

The magazine of the Geocaching Association of Great Britain

# SEEKER



23

November  
2014

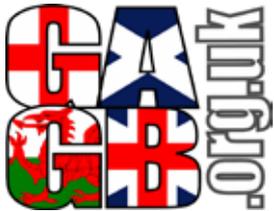


# SEEKER

ISSUE 23 NOVEMBER 2014

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### The Geocaching Association of Great Britain (GAGB)

is the leading UK Geocaching body, recognised by and acting on behalf of cachers. The Association was established in 2003 to provide a national organisation that represented geocaching, and serve as a UK point of contact for geocachers, landowners, the media and others with an interest in geocaching.

Find us on [www.gagb.org.uk](http://www.gagb.org.uk)

Contributions to Seeker are welcome; please contact the editor ([editor@gagb.org.uk](mailto:editor@gagb.org.uk)), but the Association is unable, at the present time, to pay for submissions. Copyright in all such contributions will revert to the author on publication of the subsequent issue; pictures are published on a single use, non-exclusive UK editorial rights basis under which copyright remains with the photographer.



## MEET THE 2014 COMMITTEE



Heather Bull  
(Cache on Wheels)  
Secretary



Jackie Catterall  
(JackieC)



Cass Flowers  
(\*geocass\*)



Richard Lay (RichLay)  
Treasurer



Terry Marsh  
(countrymatters)  
Seeker, Editor



Lilian Maund  
(Mollyjak)



Adam Redshaw  
(ukcachemag)



Sharon Reid (Sharant)



Jen Harley  
(Maple Leaf) Chairman

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

This issue of Seeker is the last before the next round of elections, and serves both to remind us how quickly time flies, and how much we have achieved during the year.

The phrase “There are still things we want to do, but we’ve run out of time”, will always feature at the end of any committee year, and may be a case for looking at introducing some better system of continuity, so that each year doesn’t potentially take a large intake of new Committee members who have to learn the ropes.

Our core project for the year was the website. So, once that was launched we were able to fine tune it, and use it as a basis from which to develop the services we provide to members. The new Land Agreement Database, for example, is something that we can now be proud of and it means that we can direct landowners to it when discussing agreements. This has already led to a number of new agreements over the past few months.

Somewhat worryingly, there are still many UK geocachers who aren’t aware of the GAGB, and I believe this is a key area the Committee can look at next year.

Seeker 23 is quite a bumper issue. For a start I’ve encouraged all members of the Committee, whatever their respective roles, to contribute to an Annual Report, and this appears in this issue. I feel it is a useful way of letting members know not only what we’ve all done, but, just as importantly, letting others who might want to serve on Committee see the sort of things we do.

Also in this issue are write-ups of the GAGB CITO weekend in September, a major award won by some of our Northern Ireland colleagues and details of a fascinating road trip taken by two of our members as part of the process of joining up the dots of the Mega event in Ayr and Piratemia in Cumbria.

As ever—and here I’m sure I echo the sentiments of the other Committee members—it has been a pleasure to serve the GAGB and to develop and improve the facility it provides both for members and public alike.

# nanos...

## Ramblers calls for woods for all

At the end of September, the Ramblers called for more woodland to be opened up for people to explore when it launched its Manifesto for a Walking Britain.

In 2013, the government pledged to increase access to woodland, but so far very little progress has been made. Disappointingly, only 38% of woodland in England is available for people to fully explore. The Ramblers is calling on all political parties to commit to producing a forestry bill early in the next parliament as the first step towards increasing access to woodland.

In terms that apply just as much to geocaching trips, Ramblers chief executive Benedict Southworth said:

*"Climbing trees, searching for conkers, feeling the crunch of autumn leaves under foot - these are experiences every child and adult should have - which is why we're calling for all of the political parties to commit to increasing access to England's woods."*

*"Playing, exploring and walking in woodland is not only fun, it can also help reduce stress and ill health and gives children the opportunity to learn about the environment around them."*

*"The government agreed that every person should have access to a wood or wooded area close to where they live. Now we want to see real action, with woodland being opened up for everyone to enjoy."*

*"Our manifesto for a walking Britain calls for the next government to increase people's access to woodland, but will they take up the mantle?"*

The Ramblers' Manifesto for a Walking Britain was launched as the Ramblers celebrate 10 years of being able to freely explore much of our mountains, moors and heaths, and down and common land, but they don't yet enjoy the same freedom with woodland. The Ramblers wants this to change.

## Trackable Etiquette

There are thousands of Travel Bug® trackables whizzing around the world right now. Powered by geocachers, they travel geocache to geocache...or so we hope. Travel Bugs travel in pockets, backpacks, car glove compartments and in suitcases for long distance voyages.

Sometimes though, their travels stop cold. The trackables get stuck under cushions, lost in the kitchen junk drawer or put down and simply forgotten.



Here are three tips to help Travel Bugs do what they do best: travel.

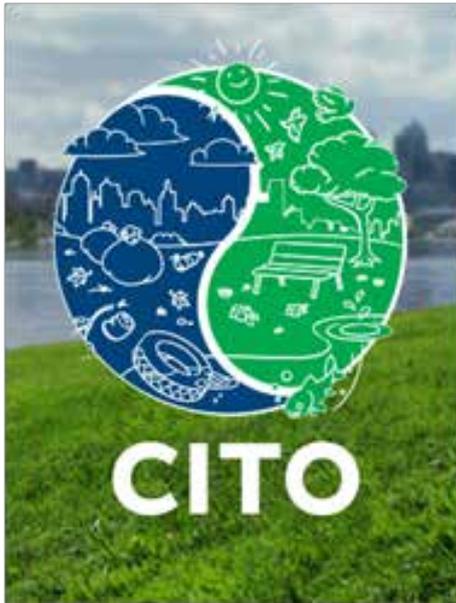
First, if you find a Travel Bug® or any trackable in a geocache, you are not required to trade anything for it. But if you take it, follow some common sense trackable etiquette. It all starts by entering the tracking code [here](#).

- Log that you have retrieved the Travel Bug or trackable from the geocache as soon as you're able. By logging that you've retrieved it, the Travel Bug owner, geocache owner and all those looking for Travel Bugs will know that this one is on the move.

- Check the Travel Bug's goal by going to its page. It's as easy as typing in the tracking code. Then you can find out if it's headed to beaches around the world, mountain tops in Austria or somewhere else. The idea is to place the Travel Bug in a geocache that will move it closer to its goal.

- Drop the trackable in the next geocache and log that you have done so. If you need to keep the trackable for more than two weeks, please email the owner to let them know that their trackable is taking a short rest, but will be on the road again soon.

Incidentally, it often happens that you find and retrieve a trackable from a cache before the person who placed it there has had a chance to log that they've dropped it in the cache. So, don't just 'Grab' it; give the owner time to record where they dropped it.



## CITO: Pick Up Trash and Pick Up a Find

No matter how you pronounce it, CITO (Cache In Trash Out) should be a part of every geocacher's vocabulary.

What's it mean? It's simple— whenever you're out geocaching, clean up the area around you. It keeps the countryside clean and shows land managers that geocachers care.

Here are a few tips to become the ultimate CITO champion:

1. Pack an extra trash bag in your geocaching kit.
2. Trash is usually gross! Always carry gloves and, if you can manage it, a grabber tool.
3. Organise or attend a CITO event and turn trash or invasive species into a smiley.
4. Celebrate the next International CITO Weekend on April 25 and 26, 2015 and earn a digital souvenir for your Geocaching profile.

## 15 new National Trails Agreements for GLAD

Exciting news! – we have added 15 new agreements from across the UK to our Geocaching Land Agreement Database. The network of National Trails passes through some of the most stunning and diverse landscapes in Britain from short walks to 630 miles. These include Cleveland Way, Cotswold Way, Glyndwr's Way, Hadrian's Wall Path, North Downs Way, Offa's Dyke Path, Peddar's Way & Norfolk Coast Path, Pembrokeshire Coast Path, Pennine Bridleway, Pennine Way, South Downs Way, South-West Coastal Path, Thames Path, Yorkshire Wolds Way and the Ridgeway.

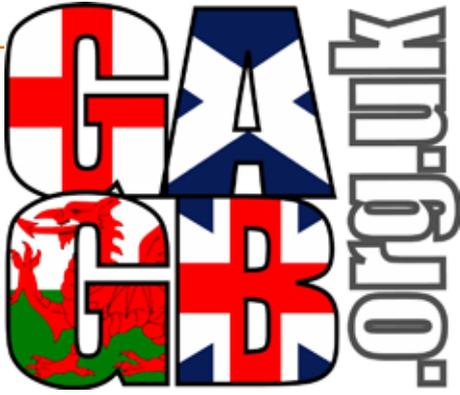
See <http://www.gagb.org.uk/landagreements.php> to view the agreements.



## MANXCACHEFEST

Moves are afoot to stage a week-long series of events on the Isle of Man, from the 15th-21 August 2015, to give UK geocachers an opportunity of visiting the island and gathering in some of the 700+ caches you'll find there. New geocoins – for the Heritage Trail and the Millennium Way Geotrail – will be available before Christmas. It's all still in formation, but watch this space: [www.manxcachefest.com](http://www.manxcachefest.com).





# GAGB Annual Report

## of the Chairman, Officers and members of the committee

### Chairman's report

The launch of the updated website and the new Landowners Agreement Database (GLAD) has given the GAGB a fresh new look this year. We aim to continue to improve and add features to the website. One feature that I particularly like is the new format calendar and list, especially as I know the amount of time it used to take to manually add all the events into the old forum calendar. Our aim is that people will visit the website regularly to make use of the event calendar and additional tools and links.

During the past year over 700 new member registrations have been processed. As well as supporting geocaching in the UK, GAGB membership enables geocachers to benefit from additional features such as discounts from outdoor suppliers, book sellers and geocaching suppliers, as well as receiving the bi-monthly *Seeker* magazine directly into their mailbox a couple of weeks before it appears on the website.

Discussion forums in general are used a lot less these days as the majority of Q&A and general discussions have moved to social media. As well as the GAGB Facebook group, we also use the GAGB Facebook page and Twitter feed where we post important and useful news.

The GAGB has been selling cache box labels, with contact phone number, for a number of years now, but at the UK Mega event in Ayr we introduced some additional GAGB branded merchandise and are currently in the process of setting up an online GAGB shop, where all these items will be available. We are also in the process of producing a new GAGB geocoin. This is now well underway so shouldn't be too long now until this is available to order.

The second week of September is now established as the annual 'GAGB weekend'. We had 10 conservation CITO events this year run by both committee and non-committee members and we hope that GAGB supported events continue to grow in future years.

Several of the emails and phone calls that the committee receive are from landowners and the media. This year was no different, we received 82. Some of these were dealt with by the committee

and others have been passed onto other geocachers. We have also contributed (directly or indirectly) to articles in *The Scottish Farming Leader*, *The Woodland Trust member magazine*, *Manx Tails* and *Your Dog magazine*

### Personal report (Jen Harley/Maple Leaf)

As well as overseeing the committee and chairing all committee meetings this year I feel that I have contributed to all areas and have a good overall knowledge of the workings of the GAGB.

I have written articles for *Seeker*, assisted Cass with the design and testing of the website and GLAD, helped Jackie with GAGB registrations, updated the Facebook page along with Richard, and answered some of the incoming landowner and general enquiries, as well as being on the GAGB stand at the Ayr Mega.

I have also been speaking to landowners and promoting geocaching and the GAGB in my local area. This has included designing leaflets and hosting 'Introduction to Geocaching' sessions at two local outdoor festivals. The first one was part of the Avalon Marshes festival in Somerset where the GAGB had a stand and three committee members were present (Lilian, Sharon and myself). We talked to people about geocaching and the GAGB and showed them how to use GPS receivers to go and find some local geocaches. The second one was part of the Mendip Rocks festival where I set up a sample trail, which included several elements of geocaching, followed by using a GPSr.

I also hosted a GAGB2014 CITO event that was held in a limestone flower meadow. We helped the Mendip Society to scythe the vegetation at the end of the summer as a thank you for giving permission to place geocaches on their land.

I am currently working with the Mendip Hills AONB unit and setting up an agreement for geocaching on some areas of their land.

### Secretary's Report (Heather Bull/Cache on Wheels)

During the past year, there have been 10 committee meetings, all held online. Between meetings, there is also contact among the Committee via the GAGB

Committee Forum. The members of the committee including attendance are shown below for 2013/2014: DaddyandDude (Dax Wood) resigned in March and was replaced by Sharant (Sharon Reid).

Jen Harley (Maple Leaf) - Chairman	10
Heather Bull (Cache on Wheels) - Secretary	9
Richard Lay (richlay) - Treasurer	10
Cass Flowers (*geocass*)	7
Terry Marsh (countrymatters)	8
Lilian Maund (mollyjak)	10
Jackie Catterall (JackieC)	10
Adam Redshaw (UKCacheMage)	8
Sharon Reid (Sharant)	6
Dax Wood (DaddyandDude)	1

There has been a wide variety of issues discussed over the last year, including events, the launch of the new website, Landowner Agreements, requests from organisations for a someone to visit and give talks and demonstrations about geocaching, the GAGB geocoin and preparations for the annual GAGB CITO weekend.

In addition, the GAGB has promoted the growth of CITO events in the UK from the first, and only one, in 2004, to the sort of numbers we experienced in September of this year. Encouraging and supporting more geocachers to get involved in hosting or attending CITO events is one of the key issues that GAGB are keen to develop, not least because these events help improve, protect, maintain and sustain our environment and wildlife.

### Personal report (Heather Bull/Cache on Wheels)

I was delighted when I was elected onto the GAGB committee last year, and was keen to support and contribute to the geocaching community. It has been interesting to learn how GAGB works, what goes on behind the scenes and what is involved for GAGB to provide the service they do.

It has surprised me, the volume and variety of the enquiries that GAGB receive and act upon. There have been from requests from museums for information about geocaching, estate managers who would like help to place geocaches, to contact from radio stations and magazines, and people who have found geocaches and would like to help them be replaced or reunited with their owners.

I have thoroughly enjoyed supporting landowners and members through the three CITO events I have organised, two being for the GAGB Annual CITO weekends last year and this year.

I have attended many events in the last year in the UK and in Europe. Many geocachers abroad were

surprised to hear that we have a national geocaching association that supports geocaching in the UK: one person described it as narrowing the gap between us and Groundspeak.

This year I attended my first two Mega events and the Giga event in Germany. I have been accessible at events, online and via private messages, to discuss member's issues, concerns and opinions.

At events that I have hosted and attended, I have enjoyed sharing with others what the GAGB is, and the role it plays in geocaching, and I have sold GAGB geocache sticky labels.

I have been contacted in different ways including when people have seen I am a member of the GAGB committee, as they followed the thread I started in 2012 in the GAGB forums about being a disabled cacher. I have also been asked at events about being a disabled geocacher and how they can help make geocaches more accessible.

A reporter from a UK national magazine was referred to me to assist in creating an article about geocaching with children. As this is based in the UK, I took the opportunity to promote the GAGB as a valuable source of information. A final year university student contacted me, too, which resulted in working with her and her team to create a short documentary about geocaching, including how geocaching can be accessible to all.

### Treasurer (Richard Lay/richlay)

It has been my first year as a GAGB committee member and it has gone very quickly! It probably took the first quarter of the year to get up to speed with everything, but I have thrown myself into lots of things and feel that I have been a valuable asset to the committee.

I took on the role of Treasurer, and, as such, prepared the end of year document which showed us as having £1932.15 in cash across our bank account and PayPal, and £678 worth of stock.

We now have a balance of around £1800 in cash and £450 worth of stock. The bulk of the difference being a printing bill for Romer cards and competition leaflets. We have received donations since April of £39. I am really looking forward to signing off the monies to pay for our exciting geocoin, which I'm sure will go down well with members.

I made no secret in the election process last year of where I believe the GAGB can thrive in the future and that is within events. I helped Cass test and establish a fantastic new addition to the website in the event listing and calendar and I am happy to update that weekly. That gives me a good sense of what is going on up and down the country, and I

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have used the Facebook groups to push key events. I have represented the GAGB at two National Trust events for new players and been available to talk about the organisation at 40 other events that I have attended in 2014. I was proud to host a CITO event for the GAGB CITO weekend and spent a week of summer camping in Ayr and the day of the UK Mega with the rest of the committee that attended on our stall. I think there is a great deal we can offer to the social side of caching, particularly in how we welcome new players and I am keen to see that develop.

I have been able to successfully field questions from the public and the media, one of which came to fruition recently as an article in Your Dog magazine featuring an interview with the Amasons, which came as a result of an email we received. I've also been able to reunite missing caches with their owners.

I have supported Lilian and Jackie in doing a small amount of administrative tasks in vetting Facebook joining requests and setting up new members to our website. I also control the Twitter account though I haven't done as well with that as I hoped.

I have managed to attend every committee meeting across the year and contributed fully in each.

In summary, I feel that I have pulled my weight this year though there is still a great deal I wish to achieve in the role.

### **Webmaster (Cass Flowers/\*geocass\*)**

Earlier this year I uploaded the new GAGB website, something I had been perfecting for many months. The new site not only brings a fresh new look, but also an intuitive and easy way for the committee to manage news items, GLAD agreements, and file uploads.

After delivering the site I set work on enhancing the events section of the site. Previously, the GAGB committee would have to manually add each event to a calendar. The events list and events calendar pages that I developed allow committee members to upload a bulk extract of UK geocaching events to the site. The site then automatically displays them in a list or calendar, making events easy to find. The calendar was further customised to be printable.

Along with this, I was also involved in the GAGB rescue bid for the 2015 UK Mega when the previous Mega committee disbanded. I invested a considerable amount of time researching possible venue locations. I then visited a location in Essex with Maple Leaf and it was decided that I would take on the role of the Chairman of the UK Mega

2015 Committee and organise the Mega event independently of the GAGB meaning that GAGB committee members could concentrate on other work.

### **GLAD Manager Report (Sharon Reid/Sharant)**

The GLAD manager maintains the database of landowners agreements, which list whether landowners allow or disallow geocaches to be placed on their land and how to apply for permission to place a geocache. As of October 2014 there are now 124 'allowed' and 36 'not permitted' agreements. The manager also deals with all the landowner queries from both landowners and geocachers who wish to place geocaches.

In the year 2013-14, the GLAD Manager role was handed over to Sharon Reid. Since appointment in March, 93 of the existing landowners have been contacted to check details. About half of them have replied with their organisation logos and other details, making for a much more reliable database. Further, two agreements were removed, 9 others edited, and 34 more entries created – 29 new 'allowed' and 5 more 'not permitted'. We now have significant numbers of new agreements from national bodies such as the National Trails (e.g. the Thames Path, Pennine Way, Offa's Dyke Path and the Pembrokeshire Coast), and the National Trust in Surrey (thanks to Peter (parastro\_uk) for that), as well as several councils, Bournemouth Borough Council, Northumberland County Council, Glasgow City Council, Coventry City Council, Leeds City Council and Blackburn Council.

It is worth noting that 'not permitted' agreements are as important as 'allowed' agreements, in that potential cache owners avoid wasting time and getting into frustrating disputes if they know where geocaches are not welcome – for example for historic, security, scientific, or safety reasons.

### **GLAD Manager (March 2014 to date)**

I was asked to join the GAGB Committee member in March 2014 when an elected committee member could not continue in the role, and I am very happy to be the 'GLAD' Manager. In this role I have dealt with many queries from geocachers on how to place a geocache and obtain permission, as well as liaised with landowners and negotiators of current agreements and with Groundspeak reviewers such as Chris (Graculus) who maintains the UK Geocaching Wiki page.

The GLAD database has been given a new look this year and is now much easier to use – you can now list by county as well as by major

landowners such as the National Trust, Forestry Commission, Councils, Woodland Trust etc. One concern I had when I started was that we weren't sure exactly how up-to-date everything was, so I have spent a lot of effort on contacting each of the agreement landowners to check that the information is up to date and adding pre-existing agreements that Groundspeak had in place as well as negotiating and adding new agreements.

Another part of my role has been to represent GAGB at certain places, and in that capacity I have attended the UK Mega 2014 in Ayr and helped out on the GAGB stand to raise funds, taken part in an AONB Partnership Consultation on Visitor Management, helped new geocachers at the Avalon Marshes festival in June and hosted a GAGB CITO in September. I am also aiding the design of an online shop for the GAGB website – more on that next year, I hope!

### **Seeker, Editor (Terry Marsh/Countrymatters)**

Since the last election period I have produced, illustrated and edited five issues of Seeker, for January, March, May, July and September. A sixth [this] issue will be published on 1 November 2014, the 23rd in total so far.

Seeker is available to members both as a pdf and in digital format. Back issues are viewable on the website ([www.gagb.org.uk](http://www.gagb.org.uk)).

Topics covered include:

Issue 18

EarthCache News: Offline lists: Dealing with cows: Geocaching in the Azores: Portrait of the Outer Isles: Whereigo caches: Product review – Aigle Parcours 2 Pro Walking Welly

Issue 19

Geocaching in Alaska: Geocaching safely: Project-GC: Profile of Ian Grime: GSAK - Part 1: Caching on an Active Volcano: Product Review – Maxpedition Jumbo™ Versipack®

Issue 20

Geohounding: Church Micro 5000: SideTracked caches: Geocaching on Mull: GSAK Part 2: Product Review – Peak Design's Capture Pro Camera Clip

Issue 21

Jasmers: New to the game; Southport CITO: Life without GSAK: Geocaching on the Isle of Man: Kent Mega: GSAK Part 3 – Product Review: Garmin's Backpack tether

Issue 22

Cedric Robinson MBE: Over the sea from Skye: The first GIGA event: A Fair Cop: Splashmob report: Product Review – Aquapac

As an elected committee member, I have attended almost all Committee meetings (only missing meetings when I've been in remote parts of Scotland), and contributed generally to the on-going business of GAGB, including giving a talk on behalf of GAGB to a group of museum officers in Shropshire.

### **Adam Redshaw (UKcachemag)**

It's hard to believe that it's been a year since I started to get involved with GAGB. As I was not allocated a specific role within the team it is fair to say that perhaps I have not been as involved as I should have been. It took a while to understand what was expected in the way the team work and communicate.

My original ideas regarding the introduction of 'learning' events are still in hand, but nothing has come of them yet.

I have been involved with most of the meetings held, and feel I have contributed in some way. The GLAD was something I had offered to be involved with, and it was decided I was not the best person for this.

I have been involved with discussion of merchandise, and have assisted in answering some of the emails the GAGB have received.

I also ran my first CITO event in September, as part of the annual GAGB weekend.

### **Lilian Maund (Mollyjak)**

As part of the GAGB I have responsibility for checking before letting cachers join our GAGB Facebook page/group. We have a lot of potential spammers and I try to eliminate these before they can cause problems within the group. This also includes the role of admin and making sure that any problems which may flare up are dealt with quickly and appropriately.

The GAGB receives a number of emails and phone calls which need attention. I usually respond to the general queries and try to put them in touch with the correct person.

I have attended all bar one online committee meeting and illness was the cause. I have also taken the minutes of Committee meetings on two occasions when our Secretary has been unable to.

I have helped to spread the information about the GAGB when attending all events as well as at Mega Ayr where we manned the stall for the duration

of the event. This included donating some camo bags, which I make, to be used for fundraising for the GAGB with the map game.

### Jackie Catterall (Jackie C)

This year not only was I on the GAGB team, I was also on the Mega Ayrshire team, so it's been a busy year.

For the GAGB I have:

- Been the lead on all new membership applications, processing over 90% of all new members and adding them to the forums
- Been backup on adding cachers to the GAGB facebook group
- Been backup for the Secretary, writing the minutes when required

- Dealing with most of the queries and requests from Scotland, including contacts from landowners and the police.
- Been involved with advising a local autumn festival on geocaching events
- Hosted a GAGB CITO near Falkirk, Scotland
- Hosted the GAGB stand/display with the Mega Ayrshire display at the Kent Mega in May
- Helped on the GAGB stand at the Ayrshire Mega and organised the majority of the map prizes
- Been the lead for the design, creation and manufacture of the new GAGB geocoins
- Organised GAGB embroidered patches for sale, and polo shirts for the team for the mega
- Helped with GLAD as required, for Scotland

## ERNIE BARROW (REVIEWER: LINDINIS) RIP



Ernie Barrow started geocaching in 2008 as 'Ernie B' and placed many caches and series around Somerset. He was a keen photographer and enjoyed combining both hobbies on caching trips.

In 2012 he was invited to join the UK and Ireland reviewing team where he would be able to use his expertise and knowledge to help the geocaching community. He took the reviewer name of Lindinis, which was the Roman name for the village of Ilchester near where he lived.

He was a retired engineer from Westland helicopters and used his technical knowledge to create the first 'reverse geocache' to be published in the UK, GC5000X which has proved immensely popular with cachers.

Ernie had suffered from ill health for a few years and during 2014 his health began to deteriorate, so, in August, he made the decision to quietly retire from reviewing. He was a keen fund raiser for the Air Ambulance and at his last geocaching event in September he held a raffle where he put up many of his geocoins as prizes. Altogether he raised £150.

Each year the reviewing team have a meeting and we were all so pleased that despite his poor health Ernie was able to come to our 2014 meeting in Devon. It is very sad he has now passed away and we will all miss him.

# GAGB CITO WEEKEND

Over the weekend of the 13th-14th September, the GAGB encouraged cachers to organise a series of CITO events across the country. Ten teams rose to the challenge, and organised events up and down the country.

Here are some of their reports: a full list is viewable at <http://bit.ly/1vQHs4A>.

## ***GC59168: GAGB 2014: Cleave Dyke Clearance (Richard Lay/richlay)***



*[Before and After pictures]*

I was very excited to be hosting another GAGB CITO event, this time as a member of the committee, but I really wanted to do something different. 2013's event was necessary and the sense of accomplishment was evident throughout all the attendees, but the thought of picking more bottles of trucker's urine out of a filth ridden lay-by was really off putting. So focussing on the conservational side of CITO was perfect for me.

We are fortunate in Yorkshire to have a ranger from the North Yorkshire Moors Park Authority as a fellow cacher, and so Rob The Ranger was the first port-of-call as a sounding board. He was more than happy to get on board with the suggestion and went away to the "Powers that be" to discuss the proposal and see where we could take it.

After jumping through loads of hoops and several non-starters, Rob came back to me with a couple of ideas. One really stood out and was the one that we ended up going with, a clearance on Cleave Dyke by the iconic White Horse, Kilburn, North Yorkshire.

The Cleave Dyke system is several Dykes which combine to create a boundary of between 9 and 18 kilometres running north/south to the west of Thirsk. It is thought to date back to pre-Roman times but minimal excavation work has taken place. The dyke we were working on is nothing like as impressive as it would have been but is still very clearly defined. Our task for the day was to clear vegetation from it allowing archaeologists to get in and see what they can find. Small birch and ferns needed to be removed along a length of more than 100 metres.

I was really pleased on arrival to find several friends had already got there and some new faces who had travelled quite a long way to get involved with us. After the inevitable Health and Safety talks had been given and lives signed away, we were off on the short walk to the area we were working in. With an array of different hand tools between us we set about sawing and snipping, settling into smaller teams to clear up as we went

It was great that people were willing to give up huge chunks of their Sunday to support the CITO. Bill from the North Yorkshire Moors Park Authority was delighted with what we had accomplished. I am really grateful to Bill and to Rob for their support in planning and organising the day and to everyone that attended, got stuck in and made a big difference.



We're planning next year's already and if the initial plans come to fruition, it should be a belter!

***GC55ZCJ: GAGB 2014: Mow a meadow! (Jen Harley/Maple Leaf)***

"Learnt a new skill", "Fun event", "Something different", "Great experience"

These are some of the words that were written in the attended logs for this event...so what sort of CITO event was it?

Maple Leaf has a cache in a limestone flower meadow

LNR where at the end of the summer flowering, volunteers cut and rake the vegetation to maintain the habitat using the traditional method of scything.

This CITO event was organised to help prepare the meadow for the next season and to allow geocachers to try their hand at scything. Expert scythers were on hand to help and teach the geocachers how to use Austrian scythes.

There were around 40 attendees who all seemed to enjoy themselves and several have already asked if we can help with the scything next year.



### ***GC597HJ: GAGB 2014: Straighten Up Stafford CITO (Sharant)***

Stafford is a tidy enough place, but like all towns there are some pockets where a bit litter-picking would improve the place. In Stafford on Saturday 13th September around a dozen of us geocachers went around two locations in the town – a nature reserve and a windswept recreational ground that the local Streetscene team had identified as needing some help. As organiser I collected some grabbers and bags from the local depot and it all went like clock-work – an easy way to improve our environment and a nice excuse to chat about caching and so on with like-minded folk!

Starting at Doxey Marshes we spent a good hour walking around collecting caches and the few bits of rubbish that the wind had left behind – still we gathered a good half-dozen bags of stuff from there and the football field next door our most unusual find was a Father Christmas costume.

Then we all convoyed to nearby Charnley Road Recreational ground where there was a tonne of stuff to collect! We split up and all gathered loads of stuff – mostly wind-blown kiddie litter and cans of lager (over at Doxey they preferred cider, we noticed!). After another hour or so we all met the truck that Streetscene sent for us, and they were impressed with what we had done for the area – and had the cheek to ask us back!



Hopefully the local populace will appreciate our efforts and spot the difference – we can only hope...!

### ***GC5BTG3: GAGB 2014: Muckout Muiravonside (Jackie C)***

The most northerly of the GAGB CITO's was held at Muiravonside Country Park, near Linlithgow. The park is just two miles south of Grangemouth and covers 170 acres of woodland and parkland. The new ranger there has experienced the benefits of what having geocaches can bring at his previous park, so he contacted JackieC to help him fill the park with new caches. But we decided to show him that cachers are much, much more than just numbers into the park, and we brought the Scotland CITO to Muiravonside.

Not only did we collect a huge amount of litter and rubbish, but we've also strengthened the relationships between Geocaching and Falkirk Community Trust, who are a large landowner in



the area. We have also been asked to place more caches, and we can use the park to hold more events...another GAGB success story that is providing benefits for both cache placers and finders alike in central Scotland.



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

★Kent Mega: 2 May 2015

Kent Hop Farm, Paddock Wood, Kent (GC53QJ1)

★Piratemanía 2015: 24-26 July 2015

The Showground, Bakewell, Derbyshire (GC5B3WH)

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# A MEGA Occasion, 2014

Richard Lay reports...

**A**lthough I'd booked a week's worth of camping at the official camp site ages ago, I guess the 2014 UK Mega became a reality for me once the side events were published and I could really start to plan where and when to go.

There was of course one event I really wanted to see and regular readers of Seeker may remember how much I was looking forward to claiming Scotland's First, so the inclusion of the lunch time event up there was welcomed. I spent the run up solving puzzles and using Project GC to determine which DT ratings I could knock off while I was up there and then finally, the 28th July arrived.

Pausing only at Gretna Green for ice creams for the kids, we made our way up to Eglinton Country Park where we found our pitch and set about getting the tent up. We had been allocated a space bang in the middle of the Essex Committee, which suited as I knew a few of them and they're a great bunch. We were joined that night by my good friend RebekahMarie73, who had come up a couple of days earlier via Ben Nevis!

Tuesday was our first opportunity to get out and explore. We went up to Largs to catch a ferry to Cumbrae for the Caches, Cakes and Cycles (GC53TP6) event. Opting for an easy day on the beach, we didn't join the hordes getting all the

caches around the coast of the island, but we did get rowed out for a high difficulty cache, The Beach (GC3QXKB). Our first event of the mega week and despite being on an island, 129 attended logs were received – WOW!

The next day was the big one for me. An early start for the drive north to the foot of Ben More. We left our combined kids with my wife and mother (this was the real reason they were there after all!) and made the drive past Loch Lomond to meet Flyfishermanbob who had been doing a brilliant job of ferrying folk from the car park to the start of the trail. Conditions weren't the best, but the prize made that irrelevant. Rebekah's knee was in bad shape following a jolt at a Yorkshire Challenge Cache, but given that she had bagged Britain's highest cache just a few days earlier, there was no way I was going to allow her to miss out on this. The good path made its way higher until the point where you have to leave it and just head up a stream. And my word, was it steep! The great progress we had made initially almost ground to a halt. But on we edged, part of a trail of ants climbing up the side of this magnificent mountain. Eventually we caught the rest of the attendees, all eager to sign the log on Scotland's First (GCF0). We were all far too early for the official time of the event, but as the weather closed in again most folk started to make their way back down, passing people that had opted for a later start and a more accurate arrival time. My UK Jasmer grid was filled in, I could scarcely have been happier!

As if that wasn't enough excitement for a day, we still had the Bat Walk and Quiz to complete, both events really well attended to the point of standing room only in the quiz and a huge procession of people walking around Eglinton, hoping to catch sight of a bat.

Thursday was a day of family fun. When driving through Kilmarnock, I hadn't been impressed, but Dean Castle Country Park was a stunning venue for the Teddy Bear's Picnic (GC52KF3). Eating our picnic between showers we then moved on to the trail that had been put out for us, cleverly giving us a sheet of things for the kids to find to trick them into thinking they weren't doing another bunch of caches but were doing something far more fun! We really appreciated the thought that had gone into that event and the deer park was an added bonus, they came up so close to us!

Later and back at Eglinton we were treated to another pair of evening events, firstly the

duck race (GC53W6K) an event with over 120 caching names attending, all clamouring around a bridge to try and get a glimpse of the duck they'd bought as it made its way down stream. Who knew the value to be had in rubber ducks? Certainly the Essex team do!

After that, another eagerly anticipated event, Tam's Terror Trail (GC53VN4). The committee really excelled themselves here. Regularly starting trips around an amazing circuit, with beer from Essex Sponsor Bishop Nick at the beginning and a drop of malt half way around. I opted to go around quite early as

my children are quite young and I didn't fancy putting them to bed terrified, but even in the fading light there was still a sense of fright. The walk through the graveyard was an absolute highlight and the "Deceangi, Stabbed in the back" grave was hilarious! Another brilliant day.

On to Friday and our first trip in to Ayr. An early-ish start for the Clangers Flash Mob Event

(GC565E7); 119 attendees rattling tins in a bemused town centre, what a hoot! We opted to spend the rest of the day in Ayr, we spent time on the beautiful beach (which sadly could have done with a CITO in some parts) and then a fabulous park for the kids. We were treated to the best weather of the week, it was truly a memorable day. We cached the town and then before coming home went to do the virtual, Electric Brae (GCG8BA). Without giving too much away, this is a place that confuses to say the least. I would absolutely urge anyone travelling near to Ayr to go to this site. Aside from the virtual, the sunshine and reasonably clear day gave a stunning view across the sea and on to Arran. Back to Eglinton for the camping and highland games event (GC4XEYE), what fun we had watching everyone get involved while we drank quietly on a warm, pleasant evening. The day of the Mega (GC4HBG4) itself and I'm not sure it stopped raining all day. I joined several of my committee team mates on the GAGB stand and largely watched in awe as Jen sold map squares in record time and Lilian spoke to just about everyone in the hall, clearly knowing most of them! It was great to see so many friends that I don't see often enough and to meet some people for the first time that I feel like I have known for ages! While we may have been a little detached from most of the Mega fun, we could still clearly see the superb dancing girls, hear the really well-composed speech from the local Mayor and observe a huge amount of people socialising and having a great time. Yes, the weather was awful but it didn't seem to dampen too many spirits. It did cause huge problems for a bunch of Irish cachers whose flight was significantly delayed but happily they arrived just in time. The lab caches were very well thought out and a lot of fun, I'm sure they are a cache type that will continue to improve in this country. From what I hear, we are already doing things better than the rest of the world and I am not surprised at all by that, the imagination that goes into them is brilliant.

The rain continued into Sunday and made for a very damp CITO event. Donned in full waterproof gear, as if we were going hill walking, Rebekah and I made our way up the coast to the beach at Saltcoates for the Dune and Dusted CITO (GC53NND). In reality, most of the work had been done by the time we got there and we had to walk some way to find any rubbish to pick up. Those that had got there early did an amazing job, it looked terrific when



we left. And in the meantime, remarkably the rain stopped and the sun came out. And by the time I got back to the site and packed up, the tent was largely dry – I really didn't expect that! We left the packed up trailer on the hard standing and made our way around to Irvine for our final event, Goodbye Ayrshire, Hello Essex (GC5396D). I'm sure the pub couldn't believe it's luck as 126 caching teams turned up. It was a really nice pub and I regretted not making it there earlier in the week but no matter. We got drinks and started saying goodbyes to old friends and new we'd made that week. Especially important was my 2-year-old Alex saying goodbye to Jen and Simon from the Essex teams little girl Evie, also two. The two of them had become good pals across the week and they are looking forward to seeing each other again at the Halloween Mega! Conscious of the long drive home, we stayed far too briefly before going back for the tent and hitting the road.



The committee absolutely excelled themselves in hosting the UK mega. The side events offered something for everyone and were all really well attended, most having well over 100 teams there. Me and my family had a brilliant weeks holiday and we are so grateful to them all for making it happen.

And as visible they were in their purple tops, they may actually have been eclipsed by the red of Essex, who were absolutely everywhere,

grafting and drinking, probably in equal measure. Completing the seven souvenirs of August within the first couple of hours of August starting, with adopted pet lackey Tyler left me jealous but full of admiration. The effort that they put in to getting the word out about their event convinces me that next year's UK mega is going to be something special.

And I can't wait.

## Election reminder

Information about the forthcoming Committee elections was featured in the previous issue of Seeker (#22), so this is just a reminder with details about how to nominate.

All GAGB members prior to 1st October 2014 are eligible, and encouraged, to participate (stand, nominate or vote).

There are two elections, first for the position of Chairman and then for the eight Committee member posts.

Nominations may be made in the relevant thread in the GAGB forum during the advertised nomination period. Each nomination must be seconded and accepted by the nominee within that same period in order to be valid. Where nominations exceed vacancies, election shall be by ballot and will be conducted by Michael Malvick (Ladybug Kids), who is returning as our Independent Returning Officer for the fifth year.

Nominee manifestos will then be posted in the GAGB forums and on the ballot so you may read about why each candidate is standing for election and the skills they would bring to the Committee if elected. SurveyMonkey will again generate the ballot and you will be sent an e-mail with a unique link to the ballot, so please make sure your email address on the GAGB forum (UserCP) is current.

Please visit the GAGB forums to keep up to date with all the election news – [link to forum](#).

### Chairman elections

Nominations for Chairman open: Sat 18th October 2014  
Close of nominations for Chairman: Fri 24th October 2014  
Election for Chairman: Sat 1st – Thurs 6th November 2014

### Committee elections

Nominations for Committee open: Sat 8th November 2014  
Close of nominations for Committee: Fri 14th November 2014  
Election of Committee: Sat 22nd – Fri 28th November 2014

# TEAM CITO GEOCACHERS WIN THE COCA-COLA BEST NEWCOMERS OF THE YEAR COAST CARE AWARD



Mark Durkan, MLA, (Environment Minister in the Northern Ireland Assembly) presenting the trophy to Jude Byrne (DucInc); behind are Gill Clarke (gillianclarke), Kevin Loughrey (Frezeluberz), John Craven, Stephen McAllister (BigStevie&Seagoatess) & representatives of KNIB & Coca-Cola (2 ladies on right)

On the 9th October 2014, a small representative group of geocachers gathered at Parliament Buildings in Belfast, home of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Although there is a “nice wee series” in the wooded grounds of Stormont this was not today’s mission. “Team CITO Geocachers” have been nominated for one of the Coast Care Awards at a ceremony compèred by John Craven of Countryfile fame!

As one of three shortlisted groups there were bated breaths as the winner was announced...much to our surprise we won!! Jude (aka DucInc) was press-ganged into saying a few words and immediately

announced that the award was “now trackable”, if there were any catchers in the audience (there were!)



The beach at Ballintoy Harbour (where Game of Thrones is filmed) in September 2014.

It all started some 18 months ago when we contacted Keep NI Beautiful (KNIB) for help when organising an event for the annual CITO weekend. Afterwards we were asked if we would like to help with the Marine Litter Survey. As fourteen Northern Ireland beaches are included in the programme we knew that there would be no shortage of caches around too.

ing cachers have become a beach cleaning flying squad – wherever there is a shortage of local volunteers the geocachers of the Emerald Isle step in and it's never in the same place twice in a row! We have been everywhere from the fishing town of Kilkeel to the wildfowl reserve at Minearney, near Limavady on the 14 CITO's to date. Number 15 is on 8th November when we are helping the Mourne Heritage Trust to clean up Slieve Donard, just for something a bit different!



KNIB staff make detailed records of all the rubbish on each beach, which is then collected to ensure that items found during the next count are 'new' and are not counted twice...that is where our CITO's comes in! The CITO-

The OSPAR Commission run a programme with fifteen countries within Europe to co-operate to protect the marine environment of the North East Atlantic. The data collected is vitally important as it will help provide an overview of the problem of marine litter not only in Northern Ireland but across the whole of North East Atlantic. The data will then be used to help to formulate solutions to address the problem of marine litter.

And what do the ever changing band of CITO cachers get in return?... s smiley, a special "Carrot In The Ocean" geocache to find and...well...the secret is that they just keep coming back for DuInc's legendary Biscuit Cake!

# MEMORABLE CACHE

## The Land of the Rings

### Terry Marsh explores remote Scotland

In a land, far, far away the winds patrol the skerries at the edge of the earth, where the land meets the sea, and the sun often shines on a benign landscape of isolated crofts and hard-worked arable fields. Here, as far west as you can get on the British mainland, there is a beautiful remoteness that almost certainly belies the harsh realities of winter...for this is Ard na Murchan, the Hill of the Great Sea, although others suggest that the name comes from the Gaelic, Airde Muirchu, the Point of the Otters.

To be pedantic, the true most westerly point is a rocky outcrop called Corrachadh Mòr, three-quarters of a mile south of Ardnamurchan Point, which forms the tip of a peninsula that extends like an accusing finger between the islands of Mull to its south and Eigg, Rum and more distant Skye to its north.

To the north of the lighthouse, you'll find a cache (GC13YNY: West is Best (Ardnamurchan Point)), while to the south, a small café does excellent trade in the summer months from among the many who make the drive out to this remote location, where, surprisingly, you'll find the only set of traffic lights in the greater swathe that is Ardnamurchan and Morvern [probably].

Ardnamurchan lighthouse first shone on the 5th October 1849. It was designed by Alan Stevenson, one of the Stevenson dynasty of lighthouse engineers that between them built almost 100 lighthouses in Scotland (and the Isle of Man) between 1799 and 1939. Alan was one of three brothers who followed their father and step-grandfather into the business, and he was the uncle of the most famous member of the family: Robert Louis Stevenson.

The Ardnamurchan Lighthouse took three years to build, using pinkish granite quarried on the island of Erraid, off the tip of Mull, a lovely place that was later made famous by Robert Louis Stevenson in his historical fiction book *Kidnapped*. The 20-acre Ardnamurchan site had been purchased in 1845 for £1 per acre.

The lighthouse was manned by two lightkeepers, who supplemented their income, and their food supply, by keeping cows and sheep on the surrounding site. This can be (and still is) a turbulent place. A little over two years after it was built, the lighthouse was hit by a severe storm. Lightning strikes caused minor damage to the tower itself, but high seas sweeping across the promontory smashed the keepers' boat and washed away lengths of boundary wall and access road. The lighthouse was automated in 1988, and since 1996 the other buildings on the site have been in the care of the Ardnamurchan Lighthouse Trust.

But apart from the stoic beauty of the lighthouse setting, hallmarked by a simplicity and charm, it is an EarthCache a little farther to the north that has become, for me, one of my most memorable caches. I am, I confess, an EarthCache junky, but I'm also moved by the sheer beauty of our British landscapes, especially when, as here they very clearly display some of the founding moments of our planet.



Here, at the remote coastal settlement of Sanna, you find clear evidence of geological creation. It is, admittedly, best seen from the air, when the shape and size of what looks like an impact crater is very pronounced. The crater that is the subject of this EarthCache, however, has been formed by a different means.

As the cache page (GC4H89B: The Land of the Rings) explains (thanks to robertburns and peigi), since it was first surveyed in 1932 the area of Ardnamurchan has been



of great interest to scientists from all over the world who come to study its remarkable cratering record.

*The Earth's tectonic plates, which make up the outer layer or crust, are constantly moving, colliding and dipping under and over each other. Some of these collisions have formed great mountain chains one of which included all of the current Scottish Highlands, millions of years ago. Today only the roots of these ancient mountains remain. The Ardnamurchan Peninsula was far enough away from the main zone of deformation of these ancient mountains to have preserved a record of the land's upheavals and burials.*

*About 65 million years ago a plume of molten material (known as a Hot Spot) that had been slowly rising from deep within the Earth reached the surface. When it broke through the crust a series of volcanic eruptions began which lasted for three million years. Although weakened, the Hot Spot has remained active long after North America and Britain have drifted apart - and to this day is still forming the volcanic landscape of Iceland. When large ice sheets began to cover the north, their advances and retreats caused much of Ardnamurchan's ancient volcanic landscape to be ground away by ice leaving today's raised beaches and rounded hills.*

*What has fascinated scientists about the geology of Ardnamurchan are its ancient calderas (although some geologists feel the term caldera may be inaccurate). Calderas are circular depressions formed above distinct magma chambers, where the contents of the magma chamber are rapidly expelled due to the collapse of the*

*roof of the magma chamber after an explosive style volcanic eruption. In the area around Achnaha these caldera are so pronounced that they can be seen in satellite imagery. Consisting of Eucrite, a variety of Gabbro. they have been called, "...one of the most perfect annular intrusions in the British Tertiary Volcanic Province (BTVP)."*

The Information board you see at the EarthCache coordinates describes the Great Eucrite ring complex centred around Achnaha and how the rings may have formed with reference to cone sheets, ring dykes and lopoliths.

To get to Sanna, a long drive largely on single track roads whichever way you come, you drive through the heart of a massive ring dyke complex evidenced by the hills that surround you and in the flatness of the central plain. While you are driving to Sanna from Kilchoan, as you approach the tiny village of Achnaha you cross a circular plain surrounded by a ring of sharply defined rocky hills, the very centre of the crater. It reveals the remains of the 'solidified contents' of the magma chamber and represents the final stage in the intrusive evolution of the Ardnamurchan complex regarded by some to be "an almost perfect set of nested ring-dykes." The area also shows evidence of the surges and flows down the slope of a volcano with air-fall or pyroclastic rocks; and by the occurrence of very large blocks and bombs in the area's cliff deposits.

Undoubtedly, this is a remote location, wild, sometimes harsh, but always beautiful, and just the place to draw the itinerant among the geocaching fraternity. Enjoy.

# Scotland Road Trip 2014

Delta68 (Donna and Mark from Warwickshire) tell the story of their crazy 1762-mile, 8-day road trip around Scotland

There was never any question whether we would attend Piratemanias and the UK Mega Event; we just weren't sure at first how we would fit them both in. So Mark came up with a mad idea that we could travel up to Piratemanias and then from there continue on to Scotland, drive all over Scotland, finding all the Wherigos and as many Virtuals and webcams as possible then come back down to Ayr for the Mega a week later. Sounds insane but 'Hey ho', when have we ever done anything remotely sane when it comes to caching and road trips?

So basically I left all the planning to Mark and over the months the plans started to fall into place.

## FRIDAY

Our original idea had been to leave home after work on Friday 25th July, head up to Piratemanias and camp overnight to break the journey before continuing on up to Edinburgh. But after our experience on the M6 going to Isle of Man a few weeks ago we decided there'd be little to be gained as the journey would take more than twice as long. So, we decided to leave very early Saturday morning and we're so glad we did as the roads were completely dead and the journey straightforward.

Our first stop off was in Norley in Cheshire to do the Wherigo there. The village was really quiet with just a couple of dog walkers, one of them asked if we were lost and told us where the nearby shops were just in case we were looking for them. We completed this in around 30 minutes, and then we were back on the road and heading to Mossley in Greater Manchester to do the Church Micro Wherigo. That was soon completed after an enjoyable walk around a very interesting church then back to the cachemobile.

## PIRATEMANIA

We have attended all seven Piratemanias, so really didn't



want to miss this one, but unfortunately we couldn't stay long as our itinerary was tight as we had to travel up to Edinburgh to check in at our accommodation in the evening, also two new Wherigos had been published in time for Piratemanias and not doing them was not an option.

We enjoyed chatting to other pirates and after having a late lunch decided to go off and do the Wherigos that had been set for Piratemanias – Blackmoustaches Treasure and Blackmoustaches Island, this was quite a walk in the heat of the day, dressed in our pirate costumes and we certainly got some funny looks from some fishermen and a group of girls that were having a picnic near the reservoir – but after all this time of being pirates we really have no sense of embarrassment. We were quite glad to get back to the car as we'd forgotten to take water or sun cream with us.

## Coniston

The next planned stop was Coniston to do the Webcam there – we are currently UK's top webcam finders so this was obviously on our to-do list, we just hoped we'd

be able to get a signal - arrgh, picture wouldn't load on phones and no available WiFi - just as we were about to ring for help the picture loaded and all was good again.

Then after a few other stops along the way we arrived in Edinburgh.



## SATURDAY

First stop, Holyrood Park to play The Lost World Wherigo. After discussing this Wherigo with another cacher at an event earlier in the year we realised it wasn't going to be a 'walk in the park' so we made sure we were very well prepared. Luckily we made all the right choices during the game, apart from the bit where I was killed by falling into a chasm, but luckily I was able to regenerate and rectify the mistake I'd made. It really was a thoroughly enjoyable Wherigo in a lovely area.



When we last visited Edinburgh, in 2010, we didn't have time to climb to Arthur's Seat, so this was definitely on the to-do list and really worth it for the fantastic views over Edinburgh.

Next on the planned list was Park Adventure Wherigo, in Braidburn Valley Park in the Morningside area of South Edinburgh. This Wherigo was quite challenging and we were about 1½ hours into it before we made any real progress. Then we picked up something that helped us and it was plain sailing the rest of the way. I had a few problems which meant I couldn't complete it on my iPhone so we continued with Mark's Samsung, we suspect this was more to do with the chain of events rather than a fault with the player. The Oregon just didn't want to play it at all. Although frustrating at times after persevering for so long it was rewarding to finally get the coordinates. If anyone had been watching us they'd have wondered why we were going round and round in circles and backwards and forwards for so long in the park but we don't think anybody really cared.

Next stop: Harry's Son Wherigo. What can we say, this Wherigo was a brilliantly frustrating RPG. I came to a very sticky end quite early on in the game (don't you just hate it when that happens?) so had to restart. We thought we'd visited every zone and after a bit of head scratching and going backwards and forwards we thought we'd reached stalemate then a chance encounter with another character in the game gave us an idea on how to continue and it was plain sailing after that. A great sense of achievement to complete it. While we were going around the park we watched a really cute dog that had been trained by its owner to pick up litter and put it in the bin – so clever!

## MONDAY

Checked out of our guest house and headed towards Dundee to do Dundee Law Virtual. When Mark pointed to the hill we needed to be at the top of I assumed we'd have a long climb to the top so was quite relieved when the spiralling road took us right to the summit. Fab views spent ages admiring them before jumping back in the car to Arbroath to do another couple of Virtuals and then on to Fraser's Final Spot.

Before the end of the day we also found another Webcam in Aberdeen, a Snakes and Ladder Wherigo, which didn't take long as we've done quite a few of those now. Then we checked in at our accommodation in Aberdeen before going out for an evening bike ride and a few caches in a nearby coastal village.

## TUESDAY

We left Aberdeen and headed towards Inverness, stopping off to do four Virtuals along the way,



of tacky gift shops and a ramshackle hotel'. For some reason this is a place I have always wanted to visit, ever since my childhood, where we would always holiday in Devon and Cornwall and my friend sent me a postcard from John o'Groats, and I remember thinking what a long way from home it was and that I'd really like to visit one day...

Well I'm glad I've ticked it off the Bucket List, but it was nothing to really write home about – although I did send a postcard home complete with Scottish stamp and John o'Groats postmark.

Nearby Dunnet Head was far more impressive. Dunnet Head is the most northerly point in mainland Britain, there is an impressive lighthouse and more importantly a trig point at the viewpoint. Then next on the agenda was a trip to Dunnet Forest to do a Virtual and a few of the caches there. It was at this point we spotted a familiar name in the log books – Walktall, a local cacher to us that we have known for a few years, had visited that very day!

It was then time for the mammoth drive back to our accommodation in Inverness, which was a little over 100 miles, stopping off to do a brilliant Virtual in Thurso.

stopping off in the Cairngorm National Park to do a Webcam where the temperature had dropped considerably to 10 degrees and there was snow on the mountains.

That evening we travelled out to Chanonry Point to do the Wherigo. The Wherigo itself was very straightforward with easy questions along the way and the location was simply beautiful with so much marine wildlife. About half way round we were amazed to see dolphins leaping out of the water, wild and free, just how they are meant to: this really was a highlight of our holiday, seeing dolphins just a few feet from the shoreline is something we've never experienced before, but apparently Chanonry Point is supposed to be the best location in the world from which to view them from the shoreline.

### WEDNESDAY

A very early start and off to John o'Groats, stopping off to find a few Haggis Highway caches and others along the way.

### John o'Groats

This was just as the guide book had described '...a tourist trap with a couple

### THURSDAY

The plan for today was to stay in the local area in Inverness and find local caches, but the forecast was for rain all day, so we decided it would be easier to just go for a long walk instead of any jumping in and out of the car and driving around. So we headed over to Dunain Hill, where I'd spotted a trig point and a nice looking series. It turned out to be an excellent walk in a beautiful forest.





I haven't mentioned the weather much: well, after weeks and weeks of heat wave at home it was a little disappointing to leave Piratemia in the blazing heat to find it was raining in Scotland, in fact the whole of Scotland rained on and off for most of the week, mostly on but as the famous quote says: 'There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing' so we just got on with it and took our waterproofs everywhere. But rather annoyingly we had planned to camp for two nights at Mega Scotland, but the forecast was for heavy rain – we had been hoping for good weather and I'm afraid to say I'm a real fair-weather camper and the thought of pitching the tent in the pouring rain filled me with dread – so while we were

on the free WiFi in pizza hut (our only 'meal' out of the week!) a quick search on booking.com and we found a good deal on one night at the hotel right next to the racecourse in Ayr, so in a split-second we decided to forget the idea of camping and stay for one night only and go home a day earlier than planned as the weather forecast was for heavy rain all weekend.

### FRIDAY

Checked out of our hotel and travelled from Inverness down to Ayr, stopping of to do a Virtual in Stirling before checking into our hotel and going off to find a couple of local Virtuals, Brig o' Doon and Electric Brae. Early evening we headed off to Eglington Country Park to attend the Highland Games event where it was lovely to chat to lots of other cachers – and a lovely surprise to bump into our caching friends from the Isle of Man, Stillroaming.

### SATURDAY

#### UK Mega Event 2014 - Ayrshire and Arran

Our 21st Mega Event!

Before heading to the event we decided to complete the Lab caches – we had our bikes with us so cycled to the ones in Ayr and then headed back to complete the ones at the mega event venue and completed them in time for the event opening and we were able to do the last two inside the event. Mark was very pleased to find we were first on the leader board to complete them all.

The time just flew by at the event, it was lovely to speak to so many people, some we only really ever see at Mega events and also it was lovely to bump into some more of our Manx Geocaching friends that we met at our event on the Isle of Man



We are in a very small group of cachers, that have attended ALL the UK Mega events since 2008, the others being Stevo185, Dobunnis, The Westies and Darapotter, it's always good to meet up, and we love the friendly rivalry and banter over whether everyone will be able to make it and whether anyone will drop out of the group. All good fun.

The highlight of the event has to be Mancunian Pyrocacher aka Deci unveiling his very impressive TB.

After a few hours of chatting and shopping on the stalls we decided we'd make a move and start the long 380+-mile journey (that's including the detour for an FTF near Cheltenham) to home.

A brilliant but tiring trip with so many fond memories.

# Geocaching in **VENICE**

Terry Marsh pays a  
flying visit

GC7BFF The Snail (Virtual cache)



*H*aving to pay £11 for a small glass of indifferent white wine in the Piazza San Marco in Venice quickly pointed up the need to avoid the place, its eateries, bars and shops if I wanted to remain solvent.

Thankfully, I came prepared, with my GPS fully loaded with the island's 40+ geocaches, and, in time-honoured fashion, we really did let geocaching take us on a journey of discovery. This comparatively modest island is a maze of narrow streets and waterways, quite a few of which finish in dead ends, which probably explains why we were walking anything up to eight miles a day to get to caches. Then again, it could have been the less expensive but much better quality of wine we found along the way that led us astray.

But what a joy it was. Early morning saw us on our hotel balcony watching sea-going prison ships—sorry, cruise liners—sail by, some so big they totally eclipsed the island of San Giorgio Maggiore, but everywhere gondolas bobbed up and down as plush water taxis ploughed their own watery furrows and put us in mind a Bond films.

Walking is really the best way of getting about, and, for sure, geocaching is by far the best way to explore Venice...just toss your travel guides out of the window, and trust your GPS, which is surprisingly accurate in spite of so many high buildings and narrow alleyways.

And the over-riding beauty of doing it the geocaching way is that you get away from mainstream tourists—yes, I know, we were tourists—into the quieter parts of Venice, where tourists rarely venture and such bars and restaurants as there are cater for the local people and the gondoliers...it's much cheaper, too, and with a more slick service because gondoliers are not earning money if they're stuck in a resto eating lunch.

Our visit was brief, just four days/five nights, but we got to see just about the whole of Venice and one or two of its islands. So, keep an eye open for easyJet doing special out-of-season deals, and go for it.



# Piratemania 2014



Piratemania is a unique camping event primarily for children (of all ages) and Piratemania7 was no different.

This year it was held at Cartmel racecourse, the home of the 2012 Mega, and the camping started on Thursday evening when lots of pirates arrived and had a BBQ and a Get Together round the camp fire — people joined in from all over the campsite bringing their chairs and being entertained by Dave Pyecroft (Fuzzybears) with his light wand.

This year we had two teams: Red (Team captain Sue Phillimore aka Muddy legs) and the Blue team (Team captain Paul aka Penfolio)

Friday arrived and once again it was a bright sunny day, and as campers arrived at the set up camp there was lots of chit-chat and plenty of harmless banter and leg pulling. As evening approached we got ready to retire to the Royal Oak pub in the village where somewhere in the region of 300 cachers gathered for beef burgers/hot dogs/veggie burgers with salad and chips by the bucket load. Soon we spied our very own Lackey "Tyler" (Bonus Town) all the way over from Seattle just for us, and what a treat he was: so much fun and joined in with all the fun and games.

Saturday morning and the caches (33 of them) went live at 10am and Andy Walker (Walker Clan) did downloads for those who wanted, while the rest were given sheets with the caches/hints on. The registration was held in the Marquee with Sue and Dave Pyecroft along with Irene (Linedancers) who was on hand to sell coins and point you in the direction of anything you may need.

As the day wore on and 3pm approached Lolly and Bob (lollybob) put on the entertainment in the form of two bouncy castles, a surfboard machine, a Gladiator fighting station and sumo wrestling outfits for the very young from 5 to 12 years, and adult ones for the big kids in us. We also had space hopper races for young and old. And for the teams, as the afternoon wore on, there were Doubloons strewn everywhere for the teams to scramble for and pick up to take to their captains.

The highlight of the evening was the prize giving and the

Next year's event (GC5B3WH), is going to be on 24-26 July, 2015, at the Showground, Bakewell, Derbyshire DE45 1AQ. There will be new geocoins out and a BBQ on the Thursday, and a Pub 'Do' on the Friday as well as a flash mob on Sunday morning.



best dressed Tent, Dog, Lady, Gent, Boy, and Girl were picked out by our very own Lackey; the doubloons were counted and the Blue team came out the winner and it was a very close call as the red team only just lost. To finish off the great day we had a tug of war that was enjoyed by participants and spectators alike.

Sunday morning saw the bulk of pirates going down to the village to stand at the cross for a flash mob event and point with their trusty swords to the sky with a final cry of

# Aaaaarrrrrrrrrr....!



# Members discounts...



[www.ukgeocachers.co.uk](http://www.ukgeocachers.co.uk)

**UK geocachers** are happy to offer GAGB members a **5% discount** on their products. In order to obtain your discount, you need to email UKgeocachers and set up an account, so that the discount is applied to each order.



**Geotees:** For geocoins, travel bugs, caches and more. We can also have your own coins or tags made for you to your design. Please visit us at [www.geotees.co.uk](http://www.geotees.co.uk) where **GAGB members enjoy a 5%**

**discount.** To get your discount, open an account, then PM or email me (Mongoose39uk) through the GAGB website before you place your order. This only needs to be done once, the discount will then be applied to all future orders.



**Cicerone Press** are pleased to offer GAGB members a **discount**

**of 20%** on **all** Cicerone titles purchased online at [www.cicerone.co.uk](http://www.cicerone.co.uk).

All members need to do to claim the discount is to add the voucher code 'GAGB' on the shopping basket page of the Cicerone website.



**NE GEOCACHING SUPPLIES** are happy to offer GAGB members a 5% discount on their wide range of geocaching products – see [www.negeocachingsupplies.co.uk](http://www.negeocachingsupplies.co.uk).

The relevant discount code is available from the Members' Chat section of the GAGB forums.



Cotswold Outdoor offer GAGB members a **15% discount**. More detail and the discount code are available from the Members' Chat section of the GAGB forums.

**Pulse72Geocaching** are happy to offer GAGB members a 10% discount on their wide range of geocaching products – see [www.pulse72geocaching.co.uk](http://www.pulse72geocaching.co.uk).

The relevant discount code is available from the Members' Chat section of the GAGB forums.



**GeocacheKit** are pleased to be able to offer all GAGB members a **5% discount** on all items on the website [www.geocachekit.co.uk](http://www.geocachekit.co.uk). Including geocoins, trackables, readymade caches and much more.

The discount code is available from the Members' Chat section of the GAGB forums.



**Base of Tree** geocaching supplies are happy to offer GAGB members a 5% discount on all geocaching supplies.

Visit their website for details, and obtain the relevant code from the Members' Chat Section of the GAGB Forum. <http://baseoftree.com>.