

ATH 2021 – Hunters’ Tales from No Management Potential

Visit 23 December

We had zeroed in early on Cold Christmas and had picked up the importance of the Greenwich Meridian, identifying the oak tree next to the bollard from Google StreetView. (Later found on the Prime Meridian site.) When we spotted James’s Wood, cutting the Meridian and with a bridleway along its southern edge, we thought that there could be no better place for a treasure tribute to James Medhurst.

An emissary visited on 23 December, meeting up on Fanham Hall Road with a local friend who’d come by train and bike from Stevenage. We walked up the Harcamlow Way to the SW corner of James’s Wood. The wood was planted in 2012 to celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and still has deer fencing around it. We carefully checked the southern edge, next to the bridleway, paying particular attention to the where we crossed the Meridian. No joy. We continued up the eastern boundary, turning left off the bridleway that led to the treasure tree, and then rejoined the Harcamlow Way at the NW corner. There were a couple of places where it would have been possible to get through the fence but it was definitely not open to the public. We left Andy’s bike there and explored a likely bit of woodland next to the footpath on the north side of Kirsty’s Wood. Then went down to see the Meridian marker (which had gained some seasonal headgear) in Cold Christmas and its accompanying oak tree. Went east from the oak but returned south on the first footpath, which kinks invitingly at zero longitude (no treasure). To retrieve Andy’s bike, we continued up the field edge (not a right of way but very close to the meridian) to James’s Wood, rather than forking left on the footpath and joining the bridleway that would have taken us past the treasure site.

The bridleway along the western boundary of James’s Wood was a treasure-free quagmire, no place for a bike. Andy felt obliged to use a jet-wash at a garage in Ware to increase the likelihood that he’d be allowed to put it onto the train back to Stevenage.

Visit 4 January

On the way back from Sussex, we dropped by Cold Christmas neath an orange sunset sky on the first really chilly day for many weeks, timed of course to experience a properly Cold Christmas. We parked up just east of the Meridian Marker and began our investigations.



The area “thirteen steps” east of it was an unmown part of the verge and bore no treasure, nor did the thicket 20m to the east.

At this point, the friendly woman at number 78 returned home and said hello, clearly aware of what we were doing wandering around the verge. “I’m guessing we’re not the first”, I enquired. “Oh no, there’ve been a few, but as far as I know none of them found anything”. A young couple pulled up and asked for directions to the derelict Cold Christmas church tower. Perhaps some more clued up hunters, I thought, but the tower is to the west of the meridian.



Confident that there was no treasure in the immediate vicinity of the marker, we wandered down to the footpath to “Babbs Green” just round the corner to the east. It runs along the edge of a bare field then cuts straight across the middle (see photo). The wood it passes through was just visible on the horizon but lacking both daylight, footwear, and any inclination that there might be treasure there, we headed home.

The boys were convinced the treasure would be under one of the traffic cones in an intriguing small triangle of grass in said field (just visible on the photo), but I vetoed their attempts to wade over to it.



We paused for the obligatory photo at the monkey puzzle tree, mindful to “keep off the grass” as instructed by the owners.



Visit 8 January

On 8 January we tried again, this time focusing on the area around Cold Christmas Church. The seeker reported "I went to the site on Saturday, but no joy. Too big an area to search in detail. Very wet and several dog walkers."