

2019 PablosATH – Cachew Nuts' Travellers' Tale

We arrived at the true solution very late in the day (on Sunday 12 January 2020, in fact). Cachew Nut Richard made the initial break-through by finding the page-12 bike on Google Streetview.

There then followed in quick succession:

- Identifying the rebus for Vigenere on page 10.
- Identifying **STONEBOOTS** as the key
- Realising that the Vigenere decoded to **CAESAR SHIFT ACROSTIC**
- By deduction and manipulation of existing answers identifying this as **HARM DONE**, a novel by **RUTH RENDELL**

Until this point we believed Dr Seuss to be the theme of the puzzle but we rapidly re-thought and came up with Ruth Rendell as the theme. Several hitherto unexplained pictures on other pages rapidly slid into place – beginning with the crocodile bird – which were clearly links to Ruth Rendell. Because there were links to Ruth Rendell on every page it was clear that she was the overall theme.

We then discovered where Ruth Rendell lived, marked by a blue plaque in Loughton at 45 Millsmead Way: very close to the already-identified bike above the door of the Foresters Arms.

We decided to make the journey on Monday 13th January 2020 – the last day of the hunt! So Cachew Nuts Rod and Brian made the long trip from Hampshire to Epping Forest and reached Loughton at just past midday.

We had already identified the "treat" picture as Baldwin's Pond – from an almost identical shot on the Geograph website. Consequently we by-passed the initial part of the journey (although we visited them after we had found the box), parked in a side street and made straight for Baldwin's Pond. Well, "slithered" and "slid" would be more apt verbs. It was indeed a "boggy furlong".

At this point we realised the significance of the "no nuts and no spoons" in the message. These were banned items for fishermen at Baldwin's Pool.



Mud and "no nuts or spoons"

We then proceeded up WNW (our Garmin GPSs confirming the accuracy of the heading) for 100 rods or so (approx 500m) until we arrived at the clearing with post.



At this point we very nearly scuppered our chances of finding the treasure by not following the explicit directions. We turned right instead of **sharp** right. So we followed the Green Ride until it turned anticlockwise ("widdershins"). But by this time we realised something was wrong as we couldn't identify any of the pictures after the clearing with post.

So we backtracked to the clearing and, this time, turned **sharp** right into the wood. As we approached Blackweir Pond it was clear that “**bank**” referred to the bank of the pond. We breathed a huge sigh of relief when we found the “truncated tree”. We wondered if something like this was the inspiration for Ruth Rendell’s “Tree of Hands” novel:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tree_of_Hands



Rod comparing the photo of the truncated tree to the real thing

We quickly found the “tree with very many trunks” but then we split up looking for the very distinctive “keyhole” tree, not realising that this was actually part of the many-trunked-tree itself. When we realised our error, Rod decided to go and investigate a nearby tree and found the pink box almost immediately. Unfortunately there were no tickets left so we followed instructions and claimed the 21st to the treasure prize. For the record we found the box at about 1.00pm on Monday 13th January. Could we claim the leave-it-to-the-last-minute prize or alternatively the last-to-find!

As we are geocachers we couldn’t resist finding the very ancient (2003) geocache which was just a few yards away from the treasure. Ironically it took us longer to find the geocache than it did to find the PablosATH treasure!



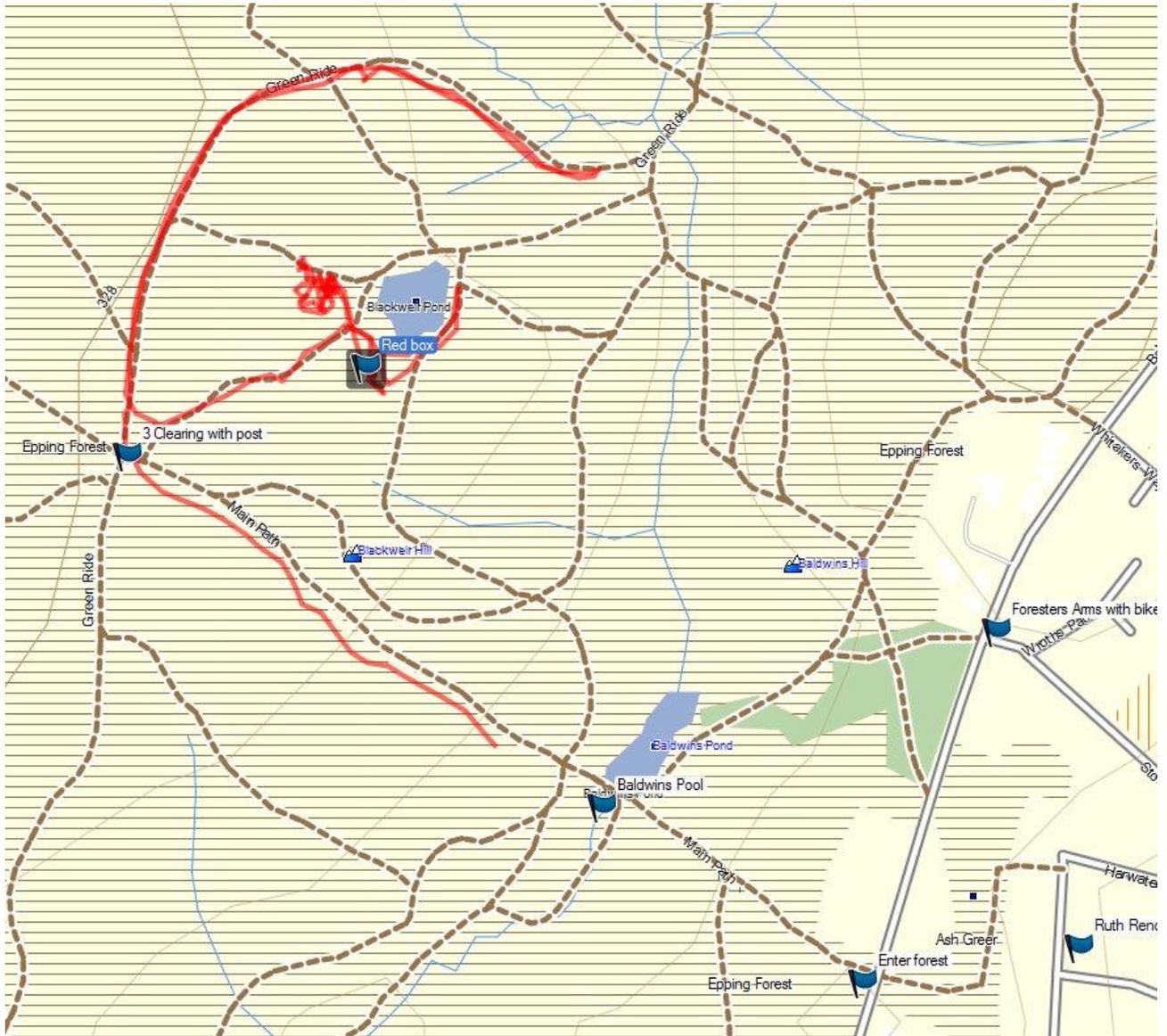
Rod finding the box and the contents – no tickets left!



The stone lion and the alleyway leading up to the road



The theme of the hunt: Ruth Rendell's house complete with blue plaque.



This is the “breadcrumb trail” from one of our GPSs which only found a satellite signal a short distance after Baldwin’s Pond”. It clearly shows our error in turning “right” instead of “sharp right”. The squiggly bit to the west of the pond was our attempt (eventually successful) at finding the nearby geocache.