

The magazine of the Geocaching Association of Great Britain

SEEKER



Oct 2015
26



SEEKER

ISSUE 26 OCTOBER 2015

*Cover image: Mow a Mead CITO
This page: Isle of Man*



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.

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Contributions to Seeker are welcome; please contact the editor (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 2015 committee



Jackie Catterall
JackieC
Secretary



Richard Lay
RichLay
Treasurer



Kim Leonard
Leonards193



Dave Palmer
Tegeingl/Mancunian



Adam Redshaw
ukcachemag



Sharon Reid
Sharant



chairman's message

Jen Harley
Maple Leaf
Chairman

This issue of Seeker is the last from the current committee and contains our Annual report as well as important information about the forthcoming GAGB committee elections on page 4.

The two core projects this year were to finalise the first of the new GAGB geocoins and to launch an online shop for GAGB merchandise. The theme of UK National Parks had already been chosen and the first geocoin to be produced, in association with Pulse72, was Loch Lomond and the Trossachs. The online shop was set up to sell the coin and other GAGB branded merchandise i.e. pencils, cache labels and sew on patches.

Seeker 26 is another bumper issue and features a summary of several of the events over the summer including two Mega events (Piratemia and Mega Essex), the week long Manxcachefest (could this go Mega in the future?) and reports from our annual GAGB weekend last month. Thanks to Steve (geotrowel) for his design skills in putting Seeker together for us once again.

There is going to be quite a bit of change in the committee next year. We already have two vacancies and there are two members that have said they won't be re-standing. I've enjoyed my 3 years as Chair, but have decided not to stand for that position again. However, there are still things that have been started that I would like to continue with, so would like to remain as a team member on the committee and look forward to working with the new team whoever that may be.

If you are interested in joining the committee, the annual report in this issue will give you an idea of the work and commitment required. I'd ask all GAGB members to participate in the elections, whether that is to nominate, vote or to stand. The first nomination period opens on 21st October.

Jen

dates for your diary

Piratemia

Sat 30th July 2016

Geolympix

Sun 31st July 2016 <http://coord.info/GC5XXYY>

North Wales Mega

Sat 6th Aug 2016 <http://coord.info/GC5TQ6Q>

GAGB Executive Committee Elections

A reminder about the forthcoming GAGB committee elections.

All GAGB members prior to 1st October 2015 are eligible, and encouraged, to participate (stand, nominate or vote).

There shall be 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. 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.

The dates are:

Chairman elections

Nominations for Chairman open:

Weds 21st October 2015

Close of nominations for Chairman:

Sat 24th October 2015

Election for Chairman:

Sun 1st – Weds 4th November 2015

Committee elections

Nominations for Committee open:

Fri 6th November 2015

Close of nominations for Committee:

Mon 9th November 2015

Election of Committee:

Tues 17th – Sun 22nd November 2015

Where nominations exceed vacancies, election shall be by ballot and will be run

by Michael Malvick (Ladybug Kids), who is returning as our Independent Returning Officer for the 6th year.

Mike is currently serving as Treasurer of GeocacheAlaska!, the non-profit geocaching organization for the state of Alaska that fosters geocacher education and land manager advocacy. He is also a Volunteer Reviewer for Groundspeak, reviewing caches for Alaska and Hawaii as Greatland Reviewer and EarthCaches for Alaska, Hawaii and elsewhere as needed as GeoawareUSA4. He has also in the past reviewed EarthCaches in the UK.

SurveyMonkey.com will again generate the ballot. This streamlines ballot counting and adds a layer of confidentiality between the Returning Officer and those who vote. You will be sent an e-mail with a unique link to the ballot, so please make sure your e-mail address on the GAGB forum (UserCP) is current.

Ladybug Kids will make an announcement in the GAGB forums after the e-mails have gone out so you can check your spam filter, etc., in case you don't receive the link to the ballot.

He may also send reminder and announcement emails which may be sent from his personal email, so please look out for the following email addresses.

[ladybugs at geocachealaska.org](mailto:ladybugs@geocachealaska.org)
via [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com) <member at surveymonkey.com>

[Ladybugs at geocachealaska.org](mailto:Ladybugs@geocachealaska.org)
(“at” replaces “@” in the above addresses to keep the text from appearing as links)

Please also visit the GAGB forums to keep up to date with all the election news and monitor the GAGB Facebook page and Twitter for updates and announcements.

Geodogs

by Leonards193

Many of us enjoy the company of canine cachers whilst out and about and during our years caching as a family, we have met a great variety along the way.

From rescue dogs to pedigree dogs, some who love the water, some who hate walking through puddles! All dogs can make a good geodog and some even are exceptionally good at finding and retrieving caches.

We have had the pleasure of meeting assistance dogs with their less mobile owners who rely on the ability and expertise of the dog to fetch a cache or replace it. Training a geodog is often the subject of conversation when out caching or at caching events as it really is not that easy!

Tracking codes

A lot of geodogs have tracking codes which are unique to them and can be discovered when you meet them. Sometimes, the owner will tell you the code and other times you have to search under the fur to see it!

Some geodogs have their own caching accounts on Groundspeak, some are even premium members... there are others who have a personalised stamp to record in log books when they visit.

We have two Golden Retrievers, Bear and Blaze who like coming out on new adventures with us. They are eager to explore and keen to sniff and see new things, looking for the odd squirrel on the way. Blaze has become pretty good at retrieving caches, particularly from one person to another. An example was recently, one of the group went down a steep slope, found the cache, didn't have a pen... so sent the cache back up the hill to the rest of the group, the log book was signed and then the container was sent back down the slope. We were pretty impressed!

We have met dogs who do scent work too and if you think about it, to a dog, a cache is an item which has been touched by lots of people



so they are sniffing out something a bit unusual in a wood.

Dogs often attend events too, liking the extra fusses that they get and providing them with the opportunity to socialise with other geodogs. Do you think they also discuss the best caches they have recently visited? How would a geodog rate a cache do you think? Best walk? Most squirrels spotted on the way? Best stream to splash around in?

We have seen lots of dogs at flashmobs, at camping events, at Mega events...

Companionship

Dogs provide good companionship whilst out walking too, adding a sense of security should you be out in the dark too. Most country pubs have an area where dogs can go in to rest and some even provide water bowls and dog biscuits.

One thing to consider though is the fact that dogs run around and dart off to explore, so if you are planning on walking a good few miles bear this in mind as your geodog will walk much further than you overall.

Respecting the Countryside Code whilst out with dogs is important too, closing gates, keeping dogs on leads where necessary and of course, picking up after them.

We look forward to meeting many more geodogs on the trail over the next few years!

Wildlife Crime



by Charlie Moores

Earlier this year I had the pleasure of leading a group of wildlife enthusiasts around the Isles of Scilly. We were looking for unusual plants, migrant birds hiding along the cliffs, that sort of thing. Nothing unusual there. But little did I know - at first anyway - that amongst this happy band were two people who were also looking for something else hidden along the cliffs, something less mobile than a rare Wheatear but nonetheless just as precious: plastic boxes stuffed with notes and the occasional treat left for the kids...

Geocaching

To be honest it took me a while to figure out that when certain members of our group disappeared and then reappeared with knowing smiles on their faces (Jen and Ross you know who you are!) they hadn't been discovering wildlife the rest of us hadn't seen. What had they been up to? Geocaching, of course.

I say 'of course' like I knew all about geocaching. In truth I'd not even heard of it before, but if you're going to be introduced to 'caching' unexpectedly then the Isles of Scilly in spring is quite the place and Jen is quite the person to do it.

I think Jen was slightly concerned how I'd react when she first explained geocaching to me (this was a wildlife trip after all), but I've been into wildlife since I was a kid and that used to be considered a bit 'odd'. I was fascinated actually, and while I'm not going to become a passionate advocate for geocaching anytime soon (I'll leave that to Jen!) her stories about the mass of cachers quietly and carefully combing the countryside every day especially interested me.

Crimes against wildlife

Why? Well, as part of my own passion for wildlife I set up a group which campaigns to tackle wildlife crimes like hare coursing or bird

of prey persecution. Called Birders Against Wildlife Crime (or BAWC) we work with e.g. the RSPB and police officers, and provide information that helps birders and other countryside users to become 'eyes in the field'. At the heart of our work is what we call 'The 3Rs' - Recognise, Record, Report: how to Recognise a wildlife crime, how to Record the details so a prosecution could potentially take place, and who to Report the crime to.

Keeping an eye out

We're not asking anyone to do anything dangerous by the way. Just to do what we are doing anyway - birding, hiking, geocaching! - but to keep an eye out for wildlife crime while we're out doing it. We'd never suggest anyone take on a criminal themselves - that's a job for



the police - but there's no greater deterrent than being caught. Imagine if every illegal shooter or poacher were constantly looking over their shoulder, wondering if they're being watched by someone who knows just what to do if they see a crime being committed

It's a very simple idea (far more simple than interpreting some of the 'caching' clues Jen showed me anyway!). An army of cachers combing the countryside and looking out for wildlife crime at the same time would be a wonderful thing. If you'd like more information please email me, or have a look at the BAWC website.

charlie.moores@birdersagainst.org
BAWC website: www.birdersagainst.org
Twitter: @birdersagainst

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at the Block party

by Mr Matto



Mr Matto at HQ

After hearing that this year would be the last Block Party, Claire and I (xfreshbatteryx) decided to make the trip out to Seattle. After arriving where we would be staying in Ballard (about 15 minutes walk from Fremont and Geocaching HQ) on the Wednesday night we woke up Thursday morning to do the HQ GeoTour.

The HQ Geotour is a set of 9 caches by Geocaching HQ that were published for the Block Party in 2013. You can either pop into Geocaching HQ or print out your own GeoTour passport, each cache has a stamp which you can use to stamp your passport. At the end HQ will stamp it with a completion stamp.

As you can imagine the caches were pretty great. One was an entire pay phone, where you had to enter the correct number to get to the log, another was a chair that needed to be lowered from a tree! I really enjoyed doing these caches, not just for the caches but also

for the people we met on the way round. We met people from all over the world. In particular I remember doing a multi with some German's and searching for a library cache with some Swedish cachers! That evening we went to the welcome event at the Fremont Brewery, It was good to catch up with some of the cachers we had met throughout the day.

Location

Saturday was the day of the Block Party. The Block Party is set around the Geocaching offices in Fremont. It really is a lovely location, right by the river and near the enormous George Washington Memorial Bridge. After collecting my t shirt and coin, and signing the giant inflatable 15 logbook (for 15 years of

geocaching) we waited around for the group photo, and waved at the drone flying overhead that I'm sure many of you have seen the video of. We then headed off to look around the stalls. The stall I really wanted to look at was the Geocaching HQ stall, unfortunately so did everyone else. The queue for this stall was about 30 minutes, but I was soon done, a number of coins heavier and a lot of dollars lighter!

Lab caches

We then set out to do the lab caches that had been put out for the day. These were all great, my favourite being having to find a code word with a UV torch in a blacked out room. Another was set near the famous Fremont Troll

Also on site there was plenty of food to buy and also a geocaching museum, which had in it things such as the travelbug that went to space, and one of the original Ape Cache log books. At the end of the day Bryan Roth and Jeremy Irish, 2 of the founders of Geocaching.com made a speech thanking everyone for coming, I even got to meet Jeremy Irish which was cool!.



The George Washington Memorial Bridge



► Geocaching HQ

A few days later we visited Geocaching HQ, and found the geocache located in the lobby. The visit itself was good fun, they have a screen in the lobby which shows logs around the world in real time, remember that when you next post a log! We had fun in the photobooth where you can take photos and print out 1 copy to keep and 1 copy for them to keep in a visitors book. There is also a shop, and some rare travelbugs to discover. The visit is something they are going to expand on in the future by adding a museum etc. One interesting fact that was mentioned during our visit is the top 3 countries for geocaching in the world are Germany, Czech Republic then the UK!

The one thing I didn't mention was the amount of lab caches that were released for the event. These were released around a week before the block party until a few days after. There were 7 in total, each containing around 10 lab caches. They were great, for example one took you around each of the Fremont Breweries (starting at the welcome event) another took you to well known Seattle attractions, while

another were all night lab caches, which required a UV torch!

We loved our time in Seattle, with all the lab caches there was so much to do outside of the block party day itself, unfortunately the Geocaching International Film Festival was cancelled due to the terrible weather on that day :-)

What will they replace the Block Party with? In the speech they said that they want to take the block party to people all over the world who may not be able to travel to Seattle, they also said they will be putting more resources into the mega events that happen around the world. Draw your own conclusions!

Matthew (mr matto)



The HQ Troll!

Fair fa yir massive sonsie face!

<http://coord.info/GC639QV> by AMAZO

Last August Ayrshire hosted the UK's 7th annual Geocaching Mega Event. Over a thousand geocachers from all over the world attended. When it was all over the committee decided to donate surplus funds to good causes. I chose the Big Burns mural in Ardeer because it is a hidden gem that has needed some TLC for years... and more than two hundred cachers turned up in the pouring rain to clean up this beach! ... I think there was a souvenir involved!

I contacted Gordon Cowan at the Caley Centre who told me that the original had been done years ago by local artist, Gavin McInnes. He knew Gavin and told him our proposal and he was delighted!

Amazing work

I had been aware of Rogue One's amazing work around Glasgow and when I met him while he was working on The Clutha mural I asked if he would like to help us give the "World's biggest Burns painting" a face-lift, he said yes! All we needed was a few sunny days in a row... tougher than you think!

It's not the biggest mural that Rogue One has been involved with but due to the steep embankment it's the first one that he had to abseil up and down! We had lots of dog walkers and well-wishers stopping to admire the work and to thank us for bringing Big Rab back to life. We look forward to seeing him on Google Earth on the next update!



GAGB *National Park* Geocoins

The first of the GAGB National Park geocoins features Loch Lomond & The Trossachs. The image on the coin depicts the view from the trig point above Scotland's First geocache (GCF0).

We still have a few coins left and they can be purchased from the GAGB online shop (along with other GAGB merchandise) using bank transfer or PayPal.

Link to GAGB shop:

www.gagb.org.uk/prestashop/



“AAARRRRGGGHHHHH!!!” That was Sarah, our 13-year-old, on the electric train coming round the coast. It seems so fast, the views over the cliff are so good, and in the open-air carriage you really do get an experience! We all loved it - and that just about sums up our Manx week. We stayed self-catering, so did everything at our own pace, and we explored pretty much the whole island in our week – from an evening of Wallabies (ask 9-year-old Kieran to show you his videos if you don’t believe him), to catching a train up a mountain and then leaving Sharon there, to friendly Italian food in the restaurant next door, it was warm, funny, sunny, and full of caches! They’ve over a thousand on the island, and they have a great variety of types too.

Hot chocolate, beer and caches

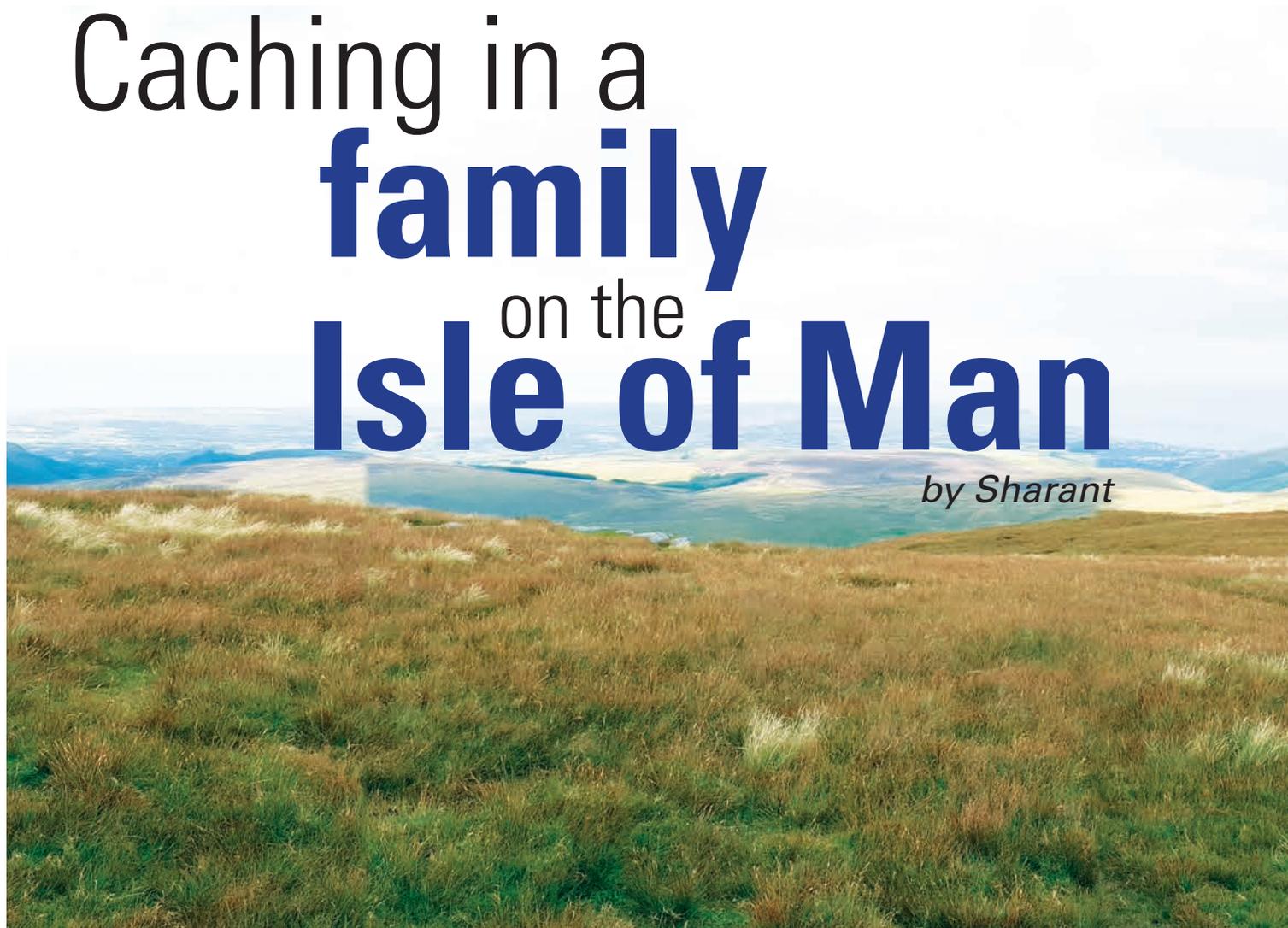
One day we got the bus to Peel and walked back to Douglas – Kieran found over 50 caches himself that day! – another day we got a steam train down to Port Erin and had great fish-and-chips, and another we did a great up-hill-walk (the E2W

trail up from Laxey) for some gorgeous views of Ireland, Scotland, and Cumbria too! We had hot chocolate at 2,036 ft, and good local beer in a harbourside pub as well. The kids want me to point out that many pubs have free wifi, which allowed them their ‘fix’ of internet.

Well-organised

The week was structured around well-organised events by the maxcachefest organisers – we did a CITO and a night cache sort of rolled into one – which was great, and muddy! – and we all formed a “The Three Legs” on the Manx flag at the Laxey wheel at the flash mob event – very odd we must have looked! We tried to learn some Manx words at their parliament event (how often do you get a geocaching event at parliament, eh?), and all the attendees – local or visitors – were incredibly friendly, and also helpful to those of us who occasionally could do with a lift in a car...!

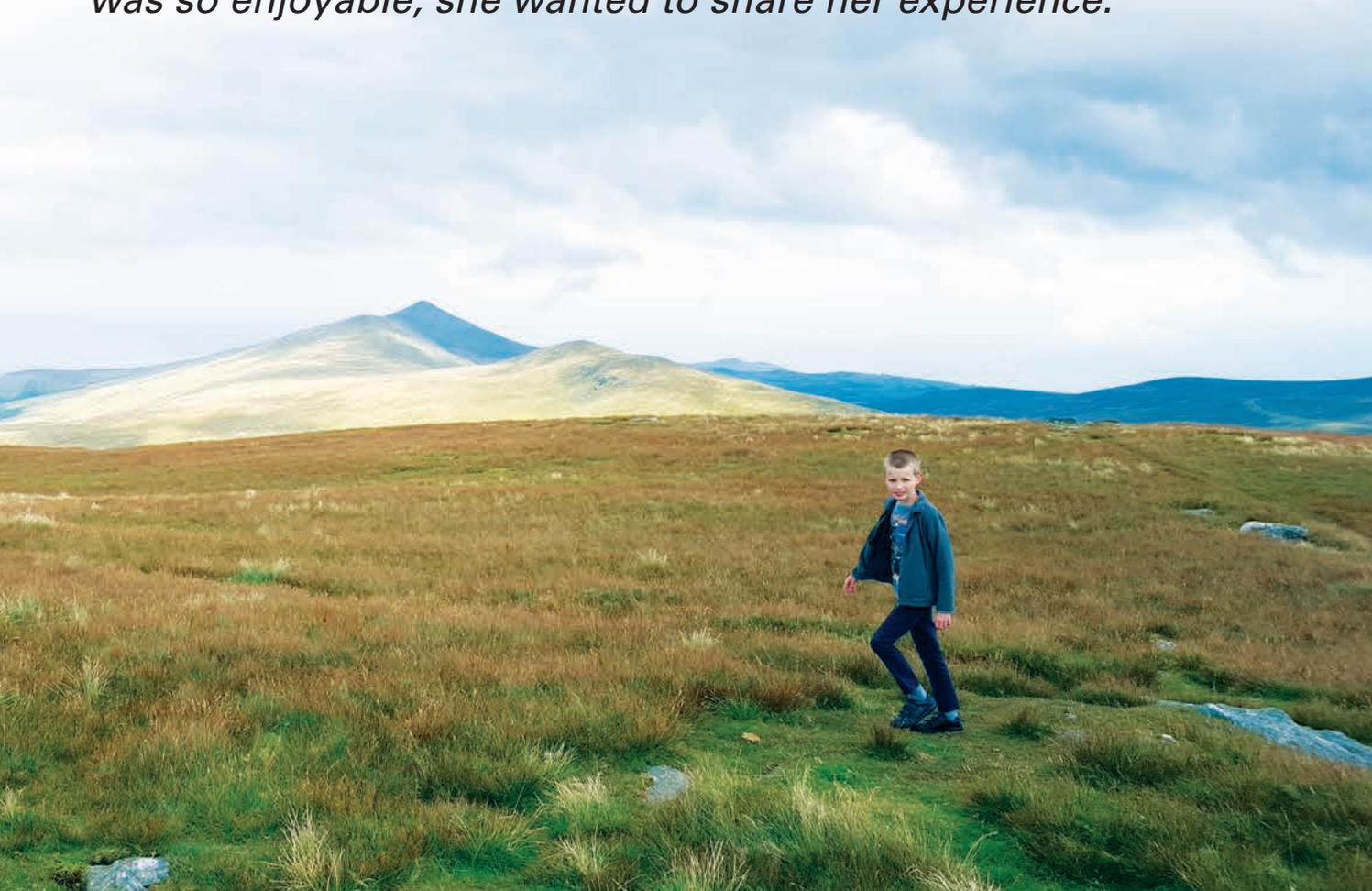
Finally the practicalities – we used public transport throughout and bought their family



Caching in a **family** on the **Isle of Man** *by Sharant*



Sharant and family's week on the Isle of Man for the Manxcachefest was so enjoyable, she wanted to share her experience.



- ▶ “Go Explore” transport card – which included all buses trains and trams and made its money back within two days! We stayed in Douglas, which was a good central location to get around. We did find one day difficult – getting from Tynwald to Laxey we only just made it in time – 20 min drive for some folk was a all-forms-of-transport 2½ hour adventure for us – but very memorable! So plan well, and if the bus isn’t helpful, ask another cacher for a lift...

And back to that train ride – Sarah decided that once burned – twice shy... on our tram ride back, she sat in the carriage that had walls and a door... not as brave, but somewhat less hair-raising...! She much prefers the horse tram...



MANXCACHEFEST!

by Terry Marsh (countrymatters)

The first ManxCacheFest was held on the Isle of Man from the 15th-21st August 2015, attended by geocachers both from the island and from mainland Britain. With over 900 caches hidden around a comparatively small island, this was a great opportunity to add to personal tallies in a beautiful and appealing environment – and, as luck would have it, apart from one day, the weather played ball, too.

The basic format was to present a week of ‘events’, some of them of short duration, leaving everyone free to dash around the island on independent caches hunts, a key element in the original philosophy – ManxCacheFest was as much about doing your own thing as about attending events. But that didn’t stop GerryU2

introducing an event of his own, at a trig point which outfortherun agreed to elevate to YOSM status just in time for the event.

Welcoming

From a welcoming event at the sea ferry terminal, to a final quiz night event on the Friday evening, it is clear from the ‘Attended’ logs that everyone enjoyed the whole experience, and many are already asking for the festival to be organised again next year – something that is being considered by the island’s geocachers, since it was they who put the whole thing together and made it such a success, and to whom the thanks of everyone are due.

Chalking the Horse

by Sarah aka Kermitcar

The idea for this CITO came back in May when volunteers were needed to re-chalk the white horse at Cherhill in Wiltshire. I went along in the morning along with 50 others and thought that it would have made a great CITO. Unfortunately I didn't find out about it soon enough to set up an event so I decided to research other white horses in the area to see if something similar would happen elsewhere. I was delighted to discover that just such an event was being held by the National Trust at the Uffington white horse in Oxfordshire on the August bank holiday.

After liaising with the ranger Andy and running my idea by him, the cache page went live and instantly attracted a lot of attention. Who knew bashing chalk with a hammer would be so popular! Although it probably had more to do with wanting to be involved in the up-keep of such an historic hillside figure that's over 3000 years old.

Run up

The run up to the event was nerve-wracking as the weather forecasts were looking poor and Andy had said he would need to cancel if it was too wet. We all breathed a huge sigh of relief



when he gave everyone the go ahead as the conditions in the early morning seemed perfect and by 10 O'clock there was a large gathering of geocachers on the hillside ready to get going while gazing in awe at the horse and other features known as The Manger and Dragon Hill. Andy started by giving us a brief history lesson and explained that if the horse wasn't regularly managed in this way, then the figure would be lost into the hill within 25 years.

The event proved so popular to us geocachers and other members of the public that at one point, there were not hammers to go round. So a small group, including myself, broke away to help manage the wider area by hoiking up thistles and scything nettles. This brought our attention to other features of the hillside such as the castle and a nearby trig point.

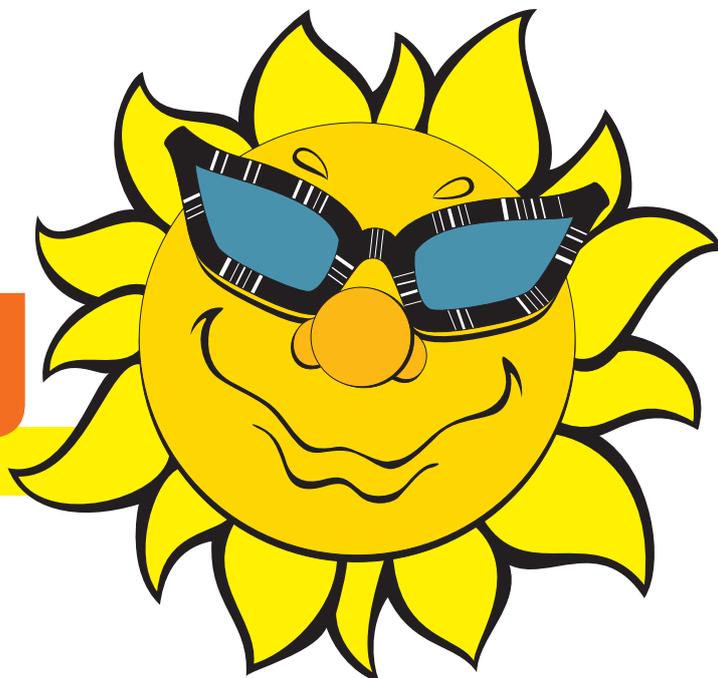
By the end of the CITO at 12 O'clock, around 70 cachers of all ages had been to the horse and helped out in any way they could and then meandered off to find many of the nearby caching trails in the area. The National Trust continued with the event for a few more hours, but unfortunately the weather turned and the hammering had to be cancelled as there was more chalk sticking to the hammers than to the horse!

All in all, it was a very fun morning with loads of happy cachers giving masses of positive feedback. This was also the first CITO that I had hosted and it also helped myself and others to claim the final souvenir of the roadtrip challenge so it was extra special to me. Who, knows, there might be more chalking CITOs coming your way soon.

Chalking the Horse
GC5XD27
30th August 2015

Summer eventing

by richlay



I've been struggling with how to go about writing this article since I was asked to do it – the subject of it is supposed to be about the Mega event at Essex but I'm guessing that most of you that read Seeker already know all about it by now, many of you were probably there.

As the summer holidays have gone on, my thinking around caching has changed. My numbers have dropped, significantly. I comfortably found 2000 caches in 2014 but as we enter the final third of this year I am not yet on 600 and that number is bolstered by two 100+ days out. My children have found their voice and my youngest is not as portable as he was a year ago. They are not willing or able yet to come on a 5-6 mile walk with Dad looking for invariably disappointing treasure and are too heavy to carry around in the backpack now. I've never been a fan of a cache and dash driving trail so that has never really been an option.

Apprehension

And so I came in to the holidays with a sense of apprehension – how will I entertain the kids for the three weeks that I am taking off and keep my numbers just about ticking over? How will I continue to work on the personal caching challenges I have going on?

But actually, as I reflect on the last few weeks, I have managed to combine everything really nicely. And this is how I did it...

Back at the beginning of the holidays was Piratemia 8. Because of how close it was to home, I decided to just be a day visitor. I still had lots to do before setting off for Essex, so couldn't really afford to give up the whole weekend, so Alex and I came down on Saturday morning. I'm not one for dressing up but what 3 year old doesn't love it? So, with Alex dressed as a pirate, we entered the showground. He



Alex on the bouncy castle at Piratemia



Billy and Alex on the Gruffalo trail with Evie from HollynCharlie

loved the bouncy castles and at one point he said to me, "What a shame Billy isn't here, he's missing all the fun"! A win there!

For me, I managed to grab a handful of caches, including a well written, if not a little long wherigo. I love wherigos and am trying to find as many of them as I can. I'll never hit the numbers that Delta68 does but I'm enjoying plodding along at my own pace!

Tug-of-war

The only negative on the day was after the fun tug of wars, Alex (who was sat out of the way after the first two heats – I figured we'd been lucky him not hurting himself for the first two heats, so made him move to the side...), managed to make himself a trip hazard and got landed on by a fully grown pirate! He broke his collar bone! At first I put his tears down to tiredness – it was gone 7 and had been a busy day, it was definitely bed time but in the morning when he cried as I lifted him out of bed I decided a trip to A&E was in order where the X-Ray confirmed a break. Remarkably, the sling was only on a week but that week just happened to be the week we were in Essex. But it didn't stop him making the most of it!

Our drive south was slowed by an incident on the A14. My sat nav took me around it but it left us looking like we might not make the event at the services, hosted by The Imp. This is a regular event of mega week and provides a break up in the journey from Piratemia to the UK Mega but it was also on our route. Happily, they had heard of the traffic difficulties and opted to keep the log book open for anyone that was delayed.

We arrived and the first thing we heard was "Oh Alex, we've heard all about your injury"! Fame at last but for the three year old, not me! After a bite to eat and a brew, we were off again, the short distance left to Barleylands.

Barleylands

Folks might not know this but there was a time, not too long ago when this mega was in serious doubt, with a couple of failed committees in charge of it. In fact, some of us on the GAGB committee talked about rescuing it. Jen and Cass viewed Barleylands and decided there and then that it would be the perfect location. Happily, Cass also decided that there was enough skill, locally in her own friends to



Feeding the deer before the Night Trail

be able to put it on. As I arrived at the huge campsite, I breathed a sigh of relief that she had done this and we hadn't tried to pull it off from distance, I'm sure we wouldn't have been able to deliver what this committee had. Right from the welcome, everything was so well organised. We were given a pack, with tea and biscuits amongst other things, there was a huge map with pins to show we'd all come from and a greeting given with genuine, if not weary enthusiasm. We were guided to our pitch, which was clearly marked and even trackable!



Look out for Dick, he's a wrong 'un!



Port Erin, Isle of Man

We got the tent up and had some tea before heading over to meet everyone else at the welcome event. Wow, it was so busy! It was great to see pals that we'd not seen since last year in Ayr and other much more local friends that we see all the time! Brilliant to have a bar on hand too, selling lovely local ale.

On to Tuesday and we were off to Hatfield Nature reserve for a Caching and Nature event. We are members of the National Trust and get the most out of our membership by using it as often as we can so it was a real treat to come



Billy about to set sail on the Manchester Ship Canal

up here. The committee had laid on a scavenger hunt for the kids, so they were happy to run off with their brown, paper bags looking for stuff, while I was happy to grab a cache or two. At the end we were all happy to go to the café for ice cream and beer

Back on the site that evening, it was an event I had been really looking forward to – the stargazing picnic. As could probably have been predicted, this was the evening when the weather didn't play ball, with a little rain and then a cloudy night – what a pity! Someone heroically attempted to give a talk on the night sky but the marquee was so busy it was difficult to hear. However, it was good to catch up with people I'd missed the previous day and it's always fun when a bunch of cachers come together.

Kids' club

The kids were having a great time though. The committee had put on a kids club every afternoon for an hour and provided scrap books for them to remember their day. The contents of the scavenger bags were stuck in to the scrap book as well as other pictures they wanted to add in. There was toys and games for them to get involved in as well as loads of other kids looking to play.

Wednesday was soon upon us and our inability to get up and out of the tent early hurt as, as we travelled to the Glaciers and Gruffalos event. As we arrived we could see parking was going to be an issue and we ended up leaving the car quite some distance away. Not to worry though as we soon caught up with everyone and were treated to a wonderful woodland, a really well organised and guided geology walk and a superb Gruffalo trail which the kids absolutely loved! Characters from the children's book were located throughout the parkland and the kids all really enjoyed looking for them!

That evening was another hotly anticipated event, a trip in to a "secret" (not so secret it isn't pointed out on the OS map...), nuclear bunker. I was always in two minds whether or not I would make this one – the time it was on at was kind of in the middle of the lads' bedtime - too late to take them without them fighting but too early to have them asleep and leave them behind. So, I took probably the worst option of getting the kids off and then driving over to get involved but miss all the fun! It was very clear though that everybody that went had

a terrific time. Clearly, some of the committee have some Am-Dram background or perhaps they just enjoy dressing up as they were spread throughout the bunker in outrageous costumes (certainly not for the last time that week!). Again, event pathtags were given out, another lovely extra touch.

Thursday was a very busy day with a need to be out of the tent early for a Flash And Crab event – a 9 am start time with quite a drive to get there but with a 30 minute flash mob where all the attendees went crabbing around Woodup Pool. Well, unfortunately I reckon the crabs had had word that we were coming as they all seemed to have cleared off but we still had a great time trying to catch the mythological creatures and were really impressed with the committee having sourced buckets, line and baits for us all to join in. Some of the party chose to try their luck in the nearby estuary and certainly had more success with several crabs, jelly fish and even a Sea Bass caught, though I doubt the credibility of that catch and reckon it more likely came from a nearby Waitrose fish counter!

Essex 100

I thought it was about time that we found some actual caches so the 4 of us went off to find some of the Essex 100 series. We had a good walk along the edge of the estuary finding some really nicely hidden caches, finishing off with a Church Micro back in the village we started from.

Later that day was a recurring event of Mega Week – the Teddy Bears picnic, the 2015 version being held at the impressively named Museum of Power. Once again, the team had spent some time putting new caches out for everyone to have a bash at, the centre piece this time being a multi with a tree climb – in reality, you didn't really need to solve the multi, the queue made it obvious! But solve it we did and we went and joined in with the climb. No mega week would be complete without a duck race and this was no exception. A huge tub full of ducks was released a couple of times to huge cheers from the watchers on the bridge. The highlight of course though was the soaking that Simon Butler got, as he stumbled while collecting the ducks and got wet well over his waders! The event was really pleasant with a massive number of attendees enjoying their picnics together.

Little Quest

Now, I am also cracking on with the Little Quest series and I wasn't going to let this week pass without making the effort to find the Essex cache, so after our picnic we made our way over to Hadleigh. West Wood was a great place to show off the county. Beautiful, still woodlands where I barely saw a soul, despite being in a fairly residential area. The cache page warns of potentially poor coordinates due to the tree cover but I had no such problem, they took me straight there.

Highwayman Horror

All of this was just a warm up though to The Highwayman Horror night event, this time at Weald Country Park. Once more we were staggered by the amount of work that went in to this event and I understand that under the old guidelines this event could have gone mega on



On the Giddy Path on High Tor

▶ it's own, with a huge amount of attendees. After we arrived and parked up we had to register for a time to do the walk which gave us a spare few minutes. We were given a bag of deer food and encouraged to go over and give it to them – we didn't need asking twice. What a privilege to be able to get up close to these magnificent animals.

Our allotted time arrived and we started the walk. We were met by a very bitter wench, complaining about missing Dick who'd left her high and dry.

The effort that went in to this trail was something else. We were met at various stages by members of the committee in really impressive costume, including a well "hung" John Rawnsley and the most sinister thing I have come across I reckon in Cass and Natalie dressed as old hags, singing Ring a ring of roses around a hideous doll. That was properly chilling! Eventually we found Dick and promised not to tell anyone where we had seen him. No fear of that, we just wanted to get back to the safety of the coffee house as quickly as possible! With the kids with us, we went around the trail in fading but still just about light. Goodness only knows what the folks going around after dark would have encountered, it must have been terrifying!

Mersea day

The week is drawing to a close and we are up to Friday now but Friday was a terrific day. Another early start, this time to drive over to Mersea island for a CITO event. I'd never heard of Mersea but absolutely loved it. Cut off from England by the Strood Channel and in fact really cut off when the tide rises above the level of the road that connects and you really get the sense that you are somewhere different. We had come over to do a beach clear and the



committee had put together an icon day, with a competition to see if you find 9 different icons in a day. I've already found 11 different cache types in a day and I didn't really want to be dragging the kids behind me as I went charging about the place but I really appreciated the thought that had gone in to the day. We came down to the beach and found our friend from Yorkshire, Derek, confusingly one of Mel+Freddie17 who was waiting on land for Mel who had gone out to do the new wherigo on the water with Steve Walford. Well, they were gone for ages, in fact there was even a slight look of concern on Derek's face. Concern, or relief, it's difficult to tell on a bearded face.

That evening was another traditional event, though this time with a twist. It was the camping event, which is normally held on the Friday before Mega Day but the committee had chosen to create a "Flich Trial", where a handful of well known caching couples were put on trial for their geocaching "crimes". A really good laugh and I think enjoyed by all. As might be expected, the chatter and drinking continued long in to the night...

Mega day

And so we arrive at Saturday, the culmination of a week of brilliant events and as a member of the GAGB Committee, I spent a good deal of the day on our stand in the mega hall. I did have a couple of hours in the morning though to get a good feel for everything and I was able to complete the fabulous Lab Caches – what a lot of thought and effort had been put in to these! Set up around a loose "James Bond/Secret Agent" theme, these were caches that we've not seen before. One like the old Crystal Maze finale, inside an inflatable box with a fan blowing tickets around, a bunch of which had the all important code on it. Another was a whole set of lockers with matching keys. Unfortunately



you didn't know which key matched which locker, or which locker the code was in – how frustrating!

Best ever

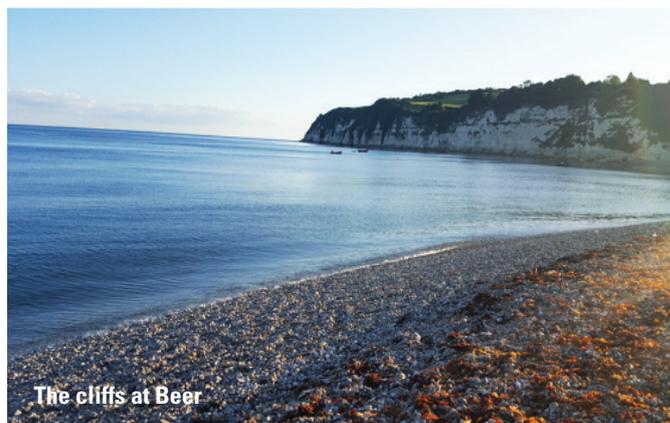
I was able to see the opening ceremony and I must admit to feeling a little emotional watching Cass reflecting on what they had delivered to our community. Had circumstances played out differently, it might have been the GAGB trying to pull this event together but I'm so pleased that Cass decided to plough on with a set of great mates, we could have never given what they did and I have heard the phrase "Best Ever Mega" used so many times that there must be something in it. Certainly it was the best mega I have attended, in terms of the day itself, the events we were treated to and even the weather – and I thought Cartmel would never be topped!

We left on Sunday, back to work on Monday but we weren't leaving before attending another CITO and the handover event to the 2016 Mega Committee. Just as the Essex mob did in 2014, the North Wales crew put themselves about everywhere all week, working damn hard and I am sure they have a lot of reflecting to do in the aftermath on what they can use for their own event. Certainly they have produced a beautiful geocoin and if they are successful in bringing the Maze exhibit to the UK, we could see huge numbers in Llangollen.

I left with a new view on Essex, the stereotypes banished from my mind, not a stiletto was seen all week and the only orange skin was on a trip to Asda, the county has beautiful parks, woodland and coast and I am so pleased we were invited to some of its most amazing spots. The logs they have received are full of praise and gratitude but who ever complained at getting more? Cass and your team, sincere thanks for a brilliant holiday and all of your hard work.

ManxCacheFest

Two weeks of work was all I had to wait for our next great caching adventure, this time to the Isle of Man. I had wanted to attend the full week but was happy to compromise on flying out for the weekend. Kind flight times allowed us to spend 2 full days on the island and a relatively inexpensive car hire meant we could come and go as we please. We landed and had



the car early enough to be having breakfast in Ramsey by 0930 – not bad! While we were there, we spoke to the locals and as the sun was out, asked where the best place to go to the beach was. We were directed to Port Erin, which I knew was a venue of an event later in the week. What a fabulous suggestion that was, a gorgeous beach and we ever saw a Basking Shark chilling out in the bay. The usual paddling, sand castles, burying parents occurred before enjoying very welcome ice creams. I tried for a relatively rare combination DT cache on the cliffs but unfortunately had to log a DNF – I'm sure it will have been found by many on the event day, so I've avoided looking at the cache page, some things are best unknown!

Later in the day was the welcome event in Douglas port, it was great to meet the team and their impressive list of coins and then in the evening a really different type of CITO. Attendees were encouraged to find orienteering control points throughout some lush woods and capture their coordinates. I took the opportunity to complete a wherigo in there at the same time which was really fun, featuring a Woodcutter and the everyday trials they face – thoroughly recommended!

Snaefell

Sunday was the day I was looking forward to though. Firstly what I believe was regarded as the centrepiece of the ManxCacheFest where folks could try their hand at the local language. I didn't do very well! Following this was a drive over to Laxey and the tram station to take us to the summit of Snaefell. Brilliantly, the organisers had managed to secure a tram purely for cachers, which we managed to fill. Our trip to the top took us by the famous Laxey wheel, where the driver paused to allow the mandatory photos and then pushed on to the peak. It didn't seem to take very long at all before we were

▶ there. The weather was kind, despite earlier threatening not to be and only light gear was needed. We were able to see England, Scotland and Ireland, Wales was just a bit too far in to the murk but what we saw was no less spectacular. You can pretty much see every bit of the island.

Those in the know will be aware of the special cache that is up there and a few of us took the opportunity to go and find it, as well as the existing caches up there and a couple of new ones especially published on the day. It gave a nice haul of caches and worth a visit for anyone that likes finding caches at a reasonable altitude.

From there we pretty much had to hot foot it back to the airport, just time for a local ale on the way but we all said that we would be back, we loved what we saw and barely scratched the surface. Hopefully the organisers weren't put off by the whole experience and will put on something similar at another time!

Canoes

A week later saw Billy and I travelling over to Warrington for RyroD and Netty227's event on canoes. Once again we completed wherigos but this time they were all on the water. Great fun, blooming hard work but fabulous for the DT grid! In fact we were out on the water for about 5 hours and after nipping over to the Wirral to grab one of the Webcams and the LQ, we were very grateful of the sister event back in the pub!

Shortly after this I was back on annual leave, to look after the kids for the last couple of weeks or so of the school holiday and I had a plan to grab some awkward Little Quests, down in the South West. First of all though I would grab one nearer to home in Derbyshire and at the same time completed Meltdiceburg's stunning "Getting Giddy @ High Tor" earth cache. You are taken on a Victorian "Romantic" walk, on an exceptionally narrow path, carved in to the sheer cliff edge with a substantial drop below, with just a hand rail to grab on to. Once I'd read the listing page, I knew it was one that I wanted to do and so 3 of us headed off to do it and one of those lovely events happened where we met other cachers on the path. It was great to meet Zomblou and friend and once we'd all spotted each other studying the rock formation it was obvious why we were all there. Once we'd finished, we headed on the cable cars and up to the Heights Of Abraham for another fun afternoon.

Jurassic Coast

On to the final week and we were loaded up again for a road trip. I'd chosen a campsite just outside of Exeter which gave me good access to the Little Quest caches in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset with a carefully planned route down allowing me to get Bristol and Somerset. I've been flirting with this series for a little while now but have recently kicked on with the intention of getting them finished this year. They are generally placed in an area that shows off the county at it's best and that's certainly what we found on this trip with a hill top in Cornwall with the best views, a coastal path in Dorset giving a fine panorama of the Jurassic Coast and another fabulous seaside vista in Devon. Bristol overlooks the Clifton Suspension Bridge and Somerset at the site of an old fort. Just brilliant. Finding these and also utilising my membership to National Trust and the Camra good beer guide gave another memorable few nights away.

So I guess the moral to all these words is this. Alarmingly, kids don't always want to be dragged around caches. I'm not going to be doing 12 mile circulars any time soon, with them at least. But there are awesome cachers out there putting their time and effort in to organising the most enjoyable events. People are still seeking out fabulous locations to bring us. And if you put the time and effort in to researching an area, you will find fun just around the corner from a cache and your kids will engage in it.

Billy has just moved up from reception to year one. He was given a scrapbook to fill in while he was off, I can't imagine many others filled every page, as he was able to.



Swimming on the Jurassic Coast



Annual *CITO Weekend*

Smartening up Billy

GC62ECN

Unfortunately I was let down quite late on in to the process this year and so I wasn't able to deliver the intended event. At the eleventh hour I reverted to a bog standard litter pick which was a pity but I organised it for a beautiful area which needed a little help.

Battling against a fairly tedious rain cloud, it was always debatable who would turn up but I was delighted with the response I got and they were soon hard at work.

I'd selected an area to spruce up a little further down than where we had been for Groundspeak's CITO weekend and I knew there was a bit to go at. I did not expect to be moving a car bonnet and 2 car seats, all seemingly from different vehicles! On top of this there was the usual paraphernalia of junk, including a garden table and chairs.

When I started playing this game, the concept of CITO was still very much front of mind and was encouraged at all times. I don't see that investment in our game space now and it is a shame. It makes what we do even more important but equally makes me question do people only do this for a souvenir? Why are these green icons as rare as hen's teeth? Maybe you could give us your thoughts for the next issue.

Richlay

Stoke Cleanup

GC621MW

I hosted a CITO back in April with the support of Stoke-On-Trent council and they are struggling to keep their cycle routes clear of brambles and trees and litter. We returned back to Stoke-on-Trent for my GAGB 2015 CITO and we went further along the Greenway to Tunstall. There was a lot of fly tipping as well as general litter. The trees were encroaching onto the cycle way and also needed a trim. We only had a few brave teams turn up in the rain but we soon had a very large pile mainly from fly tipping. We found some unusual items some very long drain pipes as well as the usual traffic cones. There're weren't many of us – the rain was heavy at the start but it dried up later – but we are proud of what we did!

Sharant



Owlbeech Woods CITO V

GC612KE

This is the fifth CITO that we have carried out in these woods and the second year we have supported the GAGB CITO weekend. The main purpose of the event was to clear birch trees to allow the heathland to regenerate in the area. This involves the hard task of digging the trees out by their roots using mattocks. The area we were working in this time was a newly enclosed area which the Horsham Rangers want to clear, we had already made significant impact in the other areas of this wood from previous CITO events we had held here. This time they wanted us to clear strips through the trees to allow them to then get in and spray the rest of the trees later in the year to kill them off.

For those of the group who did not feel up to the hard work of digging up the trees there was plenty of paths that needed vegetation clearing from them to make access easier for everyone who enjoys this area.

As seems to be normal for us we had fine weather and very soon everyone had worked up a good thirst, so the drinks provided by the rangers and homemade cake provided by Mrs. Flookfinders was very much appreciated at the half way stage. Then it was back to more clearance work, by then end of the event we had managed to clear a significant amount of the birch trees as well as clearing the path.

Once again the effort of the cachers in clearing birch from the heathland was much appreciated by the rangers.

Flookfinders



Mow a Meadow again!

GC5Z6EJ

A CITO event with a difference – not one piece of litter picked up and a musical interlude. Everyone seemed to enjoy mowing the meadow last year, that I decided to host one again this year.

With the exception of a brief rain shower at the start, it turned out to be a lovely day. Several cachers that came last year returned to see if they could improve their scything skills and a few people travelled for over an hour to have a go.

It was a real team effort, some scything and others raking and moving the never-ending cuttings. This also gave everyone a chance to have a geo-chat at the same time.

Everyone stopped for a lunch break together and the sausages that Judith & Di (from The Mendip Society) had been cooking, smelt wonderful and were gratefully received by the workers. Followed by tea and a piece of cake made by The Evil Poles.

Whilst we were having lunch, The Flying Boots (Janice & Alastair) and half of The Great Redmondo (Paul) entertained us with ukulele, drum & guitar and provided percussion instruments and song sheets for the crowd to join in. It was very enjoyable and was pleasant going back to work with the music still playing in the background.

Thanks to everyone that came and helped prepare the meadow for next year. Judith from the Mendip Society is really grateful and enjoys spending the day with the geocachers.

Maple Leaf





GAGB Annual Report

of the Chairman, Officers and members of the committee

Chairman's report

This year the online shop selling GAGB branded merchandise opened and coincided with the launch of a new GAGB geocoin. We have chosen the National Parks as the theme for the series of geocoins and the first coin features Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park with the view from the trig point above Scotland's First geocache. We are currently working on designing the next geocoin.

It is nice to see that the event calendar on the GAGB website is used by several people – we know this as we were contacted by several people when there was a problem with it for a couple of days. We also try to keep the GAGB Facebook page and Twitter feed updated with important and useful geocaching related news. Please like or follow the GAGB to make sure you keep up to date with our activities.

Unfortunately, we have lost two committee members during the year; Terry (countrymatters) who joined the committee at the same time as me in 2010, resigned in March. Terry has been Editor, and a large contributor, of Seeker magazine since its launch, so he is greatly missed. Following his departure we delayed the next issue of Seeker for a few months, but are very grateful to Steve (geotrowel) who has helped us out with putting this and the previous issue together – especially when he was also on the Mega Essex committee. The second person to leave was Paul (Poole_Man) who resigned in July. At this time the committee decided not to fill these two places but to wait until the next round of elections.

By the end of the committee year, we will have held 10 committee meetings (all online). Between meetings we continue discussions in the committee forum, however this year has been particularly difficult with very little activity and therefore ideas have not been forthcoming and things have not progressed as much as some of us would have liked.

The annual GAGB weekend is now in its third year and there were four conservational CITO events this year run by three committee members (Maple Leaf, Richlay and Sharant) and one non-committee member (Flookfinders). I was disappointed that there weren't more events, especially as the date had been set for so long. I hope that GAGB supported events start to grow in future years.

We continue to receive several emails and a few phone calls, which seem to be from landowners finding geocaches hidden on their land without permission, landowners and local reserves/parklands wanting to set geocaches to attract visitors or enquiries from the media. The committee dealt with some of these with and others were passed onto other geocachers.

Personal report (Jen Harley/Maple Leaf)

As well as overseeing the committee and chairing all of the 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 and sourced content for Seeker, assisted Sharon with the set up & testing of the online shop, been backup for Jackie with GAGB registrations, updated the Facebook PAGE along with Richard & Adam and answered some of the incoming landowner & general enquiries.

I have also been speaking to landowners and promoting geocaching & the GAGB in my local area. This has included hosting 'Introduction to Geocaching' day at a Local Nature Reserve where the GAGB had a stand and two committee members were present (Sharon & 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.

For the second year running, I hosted a conservational CITO event for the GAGB weekend. This was held in a limestone flower

meadow, where 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 have been on the GAGB committee since 2010, with three years as Chair. I have already informed the committee that if nominated, I won't be standing for the Chair position again. I am hoping that one of the current committee take over that position as feel that it is natural progression from committee to chair, as by then you have a good understanding and background knowledge of the GAGB. I will of course be happy to support them.

Secretary's report (Jackie Catterall/JackieC)

As well as doing the meeting minutes, and supporting the committee, I've also been active within the committee by taking on all the enquiries from Scotland that have come into the GAGB inbox. These have been a mix of questions, from community woodlands looking for caches to a TV programme looking for a cacher to do an interview with.

I've also been the primary for processing all the online applications for GAGB membership, and through this provide guidance to many people who want to start caching but not sure where to start.

I also organised the map game and the prizes for the GAGB stand at Mega Essex, as well as all the signage and information display, and organised branded merchandise for the event (patches, baseball caps and committee polo shirts).

Treasurer's report (Richard Lay/Richlay)

My second year on the committee flew by as quickly as the first and now I sit back to reflect on it, I wonder what the next 12 months will look like.

Certainly we face more change. Our chair has decided not to stand for chair again and I will spend what little time we have between now and the elections trying to change her mind.

It has been a disjointed year. I would urge anyone thinking of standing this time around to really think about the commitment it takes. We may only meet monthly, online but there are things going on daily with questions and media requests coming in all the time and now our new shop taking sales several times a week.

We lost a member this year that couldn't get to grips with how we do things and have felt like we have limped along, almost since the committee year started.

We need continuity, certainly but we also need to change, to progress. Our reason for being is not the same as it was all those years ago and we have lost relevance with our community. There is still much for us to do but it must be done with a passion and speed that we have not seen this year all the while engaging with the community in a way we haven't done for several years.

In terms of my role as treasurer, we are still in great shape. Our finest moment this year was signing off on our beautiful coin, which has sold really well and few are remaining. The costs that we took on the first will allow us a better margin on subsequent coins, giving us the opportunity to invest in the association, whether it be through sponsorship of events or merely purchasing more promotional materials.

Sharon spent a great deal of time implementing the shop and it has worked really well, making the transaction process smooth and simple, payments hitting our accounts instantly. We could do with some Saturday lads to help Adam at the checkouts though!

Having returned to work this year, my spare time has not been what it was and I haven't been able to be involved as much as I was last year. I have continued to monitor the Facebook group, vetting new requests and acting as administrator. I have also helped with the Twitter account and have been able to get involved in #UKGeocachingHour several times.

I am still active at events, attending more than one a week as an average for the last year and have been happy to talk about the Association at them all.

In summary, I guess it's been a frustrating, disjointed year with much to think about before the next. I sincerely hope that stalwart members of the committee who may be thinking about not standing again reconsider.

GLAD manager's report (Sharon Reid/Sharant)

My main role on the GAGB committee has been the GLAD Manager. I have dealt with frequent queries from new and uncertain geocachers on how to place a geocache and obtain permission from land owners, as well as liaising with landowners and negotiators of

current agreements and with Chris (Graculus), our contact among the Groundspeak reviewers. I have contacted landowners to check our information is up to date and added new agreements such as Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. I have also negotiated, renewed and updated agreements, for example the Shropshire Wildlife Trust is now a 'permanent' agreement and we now no longer need to renew it!

Throughout the year – as with several other committee members – I have responded to queries we have received by email or voicemail such as the Halfords corporate geocaching event along with Adam and I also attended the UK Mega 2015 in Essex to promote GAGB on the stand and raised funds. I travelled down to the south-west to support our Chair Jen, at the Avalon Marshes festival in August, and while there was pleased to help some new geocachers, and closer to home I hosted a GAGB CITO in September – it was gross! But we did good!

I was also joint webmaster, I was mainly responsible setting up the GAGB shop and also a backup to Paul as webmaster and this has kept me very busy. I am pleased to have developed and created an online shop for the GAGB website, which has been a roaring success! Take a look - visit www.gagb.org.uk/prestashop to see what we are selling such as our new geocoin. While in this role I also handled several problems with our GAGB website, for example back in May our forum just stopped working – nothing we did, and it took a week for me to fix our forum and to restore all our threads and posts – thanks to Jen helping to test, we got back online rapidly! I have also become responsible for emailing the Seeker and as part of that I now maintain our member's database and I have removed several lapsed members as per our constitution.

I have attended all bar one of the committee meetings due to an operation – I believe it is very important to communicate as a committee, and these are vital to keep the workload spread among the team. I have also contributed to the Seeker magazine.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with the GAGB and I am still committed to helping and promoting the GAGB in the future.

Kim Leonard (Leonards193)

As the end of the year gets ever nearer the time has come to write my annual report for the GAGB.

In my first year, I have tried my best to understand what we are about, what we represent and how I can play a role to support the association, however small that may be.

I have attended numerous local and not so local events spreading the word and answering questions from members or potential members as well as from members of the public who had never heard of geocaching or the GAGB before.

I have held talks and presentations for various groups, The Scout Association, GirlguidingUK, The WI as well as The Ramblers Association of Great Britain. I find this aspect very interesting and feel very comfortable talking and demonstrating what I am passionate about.

I hope to be able to carry on with this and develop landowner agreements further next year, if I am re-elected to the committee.

The first coin produced has been a good item to raise our profile, if the sale of this and further items could, in the future maybe, go towards helping with transport costs of GAGB attending talks around the country, this would be a great benefit to spreading the word about us.

I was pleased to be able to represent the GAGB on our stand at Mega Essex, answering lots and lots of questions about caching and what we do.

I have tried to meet all the other committee members this year, and have succeeded with all but Jen... Sorry about that, I feel it would benefit the committee to hold at least one face to face meeting where we all get together, in a central part of the country, or at the annual UK Mega?

I look forward to working with the committee next year and hope to meet some of you on the trail.

Dave Palmer (Brenin Tegeingl)

On being elected to the committee, I took on the role with Adam Redshaw, of dealing with emails and calls to the GAGB Phone Number

This has involved dealing with not only Landowners, but Geocachers seeking help, and those interested in Geocaching.

Whilst I have helped raise the profile of the GAGB within my local area, I've not been able to attend the various GAGB Events, nor help promote the GAGB at the Essex Mega, due to a deterioration of my Spouses health, for whom I am her Full Time Carer.

During my time with the committee, I have helped to bring in small changes, within the

internal workings of the committee. Which has made the way the committee works, much more open for future committees taking over from previous ones.

So whilst no major changes have been made, progress has been made within the committee. Which will allow the next committee to more seamlessly take over.

I have been privileged to spend the last 12 working with such a fantastic Chairman and Committee. And it is with great sadness, that due not only to my Spouses deterioration in health, but also my own health issues. I will not be re-standing for election to the Committee.

Adam Redshaw (UKcachemag)

Well the time has come around again for us to be doing our annual reports as we get ready to either re-stand for election or to move aside and allow new blood to continue to take the GAGB forward.

So what have I been involved with this year?

I have responded to many emails from members of the public wanting to know more about geocaching. Some of these have been muggles wanting to get involved with the hobby, other have unfortunately been from landowners and members of the public asking for caches to be removed for numerous reasons.

I have also responded to a number of media enquiries from TV radio and press about the various aspects of geocaching.

I have started to make some inroads to raise the profile of GAGB and Geocaching with the sports Trust by joining the Outdoor Industries association; this is very much a work in progress.

One bit of work I took over whilst one of the other team members was recovering from an operation was to work alongside an event

management company called Cohesion as they rolled out a "have a go" session for most of the store managers for Halfords.

I may not have been as active as others on an official GAGB stand at events, as I have my own stand to promote UK Cache Mag, but was at the events and helped where I could. I attended some events where no other GAGB representative was there and helped fly our flag.

I have lots of ideas of way to promote GAGB and perhaps a change in our direction as part of what we do has now moved over to social media, with more and more people turning to the likes of Facebook for help and support in their geocaching problems.

I would like to thank Jen and the rest of team for putting up with me, prompting me and nudging me when needed.




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Push the Button



The North Wales 2016 UK Mega team were faced with a huge dilemma regarding the publishing of the 9th annual UK Mega Event for 2016! There are so many fabulous spots in North Wales where could they hold the 'Push the Button event? Hmmm ... they looked at castles, seaside's, mountain tops, lakes all the usual scenery to be found in wonderful North Wales! Or, maybe something slightly different? Bingo, a plan was formulated, how about the top of the famous Horseshoe Pass which overlooks the Vale of Llangollen where the Mega event will be held? - it was a eureka moment for the team!

Members of the Team approached the owners of the Ponderosa Cafe (which is located at the top of the Horseshoe Pass) and gained permission to hold an event just outside the cafe, excellent news! The views from this vantage point are outstanding and with the bonus of all the facilities you could require to hold an event! The Team established a very nice spot right

next to the old Horseshoe Pass road to hold the event.

Now then, how was the Mega event itself going to get published? One of the Team members constructed a huge red button and placed it within an ammo can. The ammo can was locked with a combination padlock, placed inside a treasure chest which was then wrapped



in chains and locked. Three temporary containers each holding a clue to one of the numbers for the combination lock were placed nearby, co-ordinates taken ready for the attendees to find them so that they could all contribute towards 'pushing the button'.

The day of the event 6th September; was overcast and windy but at least it was not raining. The Team erected a temporary event shelter which was quite an achievement in the very strong wind and prepared event GZ ready to welcome the attendees. It was not long before folks started to arrive, a number of them already having availed themselves with steaming hot cups of coffee and tea plus mouth-watering bacon butties from the Ponderosa Cafe.

After lots of the usual geochat, most of the attendees went to hunt for the temporary containers and the codes for the combination padlock. After a nice little walk, and quite a bit of hunting around, they all returned and were given the key to unlock the chained treasure chest. This revealed the combination padlocked ammo can. It didn't take the puzzle loving attendees too long to decipher the clues which enabled them to open the combination lock and 'push that button'!

Iain Deano Dean (Big Fish) was the lucky person who pushed the big red button to make the North Wales 2016 UK Mega become live and within minutes cachers started to log their 'Will Attends'.

Over 50 caching teams logged they had attended the 'Push the Button' event which translates to over one hundred people at the event - which was fabulous.

The North Wales 2016 UK Mega team would like to take this opportunity to once again thank all who came along and supported them, joined in the activities and bought fundraising merchandise for your annual UK Mega.

If you can come along to the 9th annual Mega in 2016 please log a 'Will Attend' as soon as possible GC5TQ6Q. At the last count more than 400 caching teams have logged a 'Will Attend' - all in less than a month - outstanding!

And finally, let's not forget that the North Wales 2016 UK Mega is bringing the GPS Maze Europe to the UK for the First time! Don't miss the only opportunity in 2016 to add its unique icon to your Geocaching profile.

To keep yourself up to date with the plans for the North Wales 2016 UK Mega and for

further information, fundraising merchandise, to book your camping pitch or specially negotiated rates for selected Pro Adventure activities please have a look at:

www.mega2016.org.uk

and/or follow their Facebook page at:

www.facebook.com/geocachingnorthwalesmega2016



Members' discounts...



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 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.

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.

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.

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. 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>.