

Armchair Treasure Hunt 2013 - Results, Loose Ends and Hunters' Tales



Results

No	Captain	Team	Overall Score	Deeves Hall Tickets	Hanwell	Clearwell Castle	Sunset Gower	Prizes
1	Clare Young	Psychologicals	496	8	7	3	8	Best Solution - 1st Place
2	Steve Hames	No Management Potential	473	2	4	4	4	Treasure Finder - 2nd Place
3	Noel Aitchison	Tweleve Pack	462	6	5	6	5	Best Solution - 2nd Place
4	Rosalind Barden	Lady Strange and the Earl of Yarborough	458	3	8	5	7	
5	Peter D G Smith	Peter D G Smith Team	438	14	12	12	13	Best Solution - 3rd Place
6	Chris Andrews	Alcoholus Lubricatum	432	1	1	2	1	Treasure Finder - 1st Place
7	Mark Abbott	Apopheniacs Anonymous	432	4	6	8	10	
8	Andy Marr	Bobby, put the truckin' plug back in	428	5	17	15	6	Treasure Finder - 3rd Place
9	Peter Marchant	PATHfinders	425	9	9	9	3	Virtual Site - Sunset Gower
10	Anne Traynor	Team Poirot	419	11	13	10	14	Virtual Site - Clearwell Castle
11	Nick Ball	Quest4Treasure (Q4T Logicals)	386	7	3	7	9	
12	Tim North	Team Norway	386	13	15	13	16	
13	Gillian Hardy	Dave Kee Team	378	15	16	14	17	Virtual Site - Hanwell
14	Dave Hunter	Team Sociometry	371	10	2	1	2	
15	Bart Bramley	The Stragglers	340					
16	Brian Mills	The Famous Five+	329	16	14	11	15	
17	Jon Wallis	Chiltern Fellowship	248					
18	Mike Wood	Much Endeavour, Little Discovery	244					Most Apt Name (& Wooden Spoon)
19	Geoff Dunn	Keep Tryin'	237					
20	David Thomas	Slow Learners	215					
21	Adam Butler	I'm Spartacus	110					

Team has a CGI SSC Subscriber

There were no ATH Virgins this year so that prize was not awarded.

Just like sporting league tables, where teams were tied on overall score their ranking was decided by the order in which they found the sites.

Loose Ends

Well done to everyone who identified connections between Sunset Gower Studios and Columbia Pictures and stargazing comments and the Rainbow song Stargazer. Despite all of the obscure connections included in this year's ATH, we missed these two while setting.

As another credit to entrants, nearly every point on the scoring sheet was claimed by (at least) one team. The few that escaped unclaimed were:

- Skylab launch picture: this was NASA's 28th manned spaceflight (flight duration 28 days) and this is the 28th Armchair Treasure Hunt, hence the choice of photo
- The 'Chris' in Chris Sellers was taken from the (fictional) Astronaut in You Only Live Twice – it's the scene in the picture on his Facebook page.
- The 31 Star Jack (in the Space Truckin' group) was chosen to represent the 31 flights in Mercury, Gemini and Apollo (inc. Skylab and ASTP – Apollo/Soyuz)
- Bob, Chris and Sofia's birthdays and wedding anniversary dates were key space events in 1959. The birthdays were spotted, but no one identified the wedding anniversary (8 June) as the first flight of the X15. Unintentionally coincidental, it is also the birthday of Bruce McCandless II and Bonnie Tyler, who both appeared in the Facebook pages at some point.

From correspondence with teams:

The Geocache Box under the footbridge at the treasure site was in a rather more secure position than we were used to seeing it, when we went to retrieve our treasure box. One team wistfully commented on how close to the Geocache they had been (and yet so far away).

Quoting Phil: "Brian and I did go back on Sunday and the Geocache was still there. However, some kind individual, presumably from a team that found it before you looked had put it back underneath the step on to the bridge rather than on the metal beams that support the span, which is where it has been for at least two years! Even though I knew it was there it took me a minute to spot a black box in the dim light. I did take a photo but that didn't come out very well!"

It has been returned to its usual position!

What were the purple letters for?!

Quoting Brian: "Phil came over to my house for lunch one Saturday (instead of the usual Old Guinea pizza) to test run the jigsaw puzzle.

After 2 hours he was pretty close to a solution and we worked out some things which would change this from an impossible task to an intermediate one. These were:

1. Varying the thickness of connecting lines
2. Green and red dots to clearly indicate the start and stop points for the jigsaw URLs and
3. Overlaying (purple) characters onto some pictures where he thought there might be too much ambiguity to easily identify the letter needed to complete the snipurl

I had a look at the purple characters to see if I could make anything of them but, given how late in the setting process we did this. I decided we had to accept that these would have to act as snipurl clues for some and red herrings for others.

Unfortunately for some, they hoped to find extra significance in the purple letters and it added a (red herring) layer of complexity which wasn't there (as I couldn't retro fit it into the ATH). Sorry, but that's all there was there."

Sofia's Birthday (and instructions in the introduction)

Brian: I'm glad the Facebook section was a relatively insignificant part of the hunt, mainly there to add backstory. Teams who identified her birthday as either 'between 4th-10th October' or 11th October were awarded half marks (i.e. one point instead of two) as I had a suspicion Facebook was being unhelpful and that we may have missed something in the security settings.

First, some background, then a long winded explanation.

You will not need to join, befriend or login to any page or site to participate in ATH2013, although wellies or stout boots and a walking stick may be useful, depending on the weather this winter. Please respect private property and do not trespass as this is also not necessary.

Both Rabley Park (with the Terracotta Warrior) and Deeves Hall owners have their own web sites so the instructions not to join or befriend were particularly targeted at preventing hunters pestering non-participants local to the treasure site. Obviously we couldn't specifically name those sites, but that was the intention behind the instruction. As an aside, Bob still got 6 FB friend requests during the course of the hunt (all ignored) despite instructions.

As noted in the answers I would (again) strongly advise future setters against using Facebook because it is out of our control and frankly too unstable - it's like being in permanent beta test. The gripes in the late Facebook entries and format changes (roughly 11 April 2013) reflect my frustration at Facebook mucking about with layouts and settings yet again, after nearly a year of building the backstory. It may be that some of these changes resulted in previously visible posts becoming invisible and us not spotting this in our checks, in which case I can only apologise. All that I can hope is that Facebook behaved consistently for all hunters, to maintain a level playing field (hence no friend requests were accepted).

There is definitely a 4 Oct happy birthday post on Sofia's FB between the profile drawing and the Armstrong pics but it seems that this is not consistently visible. Phil retested this after yesterday's correspondence and it seems it is visible on some routes in through FB but not others.

21 teams submitted responses this year, none were 'ATH virgins', and 15 found the treasure. 11 of those 15 teams identified Sofia's birthday as 4 Oct, two as 11 Oct, one as 'between 4 and 10 Oct' and one didn't answer Q(A) at all. Question A on the trail is worth 2 marks. Teams answering 4-10 Oct or 11 Oct got 1 mark because I assumed that this might be down to interpretation of FB entries and possibly some unseen FB issue.

Apart from Sofia's FB there are other clues:

Bob FB, 4 Oct

Chris: So is this the day to let Sofia see what we've been working on?

Bob: I think it might be - an extra present from us both

Chris: I have a copy here - not really something you can gift wrap though

Bob FB 11 Oct

Chris: I don't think S is desperate to dive into our treasure hunt, birthday present notwithstanding

Bob: I'm sure she'll get into it once the excitement of being here has worn off

Sofia: I've printed the pages and I might have a quick look on the plane. It looks like you two have kept yourselves busy while I've been away, but this might wait until Christmas

My interpretation (and intention, so I will admit setter's bias) was that they gave the hunt to her on 4 Oct (her birthday), she has expressed a lack of willingness to get going on it to Chris (based on Chris 11 Oct comment) but she has printed it off at some point before the flight to UK, i.e. before 11 Oct, and looked at it on the plane while flying (11 Oct).

“Did it ever cross your mind to draw a red C on the tree and the lid of the treasure box rather than a yellow L?”

Brian: “No” ... From the ATH site setting design tips:

<http://public.logica.com/~ath/setting/settips.html#burial>

(plus, I had some old yellow paint in the garage at home)

PDF Pictures and Overlays

Brian: As some teams noticed, when your cursor was moved over the main picture in the 'Teaser' poster, the filepath and filename were displayed. This unintentional error was due to putting this poster together in the office one lunchtime and using the PDF maker provided there, which left this information in. Hence the poster was updated a couple of days later. It was also the 'Test' poster and in the end it tested more than just our ability to post a file and text on the ATH site.

A couple of days before launch I did a quick surf to try to validate pictures. The original picture of the 'Dowager Duchess of Dunraven' had disappeared so I had to quickly stick another portrait on top (6x6 grid page). Similarly I couldn't find Strangeways Riding Stables / Equestrian Centre / Farm website any more, where the kids on ponies picture came from so I stuck a snip of their Facebook page on top and ensured that the first letters of the title were still visible. (and so on) Hence the 'hidden' pictures.

"What was all that stuff in Bob's blog about a Derek Flint lookalike using an ATM in a village outside Hull?"

Brian: "In Our Man Flint, there is a running joke where Flint uses his own code based on a math progression 40-26-36 (I think) which no one ever let's him finish explaining. It looked like a valid bank sort code so after a bit of digging I found a match to an HSBC branch in Hedon near Hull.

When I checked it out on street view there is a man of similar height build and hair colour as Flint taking cash out at the bank.

It was too good not to use.

One team not only solved it but sent a screenshot of that scene! (on the right)

[It is an insight into] that strange mindset you can get into as a setter.

I found I would start researching one thing then go off at a tangent or have an idea and follow that for a while or just stumble across something unexpectedly useful. Serendipity intervened several times and this was one of those ones where I had an idea but it took a disproportionate amount of effort to find the HSBC branch code and corresponding address – brute force setting paralleling the brute force surfing sometimes needed to dig out a solution."



Recreating Knebworth Mud ('The Return of the Knebworth Fayre' 1985)

Brian: In January 2013 I was sent home early from work as the McLaren offices outside Woking were in danger of becoming snowbound and the roads impassable. Phil and I had started visiting the Deeves Hall area in November 2011 and this snow was by far the most worrying weather condition encountered to date. It turned out we had other weather to contend with, as I found when I hid the box on 19th December. After weeks of poor weather and heavy overnight rains, a stream had started running across one road in Shenley turning it into a ford, other roads had small streams of runoff water following the incline of the land and the path to the treasure site was saturated, wetter than I had ever seen it. I can only guess what the route from St Margaret's Church to Ravenscroft Farm was like.

However, I don't need to guess as many of you kindly provided descriptions, which brings us onto... The Hunters' Tales.

Hunters' Tales

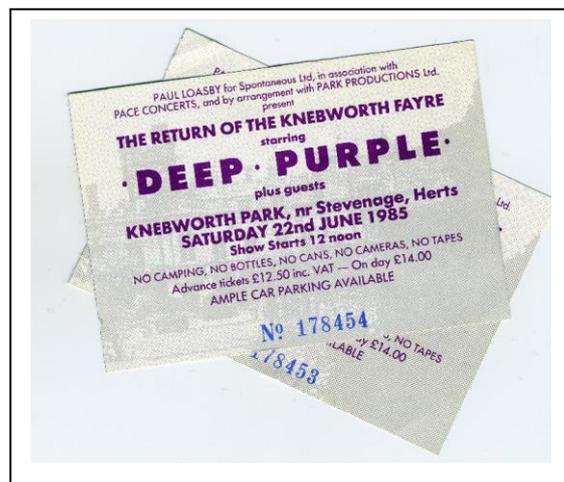
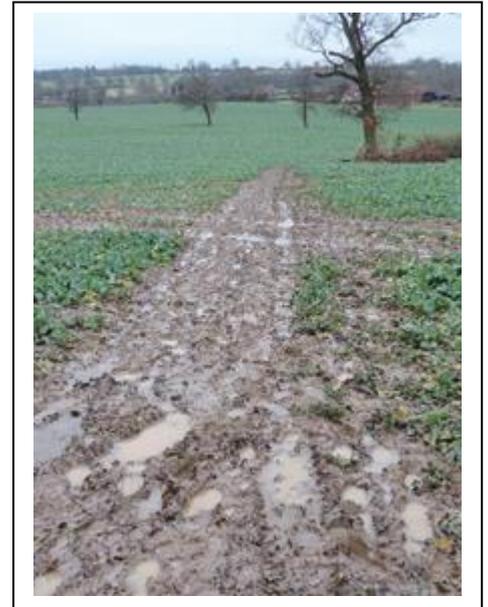
Team Norway

[From Garry Smith, with Team Norway decoding the directions] ... Anyway – time for Nancy and me to go treasure hunting. (Well, OK, maybe I should get dressed first!)

I've been a Deep Purple fan for over 40 years, I've lived in St Albans for nearly 30 – and that was the first time I'd actually seen Deeves Hall. (I'd checked it out when it was for sale many years ago, but it was out of my price range.) We parked just beside the church, rather than in the pub car park. On with the wellies, and away we went.

Another couple, with a toddler, had been very interested in [Tomers] gate. The woman then ran back with the toddler's pushchair in the direction of the pub – to put it back in their car, I guessed - whilst the man wandered around the churchyard.

We went round the church (the “building”) as instructed, and as we were about to “exit on left” through the hedge into the field, I looked back, to see the woman had just come around the corner of the church. I waved at them to come and join us. I've always said that if I turned up at a treasure site at the same time as another team, I wouldn't race – I'm too old for that now - but propose that we work together, and tell the setter that it was a dead-heat between us. But she didn't seem to want to join us, and Nancy told me to stop being an idiot and gesturing at total strangers. So we struck out on our own.



We were glad that the setters had advised us to take wellies, although wet suits and snorkels would have been better. The path was VERY muddy.

“Reminds me of Knebworth!”

Yes – we were there.

[At the treasure site] Reasoning that “between the two gates” meant between the two gates of the bridge, Nancy had stood on it and looked around. And had seen the yellow L on a tree to the left! It was not at all obvious.

So we scrambled down the bank of the stream, and found the treasure in a hole in the tree. Number 13.

At the same time, I could see the couple behind us approaching the other side of the field, so we didn't spend much time at the treasure location.

[Back in the treasure field] the couple had split up and were checking round the edges of the field. Since it was obvious what they were there for, I went over to speak to them. It was Phil and his partner, and their small daughter, from the Peter DG Smith team. They had travelled from central London.

They asked us if we had found the treasure, so we admitted that we had. They hadn't – we told them that they were warm, but they didn't want any more clues. (I would have hated someone to come that far but leave with nothing.) So we left them to it. As we left the field, I realised that I had taken only the two earlier pictures at the treasure location. So I turned round, to see that Phil and co were standing on the “treasure bridge”.

Peter D G Smith et al

It was a nice day for a walk in the country. Fortunately not One More Rainy Day. (*)

We passed Garry Smith putting his wellies on near the pub, but he soon raced past us.

There was a distinct difference in attitude. He was dressed like Scott of the Antarctic, holding a compass and with a pocket full of maps: I was dressed a bit more like Terry Scott, holding a one-year-old and with a pocket full of sweet wrappers.

...The footpath continues to a bridge over the Catherine Bourne stream, bounded by two gates. From the bridge one can see a tree marked with a Logica L down by the stream. The treasure is in a hole by the L.

Like most other teams, I imagine, we then rewarded ourselves with some dolly mixtures and played pooh sticks.

(Brian: 'One More Rainy Day' is third track on 'Shades of Deep Purple' and so possibly was written at Deeves Hall. Maybe Deep Purple had some grotty weather there too)*

Alcoholus Lubricatum

With the puzzle launched at midnight it was certainly a relief to start this year not in the middle of the working week. Apart from a few picture identifications there was not much activity in the overnight hours. The timing did present us as a team the opportunity to get together (in real life) on the first days hunting, which worked really well.

Despite the errors in the pre 23rd December version, our decoding and identification to start near Deeves Hall was good enough for an exploratory visit late that afternoon. While this yielded the 1st ticket, not everything made sense (or was visible in the fading light), so a second visit occurred on 28th December once we had the revised decoding which had also revealed further questions that needed eyes on the ground.

As all good stories begin, this one began on a wild and stormy evening. Jon arrived at South Mimms at 3pm, with the light fading fast and a crumpled sheet of very rough directions.

From the churchyard, Jon did something that vaguely corresponded to turning right and exiting on left and found himself in a field. Was that a path under wires? Was it even a path, or just a strip of ground so muddy that the plants refused to grow?

It turns out it was a path. And away in the distance there was a farm that he would pass on the left. Jon hadn't expected to have to go so far, but didn't have time to retrace his steps and look for a different gate so he persevered. The footpath got to a road so he consulted his directions to see what to do next.

WAZCRHNREDSOWHCLMAXWOJOU

That helped.

Jon interpreted it as 'cross the road and head down a steep and muddy footpath through a wood'. So he did.

No idea what the stargazing reference was but he was certainly between two gates. He scrambled down the bank and found the treasure! Fortunately it was in a really obvious location within a hollow tree. If it hadn't been quite so easy to find or he'd been about 15 minutes later he doubts he'd have got it. Our initial decrypt was indeed puzzling, but things were also falling into place. We passed on the decrypt, as we had it, to the setters in case there was a mistake, and soon they published a modified version that made more sense.

The second party had the benefit of the corrected instructions, Jon's precise explanation, a nice sunny day and team of five people (Alex, Chris, Constance, Matthew, Margot). In the finest traditions we met up in the Old Guinea for a rather pleasant pint and a bite of lunch.

As we viewed Rabley Park and getting a good look at the warrior we certainly looked suspicious. Although if you are going to case a joint for future wrongdoings then bring along 2 girls with cameras too – it seems to save any eyebrows being raised.

Despite more of us, daylight, and no questioning in the instructions it still took us a good while to locate the actual treasure; and only afterwards did we see the tree markings from the bridge. By now the next ticket was already #8.

While we took the chance to look at the box and the comments left the girls were back on the bridge playing pool sticks in the Brook which was not as high as we had expected (given the flooding reported in the UK) but did have a good pace about it. Having concluded that playing too much will disturb the scene that was obscure to us already we called it a day and headed home.

Tweleve Pack

12 January email "No More Stargazing" from Noel Aitchison:

It's probably too late for this to make a difference, but one of your clues is no longer valid.

Even though we'd already collected the treasure in December, yesterday I took a gamble that our missing answer for question E might be related to the geocache that I'd just noticed was within metres of the treasure. So certainly not a wasted trip. And yes, I did try the pizza at the Old Guinea.

When I got there, I was surprised to see that a good stargazing patch was no longer there. The little green observatory that was definitely there on 27th December, was definitely not there yesterday. This is surely an extreme piece of sabotage by one of the other teams!



Team Poirot

[Anne Traynor] On our route to the treasure, one of our team got into discussion with the lady in the house with the elephants, who was quite excited to learn that her property featured in the treasure hunt. As we hadn't got to the treasure at that stage we were hopeful to be lower than number 11 when she said she hadn't seen any other treasure hunters in the area over Christmas.

We did think the field was a pretty big stargazing patch. She asked us to keep her updated on our progress and sent back this email a couple of days later:

Thanks for your email - it was very interesting. It's a shame that our observatory ("a good stargazing patch") was dismantled and removed on the 2 & 3 January 2014 - that must have thrown a few treasure hunters!

Team Sociometry

[Dave Hunter] I woke up on New Year's Day and discovered that, contrary to the forecast, it wasn't raining. I took this as a good sign and decide to try out the instructions. The rain started as I got out of the train at Borehamwood and didn't stop for the rest of the day. So, first a short walk up to Ridge. I was very pleased to discover that the cryptic reference to Tomers Gate was very clear once I was standing in front of it. And from there on it was plain sailing. Though I did regret following the instructions which took me through a ploughed field rather than going directly to the obelisk which we had located on the map. It must be nice to be sufficiently wealthy that a yellow elephant seems like a good idea! I still have no idea why the bridge is a good spot for stargazing but the yellow L was clearly visible from it. Fortunately, the stream was within its banks so reaching the tree was easy and we found ticket 10. Not brilliant but still better than our performance over the last few years.

And so on to Potter's Bar station just in time to crowd on to a train back to town with a horde of Arse fans appropriately perhaps. Kind people, they gave me lots of space. Probably because they didn't want to be dripped on.

And then a bottle of Ridge Zinfandel with dinner! As a sort of appropriate celebration.

Much Endeavour, Little Discovery

[Mike Wood] Slightly late start as far as I was concerned (I'd hoped to use a day's leave "left over" on Friday 20th Dec to make a start, but it was still on the launch pad at that point). Due to family commitments we didn't really get going until after Christmas, made some good progress, then slowed dramatically (it's never a good sign when you've not solved enough to understand the errata in the Notes section), and suddenly it was time to make it ready for entry.

No Management Potential

Could we justify an excursion on Christmas Day? Er, no. A rendezvous was fixed for Boxing Day.

Overnight, the our crack US team turned up a useful description of a walk around Ridge <http://www.walk-talk.co.uk/RIDGE.htm> so we were confident that we were heading for Rabley Park; after a pre-dawn start we parked nearby just before 9:00.

The obelisk was visible ahead and a second elephant on the right. Things were looking good. We now believe that the elephants must have come from the London 2010 Elephant Parade. The polyhedron on the obelisk was a cuboctahedron. This is the 11th Archimedean solid⁷⁷ or A11, linking beautifully to Apollo 11.

... Back to the footbridge, the 'good star gazing patch between the two gates'. No stars to be seen, but suddenly, more distant than expected, a yellow 'L'! Rather indistinct from the bridge itself, but much clearer from the field on the far side. And there, in a hole: a bag, a box, a note dated 23 December (!) from Alcoholus Lubricatum ... and ticket number 2. Yes!

We then completed the trail by visiting the telegraph pole, Tomer's Gate and the Old Guinea. As we did so we found a man walking towards the farm, studying an A4 sheet of paper. Another Hunter, surely.

Sadly, we were much too early for pizza.

Bobby, put the Truckin' plug back in!

[Andy Henderson] TAKE PATH UNDER WIRES. PASS THE FARM ON YOUR LEFT – I was now on a path heading Northwest through the field towards Ravencroft Farm. It was at this point I thought an angry farmer was shooting at me for walking on his land but it turned out to be a clay pigeon shoot going on in the next field. I was also glad Bob's blog recommended wellies at this point!

FOLLOW THE ABANDON PATH – I soon came to a path marked as the Hertfordshire Way but I later noticed that it is also Footpath 16. Abandon is the name of Deep Purple's 16th Album hence the Abandon path.

THROUGH THE KISSING GATE – I went through the kissing gate. It was at this point I noticed a merry band of likely treasure hunters in the field ahead. Sadly it turned out to be the Apopheniacs Anonymous clutching ticket number 4! TOWARDS A GOOD STARGAZING PATCH – Ahead of me there was a small home observatory in the field the other side of the river ahead of me at this point.

So Treasure ticket number 5 it is. I think that's our best yet. If I'd been 15 minutes earlier it'd have been number 4 but never mind!

Apopheniacs Anonymous

[Mark Abbott] To keep a fairly long and windy tale brief, our route to the Catherine Bourne burial site [included] dodging the shooting party bullets on a soggy Christmas morn to make our way from the Old Guinea to Catherine Bourne across a number of squelchy paths.

We retrieved Ticket No 4 at roughly 11am on Friday 27th December. Just in the nick of time as it transpires, since hardly had we replaced the box after the necessary photo opportunities, than another Hunter appeared over the horizon.

Luckily I only suffered minor flesh wounds and lived to recount the tale.

Apopheniacs Anonymous' answer also contained the first but not only reference to a real Chris Sellers at NASA: We also found a Linked In page for Chris Sellers that looks ATH-like: Chris Sellers NASA engineer from Ardmore, Alabama (Huntsville, Alabama Area) has a linkedin page at <http://www.linkedin.com/pub/chris-sellers/82/3a9/2a1>. His location there in Huntsville makes me suspect an ATH creation. Passingly interesting that Huntsville "is home to the Saturn 1B Rocket, at the Alabama Welcome Center, just south of the Tennessee border, on Interstate 65"

And they noted:

There are a fair few misspellings [on the Facebook pages] - thought maybe we could collect the incorrect letters and make something but nothing.

Stragglers

[Bart Bramley] We are confident that the treasure is near Deeves Hall Barn. One thought is that it is near the Old Guinea pub at the south end of Deeves Hall Lane, where it is close to a WWII vintage pillbox, possibly suggested by the Connect Wall. Another thought is Combe Wood, about a mile to the east of the barn, along Mimms Lane. This would be thematic with last year's placement near Combe Down and the 2007 placement (in Paul Coombs' last ATH) on Coombe Hill. Along the way we found a few oddities that seem too strange to be coincidental:

- The Facebook conversations between Bob, Chris and Sofia contain a bunch of misspellings. We think they are coded somehow, but we ran out of time and energy to break it.

- We found this page: <http://blogs.airspacemag.com/moon/2011/03/discarding-shuttle-the-hidden-cost/> The article highlights comments by Robert F. "Bob" Thompson, a U.S. space program veteran, in which he calls the Hubble Telescope a "national treasure". We hope you named your character intentionally after this guy.

Brian: I'm sorry for the effort spent on the Facebook misspellings, but the timestamps are genuine and that's probably why there are so many spelling mistakes and typos.

David Kee Team

We arrived as the rain stopped but we kitted up anyway with the same kit we have used in Antarctica and Everest. *"You can never be sure about the weather up on the Ridge"* (or is that the north east ridge on Everest with Mallory and Irvine?).

Early confirmation that we were on the right track was the gate into the churchyard. The plaque was not readable on Street View but on site it was very clearly for Tomer and a source of information for question A. Buoyed by this success we exited the churchyard and immediately went wrong. *"take path under wires"* it said and we could just about make out some telegraph/electric overhead cables and it looked like we would go under them if we followed the huge cabbage field boundary. Off we tramped confident of finding a sign on one of the telegraph poles that would solve question B. Half a mile later we were less confident and very muddy. We decided to turn back and then I remembered that we are supposed to find the treasure without trespassing (note on CGI ATH site). So we headed back to the churchyard exit.

Looking again at the map and using an on-line map and compass orientation we determined that the path went across the middle of this huge cabbage patch. Not entirely obvious in the dark. Well a moon in a very early phase and scudding cloud. So off we went and without the torches our eyes got accustomed to the dark and we even thought we could see the path! After half a mile we were less confident, having been under numerous wires and passed many poles that could have had numbers but were marooned in a sea of cabbages. And then we found the one that solved question B and morale rose again. The mud is forgotten.

We head north at this point looking for elephants and a warrior, it is really very dark. Dave suddenly says, *"I know this house, I cycle past it regularly"* (mind you he also regularly cycles past the church and had never noticed it!). Better still he says *"they have a terracotta warrior in front of the house"*. So question C solved, although we can hardly see the house let alone the elephants and warrior.

We are on a road by now but another footpath looms and we are walking towards an obelisk that we cannot see and is not marked on the map. On our right is a huge garden where the polyhedron of question D could easily be hiding in the inky blackness. We reach the obelisk and on its top is the polyhedron, well something very odd and geometrical.

Morale is high now, we are at the kissing gate. We head down to the stream, there is a bridge with a gate at each end that fits the last part of the instructions. *"a good stargazing patch between the two gates, look for the yellow L on you left"*. We don't understand stargazing because overhead is all tree branches. Looking left is down stream and not on the path so out of bounds? We cannot see a yellow L! Dave says he can see footprints by the side of the stream and starts walking along its edge. Reluctantly, because he is obviously wrong, I follow. Quite soon I tell him this is a waste of time and we should go back to the bridge and regroup. As I turn my torch catches the Logica L which is facing towards the stream and there is the box in a recess in the tree and we have ticket 15. Alcoholus Lubricatum were there on the 23rd of December, two days after it started, they are first again! No Management Potential (Steve Hames and Alison) were second on Boxing Day.

During our progress I have been emailing pictures back to the team web site so that our progress can be followed. Unfortunately just as we find the box the iPhone gives up the ghost and although I had brought a spare battery I had left it in the car. So the team is left hanging wondering what is happening. Also I have lost my online map. At least I was prepared for that with a paper version and I note that there is a much quicker way back if we carry on and do not retrace our steps.

We pass a house with CCTV and a footpath across their garden and down the drive, No one comes out, it is only a little after 11pm. At the end of the drive is a parked car with a couple inside. They emerge as we walk past, nothing is said, this is England after all – cross country walks in the dead of night are the norm.

We get back to the car much quicker than we came and largely by road, why couldn't we have gone that way? We pass Deeves Hall rehearsal room and very flash it looks too, no pictures because of the defunct iPhone. Back at the car a quick burst of electricity reminds the iPhone that it is 60% charged and emails and pictures of ticket 15 are sent to the team. We head home as the storm resumes overhead and there is so much rain hammering down.

A great end to a 48 hour period. We had not a single web site 48 hours ago, had a breakthrough and have now found the treasure. All without having to listen to a single Deep Purple track!

Psychologicals - First site visit

I met up with Annika and her family, at the Tomers Gate entrance to St Margaret's Church in Ridge, on Sunday 29th December. We had a copy of the decoded instructions on how to reach the site, and had worked out the first line told us to park in the Old Guinea pub in Ridge, and head down Deeves Hall Lane to the gated entrance to St Margaret's Church, on the left. This memorial gate gave us one of the dates needed to answer Question A.

Armed with our instructions, we set off through the church grounds, and out onto a footpath through a cabbage field heading towards Ravenscroft Farm, under lots of telephone wires. It was a beautiful sunny day, a bit wet underfoot! As we passed the farm there was a telephone pole which held the answer to Question B, L2070. The route turned north, and up Packhorse lane, where we spotted a multi coloured elephant in the grounds of Rabley Park, and up against the house was a statue of a terracotta warrior.

We turned right off Packhorse Lane, towards the noise of the M25, following footpath no.16. On the way to the obelisk we spotted the other yellow elephant sculpture in the extensive grounds of Rabley Park. There was a kissing gate a few metres past the obelisk, so we took this heading across a short field towards a footbridge over the stream, Catharine Bourne. As we walked to the bridge we noticed through the trees on the other side of the stream, the green domed shape of a telescope cover, a mini observatory. So, though we noticed the two gates either end of the bridge and Annika said the area to the left of the bridge looked like a good location spot, we crossed the bridge and headed for the mini observatory, looking for an answer to question E there!

This proved fruitless, and eventually we decided the two gates must refer to the ones either end of the footbridge. We headed back and started a search along the stream by the bridge. Annika soon spotted the yellow Logica L on a tree, and inside a natural hole in the tree was a well wrapped box. We were delighted to find that we had picked up ticket no.8, as we already knew that no.7 had been collected two days earlier.

We didn't have an answer to question E, and after checking the bridge again for graffiti and plaques, we headed back towards the pub for a drink, passing Deeves Hall, where Deep Purple had begun rehearsing in 1968, on the way. This was my first Logica hunt, and I now had an idea of what they were all about! Although happy that we had found the box, and that we weren't quite as far behind as we had thought, I was also frustrated that we hadn't been able to answer the last question.

Psychologicals - Second site visit ... Timeline to the Geocache box:

29th December 2013:

On returning back home, after finding the CGI ATH box today with Annika and her family, I began wondering why we couldn't answer the last question on the route to the box instructions. Had we missed something on site, an inscription or plaque on the footbridge? Annika had spotted in the log book that one team had returned to the site "Looking for more clues", so it seemed that others were also finding this last question tricky.

30th December 2013:

I was going through Bob Thompson's blog and found a second reference to Kate, the other one being in the introduction story of the hunt. Wondering if this mystery woman was a reference to the stream at the location site, Catharine Bourne, I posted my idea on our Bulletin Board. By chance, part of the blog I quoted mentioned "modern GC stuff and so on" which Jo thought might be a reference to Geocaching. This first mention of a Geocache site seemed to go unnoticed.

31st December 2013:

Jo posted her idea about there being a Geocache site at the footbridge again, and this time Pete took notice and researched it himself. With Premium Member access, he found confirmation of a Geocache box at the same footbridge, though at this stage we still thought this was a bit of a long shot.

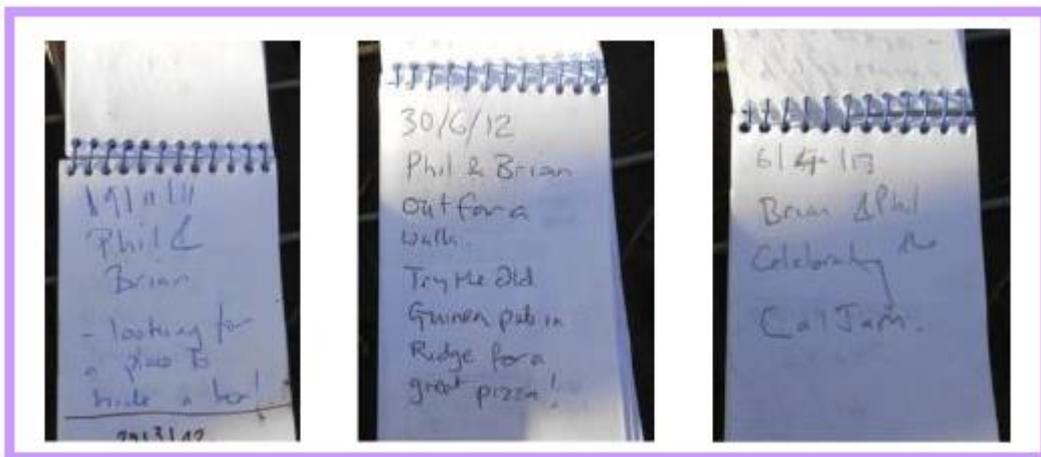
Geocaching premium members cache GC1VTKE In The Line Of Duty #3: SC James Grainge

1st January 2014:

Decided to go back to the site location on Thursday, as the weather looked good around midday. Got camera charged up and wellies ready!

2nd January 2014:

Drove back up to Ridge, 42 minute journey. Walked to the footbridge across the field from Mimms Lane, very wet, a lot more rain had fallen, and the stream was full. Found the Geocache box immediately, and the three entries by Phil and Brian! Result! Great team effort sifting through the clues!



And finally ... an afterword from The Setters

Thank you to all the teams who took part (including those that didn't submit) and all those that kindly allowed us to monitor their progress during the hunt. Apologies for the errata and unintended glitches, it seems everyone coped with them so hopefully they were not too distracting.

Good luck to next year's setters - we will be relieved to return to the ranks of entrants in 2014!

Finally, we hope to see as many of you as possible at the Prize Giving.

Brian Jackson and Phil Stockton

January 2014