

Towards the end of the final week we were coming to the conclusion that Cold Christmas had to be the treasure location and we pencilled in the weekend for what was expected to be a fruitless site visit. We had no detailed instructions but it was worth a punt. We are hunters, we had to go.

We had joined forces with a team of German speakers for this year's hunt, apparently our understanding of English idioms was what they needed. Although since they have finished much higher up the leader board than us for the last two years I think we were getting the better of the deal.

On Friday we started to make progress with page 14. We had already identified all the pictures but had stalled on what to do with the rest of the page. A sustained attack by English and German speakers revealed *EAST FROM CCLGM OAK*. Obviously *EAST FROM Cold Christmas Lane Greenwich Meridian OAK*. By this time we knew more about prime meridians, anniversary markers and oaks than Isaac Newton. So we now absolutely knew that the prime meridian marker at Cold Christmas was the place to start.

Unfortunately we had not cracked a lot of the route instructions. In fact all we had was:

- *PATH SOUTH OR TAKE TRACK*

So we decided not to venture out on Friday, it was late in the day and we had high hopes that we might find out more before the site visit. Saturday morning at 01:15 we had cracked another instruction:

- *SECOND TREE*

However, it poured with rain on Saturday so we abandoned the day and, anyway, it really didn't seem enough for a site visit. So we set our alarms for an early start on Sunday. We were not confident; it really wasn't much to go on. There are a lot of footpaths around Cold Christmas. However, looking on Google Maps aerial view we could see two isolated trees that looked possible and they were not too far off the meridian.

No more information came in from the team on Sunday morning so Dave and Dave set off by car to park just west of Cold Christmas and Bob and Pauline took the train to St Margaret's and set off on foot from the south.



As Dave and Dave approached Cold Christmas more information came in from our German speakers:

- *so we want to give you a bonus point*
- after you have found the treasure.*
- On the walk back at your leisure*
- go west to **Ware** you've seen*
- outside of number sixteen.*

We tried to construe this as extra help in finding the treasure location but to no avail. However, as we approached Cold Christmas from the west we passed a footpath sign for path 16 to **Ware**! So we were definitely on the right track (or path) and we had a bonus point.

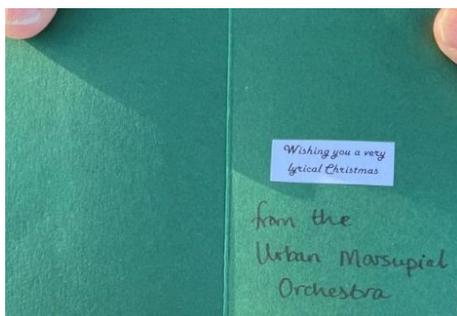


We arrived at the meridian anniversary post and the oak tree. It was exactly as social media had predicted. The oak is right behind the post and opposite a couple of houses and in a few years will dominate their view (i.e. block out all sunlight). Had we not known it would have been a little surprising to see that the oak tree was little better than knee high to a grasshopper, even though it had been there for nearly 40 years. Social media gossip has it that the house owners were not too pleased with an oak tree planted so close and each year coppice it severely.

So we knew we were at the starting point and the instructions said go east, so we went east. All we had was *PATH SOUTH OR TAKE TRACK*. The expectation was that we would see a path and track off to the south, but close study of the map and Google Map aerial view had revealed nothing to fit the description. The first path we came to went off to the SSW, but there was no associated track. However, it was heading in the direction of the two trees we had identified so we took it. This was a mistake in more than one way, albeit a fruitful one.



The path soon turned at right angles across a very, very muddy field (first mistake) before joining a properly surfaced track leading to the two trees. In fact there were three trees (second mistake), better resolution required by Google. DaveB walked around the second tree, no Logica L, no box. Luckily DaveK has more stature and spotted the box immediately, we did not find a Logica L. It was not the triumph of number 1 from last year (more than 50% of the team believe we won) but an envelope with 5th on the front was very welcome. Early on in the hunt we doubted we stood any chance and it was only the fortuitous joining with German speakers that got the combined might of Arthur and his three Agathas and the David Kee team over the line.



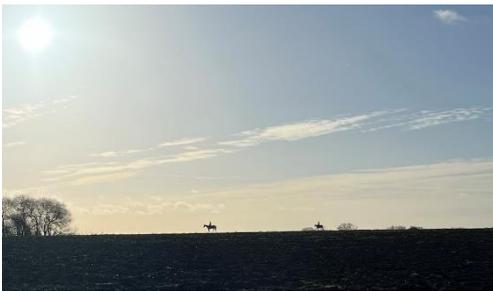
We moved on quickly so as not to make the tree too obvious to other hunters and headed towards Bob and Pauline as they approached from the south. Having met up with Bob and Pauline we revisited the site so that

they could also experience the thrill of a site visit. They were a little dismissive “but last year we got ticket number 1”, there’s no pleasing some people.



It was a glorious day to do some treasure hunting, even if the fields were a bit muddy. There were clear signs in the sky that we were about to make a famous discovery, horse riders were out looking and a microlight flew over the site. The lengths some hunters will go to ...

As we headed back towards Timber Hall we stuck to the well-made track and emerged onto the road east of Cold Christmas where the footpath on the ground is not as per the map and *PATH SOUTH OR TAKE TRACK* actually makes some sense.



As we walked towards Cold Christmas we met another couple who started the conversation with “have you found it”. We were a bit coy, not wishing to give anything away, but it turned out they had seen us across the fields clustered around the tree and with our hands high up the tree. The box was in a hole in the tree about 7’ up. So they were off to get ticket number 6. The

women in the group agreed that it was sexist to put the box so high up, setters please note. The couple knew virtually nothing about the hunt, they were the site visit team for their son in California!

Buoyed up by the success of the visit and the fact that the pub was some miles away Bob and Pauline accepted a lift and we all spent a few happy hours having lunch in the White Horse in Wareside.

Report by David Kee on behalf of

Arthur & his three Agathas with the David Kee Team