill via another off road trail, maintaining one-self on the bike for this climb is quite a task, worst still with the muddy ground. Thanks god it wasn't as lengthy as Steroid hill. Without noticing and with the sight of the water catchment tank after the trees clear up, the feeling was really happy and relieve knowing the way back is not far away, as the ride for today was quite lengthy (3 hours +) and tiring.

Upon reaching the car park, Linda was already all dress up ready to head home, later I found out that she has a chain break and spend 30 minutes changing it. So without doubt I must have done a much longer trail than her. Being a bit adventurous today, I actually try to cut some climb and try to find my way back to the car with my GPS towards the end, but ended up in another plantation, circle there twice b 4 decided to head back to the paper trail. Another poor soul was fool by my GPS too, can't remember his name.

Why I decided to write for the first time after so many rides...?? You may ask...Well, today was the first time in my riding history that I fell into a river, or rather a stream. Not riding across a 8 inch wooden plank but walking across it, quite a disgrace actually, having had to be winched out of the 4 foot water, cause no way I can get my feet out of the 1 foot quick sand.

There are actually two plank there, one wooden and another concrete, why 2 instead of 1 (as you see in most oil palm plantation), the catch is that the wooden one is slightly slanted, not 180 horizontal, So when the thing is wet, there's no way your SPD shoe can stand on it, that is why I figure out there's the other concrete plank. Those that choose the wooden one, very sorry-lah, later I found out that Linda also fell into this river.

My jersey has to be watch twice due to some weird smell of the water, my backpack has to rise thoroughly, Worst of all, my handphone when kaput, IC chip blown, cost me RM130/= . Luckily my hardcore water resistance GPS still working, but most lucky of all, I didn't bring my RM2K digital camera along...!!

Thomas "Lucky" Fong

BITS & BOBS – 1) Swag for sale!. **KLMBH Mugs** (RM15), polo t-shirts (RM15), 1st Annual Int'l Bash t-shirts (RM5) and 2nd Annual Int'l Bash t-shirts (RM12) are still available and **make great gifts!** Kindly inquire with Bash Cash. 2) **REPEAT! Beer prices for the Bash have increased to RM5.50 each** from RM5.00 due to increased sin taxes levied by the "Powers That Be". **Softies remain at RM1.50 each.** 4) Recently, there has been some dangerous tree felling taking place in Bukit Kiara whereby 6-8 inch stumps were left sticking up in the name of speed and efficiency for the Kiara GP. This saddened and horrified me at the same time. I chopped down the ones on Janie's Addiction but Adli had a pretty bad wipeout hitting one that I missed on Clenched Sphincter. Luckily he didn't catch a stump in the ribs or the head. The lesson here is that unnecessary tree felling is dangerous and undermines the integrity of the trails. Remember that there's a reason why Pat left them there! **If you can't ride between 'em, walk! Or better yet, take up golf!** Mountain Biking in Bukit Kiara isn't for the faint of heart or those weak onda skills dat pay da bills! 5) That's all for Bits & Bobs for now...

The Short Run

25 February 2001, North Hummock Estate

There are many things I do not understand about hashing - not surprising perhaps given that this was my first experience of the activity - but I'm most deeply puzzled as to which of my gestures, comments or social lapses caused me to 'volunteer' to be scribe" So began the last "Bash Tail" (if you don't know the terminology, make up your own) and hey, deja vu...

This was not my first hash, but certainly my first bash> > and I was not expecting the 'tortures' to start until AFTER the ride! I think I see a Bash pattern emerging here though... Is this why the 'regulars' were all so reticent about 'rolling up' for the hares' 'pep talk'? I did think it odd that such experienced bashers should suddenly be having to be bending over their bicycles, checking things, making last minute adjustments... Tip for newcomers, don't stand at the front looking keen to go! Its not even as though I had a shiny new bike to give the game away.

Nope, surely Boon's rental bike looked like the well used but sturdy steed that it was. Maybe it was the lack of bike shorts (never again). Maybe it was that 'trail hardened bike' and 'rider doing scenic route' didn't fit together? Maybe the hares simply recognised it as Boon's old bike and that had to make the person riding it... a newcomer!

Be as it may, we watched the 'serious' bashers do their flying hill starts in awe, before setting off at a more leisurely, relaxing pace. This was the scenic route after all, right? Wrong! Don't be fooled by all this talk of 'that's the route for 10 year old kids'. These little guys must be glued to the saddle or something. Respect!

So there we were, my friend Andrea and I, toddling along quite merrily at the rear, enjoying being out of the city and in the great outdoors. Being a hasher, I had no worries, just 'stay on paper', right? Except that the rest of our group were way ahead and looked a bit lost to us. They seemed to have lost paper when, hey presto... we found paper. Whoopee, we were in front again! Calling loudly and jubilantly to the others we continued on our way, over the single plank bridge, through a stream, through the undergrowth and away.

We were having a great time, getting plastered in mud and admiring the scenery until, who should we meet but the rest of 'our guys' - coming the opposite way... Ah... Hi guys, so who's going the wrong way? Ha, ha. Well, actually... looks like it was us! Still, no turning back now, stay on paper and thanks to some 'expert' navigational skills (see how modest we are) and a few tips by the 'sweeper' we were almost first back for the beers.

Are we going again? You bet! (hey, sense of 'deja vu' again...)

Ingrid Burke

Ed.itorial

1. As Thomas Fong's article highlights above, it is dangerous to bring electronic equipment on a ride without proper waterproofing. From my experience, a simple plastic bag will keep most car key fobs and mobile phones dry if you happen to be caught in the rain. For better protection, use double Ziploc® bags (smaller one in larger one). Remember though that plastic baggies won't protect your equipment from shock and impacts so you may want to find suitable padding for your more sensitive equipment as well. It is interesting to note that my Nokia 3210 has survived several "Camelbak® saved my life" crashes intact. Ericsson has a phone that is shock, water and dust proof as well but boy, does it remind me of my old Motorola® PCN 600. Yep, it's that big.

2. Speaking of TwoCan and Scandal again, the happy couple have their webbe site up at www.skyboom.com/aliden. Check it out!

3. I'd heard a lot about the movie "The Blair Witch Project" and how it had gotten rave reviews despite being shot on a supertight budget by a bunch of amateur filmmakers. I finally got a chance to watch it on HBO last month and, between flipping channels to watch Problem Child II (he doesn't need love and attention, he needs a good spanking!), realized that us Mountain Bikers could learn a lot of lessons from the "The Blair Witch Project" like:-
- Never go deep into the woods without telling anyone where you're going and what you're doing. Finding your parked car outside Devi's Corner in Desa Sri Hartamas ain't gonna tell anyone where the hell you are. It's a big world out there;
 - Know where you're going and how to get out. Navigation skills are very important. Know how to read a map and use a compass. Better yet, get a GPS unit to back it all up. Especially if you have a poor sense of direction or ride in oil palm estates (damn trees all look the same!);
 - On the same topic, only one person should hold the map. Period;
 - Try not to curse too much when you're in the woods. Trust me on this one;
 - Always choose riding partners whom you can get along with. Otherwise, see above;
 - Try to remember that you're just riding your mountain bike for FUN and not to beat your riding partners into submission (However, if so inclined, the phrase "Your Kung-Fu is the best!" or "Uncle!" work here);
 - Make sure you have spare batteries for all equipment (flashlights, GPS, cameras, laptops, PDA's) that you carry with you;
 - Bring everything you think you might need, except for the kitchen sink. You'll end up needing it someday; and lastly
 - Bring a handgun if you can. Something compact but powerful and accurate at short range, like a SIG Sauer P228 or a Glock 19. 9mm punch with 15 rounds ready to go. I had a riding buddy in California who packed a .32 on every ride, just in case. I'll bet you the Blair Witch wouldn't have gotten them if they'd been packing some heat!

Ed.

HARELINE

In order to facilitate the efficient planning of your 2001 cycling calendar, the following Bash dates have been fixed for this year. As in the past two years, your Committee has decided not to adopt a receding hareline, whereby all members are required to set hashes on a rota system, this year and therefore volunteer hares are needed to keep the Hareline going.

Setting a Bash is a rewarding experience as it involves planning, much adventure, camaraderie, some deviant thinking and a great sense of satisfaction when the pack charges off down your false trail and/or your fellow Bashers curse you out at the end of the Bash and then buy you a beer. In fact, setting a Hash is so much fun as evidenced by the Hare Tonic overleaf.

Anyone interested in setting a Bash can contact the Melody, the Hare-Raiser, and for those who have no experience in setting a Bash, fear not for your Committee shall pair you up with an experienced Hare who shall pass on his/her wisdom free of charge. **Hares will also have the exclusive use of the KLMBH guillotine and the KLMBH directional signs to help prepare for their Bash (Ooh! Ahh!).**

Bash	Bash #	Date	Hares/Notes
March	78	1 April 2001	As listed above – April Fools/Farewell to the Emperor Bash
April	79	29 April 2001	Raymond Keys and A.N. Other
May	80	27 May 2001	Scott Roberts (tentative)
June	81	24 June 2001	Hares needed!
July	82	29 July 2001	Hares needed!
August	83	26 August 2001	Hares needed!
September	84	23 September 2001	Hares needed!
October	85	21 October 2001	Hares needed!
November	86	18 November 2001	Hares needed!
December	87	9 December 2001	Hares needed!

HARE TONIC

In Basherama! 48, Hare Tonic was introduced in an effort to encourage more members to step forward as hares. The idea was to reward hares who had set 5 or more Bashes with Pewter Mugs. The Committee is currently sourcing the rewards (which may or may not be in the form of Pewter Mugs or exclusive Jerseys) with the intention of presenting them to the deserving hares as soon as possible (whenever that is!).

The score as it stands as updated by Speedy the Dog on our very own website as 28 March 2001 is presented below. As mentioned before, if you feel that you've set more Bashes than listed below, kindly contact Ed. or Speedy the Dog to set the record straight.

Azizul Adnan	13	Animal Elford	2	Annett Frohlich	1		1
Richard Aubry	12	Dick Shelly	2	S.Y. Chong	1	Peter Pickernell	1
Eric Teo	7	Grant Lee	2	Clara Chin	1	Phaedra	1
Gordon Fraser	6	Jake Slodki	2	Colin Jackson	1	Pinhead	1
Pat Brunson	6	John Hagedorn	2	Dave Baker	1	Simon Ng	1
Ngah Fuji Bakri	6	John Mugford	2	David Foo	1	Steve Ellison	1
Peter Bloomer	5	John Spencer	2	Emma Booth	1	Kenny Stewart	1
Barry Hills	5	Kelvin Wong	2	Geoff Stecyk	1	Karen Brunson	1
Mike Elliot	5	Noel Brennan	2	Graham	1	Janie Ravenhurst	1
Denis French	4	Nigel Blott	2	Ian Miller	1	Paul Moir	1
Alison Keeler	4	Paul Sweeney	2	James Aubry	1	Jamie Knowles	1
Hulk	4	Shariman Alwani	2	Jeff Dean	1	Robbie Knowles	1
Shaharudin Damis	4	Speedy the Dog	2	Johnathan Startin	1	Raymond Keys	1
Bill Steven	3	Tan Boon Foo	2	Marie Benedix	1	Conrad Fawcett	1
Mark Chaterton	3	Larry Chan	2	Mark Clark	1	Melody Tan	1
Peter Heston	3	Andy Blake	1	Mike Smit	1	Charl Bester	1
Simon Kenney	2	Andy Knellar	1	Mike Wright	1	Your name here!	
Alistair Swanson	2	Angus Knowles	1	Paul Booth	1	And here too!	

Three Guys, Three Bikes and Three Hills in Penang

So there I was, dizzy, lying in a moss covered drain with my feet pointing downhill, my head propped up on my Camelbak®, Chew, Hulk and Paul standing over me going "Are you okay?" and me wondering if this trip had been such a good idea after all.

As with our previous trip, Chew, Hulk and I made the decision to head up to Penang to expand our horizons and do a little riding in a more exotic location at very short notice. The division of labor was very simple. Hulk took care of the accommodations, Chew would take care of the post-ride entertainment (since his parents lived in Penang) and I would be in charge of the rides (bwa ha ha ha!).

E-mail proved its worth in coordinating our trip. I made online arrangements with Azmi from the Knights of the Round Table for our rides and we managed to rope Paul Sweeney in to join us as he would be in Penang around the same time. Chew would meet us in Penang.

The 25th of January dawned upon us and I swung by Hulk's house to pick him up. While there, we installed his bike carrier onto my roof rack to enable us to drive three up while in Penang. A short stop at the Touch n' Go booth to top up my card and we were off to Penang. The drive up was pretty uneventful except for all the speed traps that the police had set out. This year, they were sitting in blue and white tents that probably offered more protection from the elements than the little umbrellas they were given in previous years.

Cont'd >>

Three Guys Cont'd

Looking at the crowds at the highway rest stops, we decided to have lunch when we got to Penang. However, with all the traffic and speed traps, it took us quite a while to get up to Butterworth, across the Penang Bridge and out to Batu Feringghi. The problem was that we were to meet Azmi and some of the Knights at the Botanical Gardens at 3.30 p.m. for our first ride. A quick call to Azmi pushed back our meeting time to 4.00 p.m. We arrived at our hotel in Batu Feringghi to find that they didn't have our room ready when we arrived and so we had to call Azmi and delay the ride further. With no time for lunch, we charged up to our room, geared up and drove off to pick up Paul Sweeney from his hotel.

The road leading to the Botanical Gardens looked like Bangsar Baru on Saturday night except for the crowds of people throwing food at the monkeys and gawking. Then again, with the way some people act in Bangsar..... Anyways, Azmi assured us there was parking right at the entrance to the Botanical Gardens are surely enough, we soon spotted a group of riders, including Chew, and an empty parking space.

We were greeted warmly by Azmi and his brother Sany who then left us to get our shit together. I looked up at the sky and all I could think was "We're gonna get soaked!" "Man, they all look pretty hard core" said Chew "and the girl looks really fit!" I glanced over and took in the full-suspension bikes and hard bodies. This ride was supposed to be an easy initiation ride up the Penang Hill Jeep Trail to the Mount Erskine Trail which everyone (being Raymond Keys and Mike Wilkinson) had raved about to me. "Well," I thought to myself "the climb can't be too hard if they're riding full-suspension!" Famous last words.

We locked the car and rode up to meet the Knights:-

Azmi – Santa Cruz Superlight with disc brakes
Sany – Matching - Santa Cruz Superlight with V-brakes
Sup – Specialized P3B dirt jumping hardtail with disc brakes (at least 30 lbs.!)
Derrick – Santa Cruz Superlight with disc brakes (30lbs too!)
Su-Ann, the "really fit girl" – GT hardtail

After brief rolling introductions we started the climb up the paved jeep trail, which had numbers painted on the side of the road, starting from zero. It was pretty steep but I kept on cranking through one switchback after another, long after Paul, Chew and Hulk were reduced to pushing. I still couldn't keep up with Azmi, Sany and Su-Ann who were way ahead of me and soon Derrick passed me too. There was no let up in the effort and my heart was pumping like a herd of stampeding cattle. With each switchback, the road seemed to get steeper. Several 4wd's passed us heading up with their engines screaming, their clutches burning and exhaust fumes spewing out under the effort. It was that bad.

My head started spinning after the 8th switchback or so and pretty soon, as the trees began to blend with the stars, I decided it might be prudent to stop and take a break. I sat down on the ledge of the drain at a switchback but it was too little, too late. My head and stomach were already reliving my best moments on the roller coasters at Six Flags Magic Mountain (Personal favorites - Viper, Batman®-The Ride, Colossus and Freefall). More drastic measures were called for.

And that's how I ended up lying in the drain.

Ed.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Date	Event/Remarks	Date	Event/Remarks	Date	Event/Remarks
1 Apr	KLMBH April Fool's Bash	14-15 Apr	Pahang MTB Challenge	13 May	Kiara GP 2001 #3, Bukit Kiara
7-8 Apr	Singapore Bike Hash	22 Apr	Malacca Bike Hash	20 May	Singapore Bike Hash
7-8 Apr	KBS-Meru MTB Challenge	29 Apr	KLMBH April Bash	20 May	Malacca Bike Hash

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After a while, the spinning stopped and I managed to prop myself up. Paul gave me one of his PowerGel® packets and boy did it taste good. The moral of this story was that if you haven't eaten all day, take it easy when you're riding. If I had had lunch, I probably would have lost it. In any case, I got my second wind from the PowerGel®, jumped onto my bike and rode off up the hill before anyone could take my picture (Phew!). A little ways up, I encountered a monkey who seemed very interested in the PowerGel® packet that I was trying to finish off. I tucked it away in my jersey pocket and split before the monkey could make a move. A combination of riding and pushing got me to "47" where the rest of the group was waiting for us slowpokes. We were joined by Mr. X (sorry, can't remember his name) who was riding an old rigid bike with a bent fork.

The sky appeared to be growing darker by the minute and so we headed off towards the Mount Erskine Trail down some earthen stairs, past a waterfall and across a stream. Sup impressed us all by riding across the concrete beam over the stream. From there it was a short hike a bike up to the top of the Mount Erskine Trail. And then the fun began!

The first section reminded me of Mondo Cool in Bukit Kiara, rocky and technical. I now realized why Sup, Derrick and Su-Ann had broken out the body armor at "47". Chew launched into the downhill with gusto, as usual, while the rest of us chickened out and pushed part of the way. We were told that a downhill race had been run on this exact same course a few months back. Ulp! 8 inches of travel would have been required for the biggest of the drop-offs on that section of the trail. When the rocky, super technical section ended, there was a looong downhill dirt trail that wound its way around the hills all the way to the Mount Erskine Temple. There was incoming fire from fireworks being let off in the valley to accompany us down. It was great! We swept around turn after turn, grabbed a little air here and there and splashed through some rocky streambeds. By the time we arrived at construction site next to the temple, it had started to drizzle. We dropped off into the construction site and made our way past some houses to get back to Mount Erskine Road.

After a short discussion to agree on a time and place to meet the next day, we parted ways with Azmi and Sany, whose house was close by, and pedaled off back towards the Botanical Gardens and our cars. Along the way, Sup, Derrick and Su-Ann peeled off to head to their own homes. The proximity of their homes to the trail sort of reminded me of how close I live to Bukit Kiara. We loaded our stuff into our cars in the rain and headed off to have a drink at a little coffee shop thumping to the beat of the latest Techno music. Weird! Several Beers and teh tarik later, we parted ways with Chew and drove down to Tanjung Bungah to drop Paul off. With a promise to meet for dinner (Hulk and I were starving by now) we drove back to our hotel for a hot bath and some rest.

Dinner was eaten at a largish hawker center that Paul showed us. Char Kuay Teow, Rojak and Yam thingies were all wolfed down shortly after they arrived. Yum! After more beer and conversation, we headed back for a good night's rest.