

SEEKER

Piratemania
Geolympix
North Wales

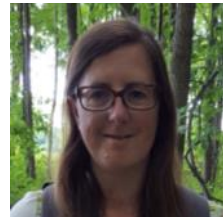
A MEGA Summer!

Autumn 2016

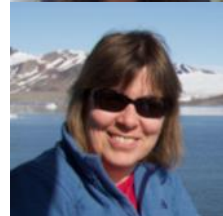
#30



The 2016 Committee



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Sharant
GAGB Chair



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Maple Leaf
Secretary



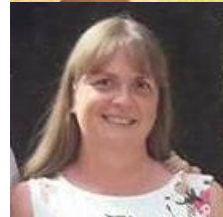
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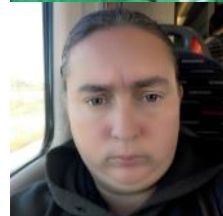
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Leonards193
Store & Sales



Ant Reid
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Abi Hamilton-Thompson
Abiherts



Cover: Llangollen Canal, near GC4oCNR

Above: Llangollen Railway



The Geocaching Association of Great Britain (GAGB) is the leading UK Geocaching body, recognised by and acting on behalf of geocachers. The Association was established in 2003 to provide a national organisation that represented geocaching, and to serve as a UK point of contact for geocachers, landowners, the media and others with an interest in geocaching. Find us online at www.gagb.org.uk.

Contributions to Seeker are welcome; please contact editor@gagb.org.uk. 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.

Seeker 30 design and layout by Jamie Douglas (*Paperballpark*)

SEEKER 30

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Chair's Message

Sharon Reid

Sharant

GAGB Chair, 2016



This issue of Seeker is the last from the current committee and contains our annual reports explaining what we have achieved this past year, as well as information on our upcoming elections on page 26. It's important that our members get involved in the elections - whether to vote, nominate or stand for the role of one of the eight committee member posts or Chair. If you have something to say or do, please get involved! Nominations open on 26 Oct.

Whether or not you stand for election, I do encourage you to help in whatever way you can - all members can help us with finding new GLAD agreements, sending us Seeker articles, and hosting a roving event or a CITO – the GAGB is for you, make it what you want!

This is another bumper issue, with a summary of this year's summer Mega events and our annual GAGB CITO weekend. We also have a few articles about caching abroad, as well as why it is essential to read the cache page and ask for permission from landowners. We have also launched our second UK National Parks geocoin, Snowdonia, produced in association with Pulse72.

A BIG thanks to Jamie Douglas (*Paperballpark*) for his design skills and collating this edition of Seeker, and Angie Brook (*twoofnine*) for her Back to Basics articles, as well as everyone who sent in photos.

Members' Discounts...

CICERONE

20% Discount

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.



15% Discount

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.



10% Discount

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.



10% Discount

GeocacheKit are pleased to be able to offer all GAGB members a **10% 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.



5% Discount

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 forums. www.baseoftree.com



5% Discount

Geocache Land are happy to offer GAGB members a **5% discount** on their wide range of geocaching products — see www.geocacheland.com

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



5% Discount

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.



5% Discount

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.



5% Discount

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.

PIRATEMANIA

...the scourge of the **NINE** seas

It's well-known that Ant (our editor) isn't a very compliant camper. He's not particularly compliant about anything, but he gets especially 'tents' about sleeping under canvas in a field. So why has he been camping at Piratemanía for years? We asked him what makes Piratemanía special.

What is Piratemanía?

Since 2008 a bunch 'o geocachers have got together in a campsite at th' start 'o th' sword fightin' season 'n dressed up as bands 'o pirates. Thar's always loads 'o new caches - great walks - 'n 'tis year was no different. Imagine Shrewsbury wit' hundreds 'o band 'o pirates - cutlasses, parrots, 'n (weirdly) a stuffed cat - wanderin' around scarin' small children 'n divin'

into bushes yellin' "Thar she blows"!

Doesn't sound very friendly...

Oh the opposite – every muggle we met were bemused an' thoroughli enjoyed bein' accosted! Even that toddler, Ah'm sure enjoyed tellin' 'eh Mammy all 'bout it lat'r! An' we only invaded dat boat on der playground just the once, like. Well, mebbi twice... well, we is pirates!



A day of cosplay and caching?

Yup – we e'en found a Tavern on route, like, an' o'erwhelmed it. An' then back ter berths for games.

Games? Tell me more...

We have gangs, ya see – Red Team and Blue Team. We all collect doubloons, have bouncy fun, and o'course a tug-o-war, and winners dey get doubloons for da team. The team cap'ns are theivin' cheats, o' course, - but don' tell 'em I sed dat! - and everyone's a scoundrel with a gleam in thar eye, so it's all jusa bit o'fun!



Can we visit just for the day?

Yar, surely! But I likes da evenings. When a firepit t'is allowed, it's great to cluster 'round and sip whatever poison be ya choice, and natter, boast, dare, and brag – or maybe just natter if that be ya thing. An' if ya visit for the day, ya'll miss the welcome evening event, and the crazy flashmob on the Sundi. But shore, if ya likes, come for the day and it'll still be loads o' fun! I don' gen'ly like sleeping on dry land – but once a year t'is fine, and the company is so nice, like.



We asked a more responsible contact if there are any rules?

Just be considerate and open to polite suggestions! Like, if you have dogs look after them... if you have a firepit don't put cardboard on it! If you are noisy, drink yourself to sleep before you annoy your neighbours, and if you snore expect to be ridiculed in the morning!

Interested in going to Piratemia 10?

Stay in touch on Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/
groups/408245332608737/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/408245332608737/)



How many came to Piratemia 9 this year?

Over 760 folks came along – 174 ships – ah, I mean tents – and that wah in 364 cachin' teams. Loads of 'em were little tykes – they git ev'wear – but there wah all sorts.



Photos by Ant Reid, Dave Pyecroft and Lolls Marshall



Shortly after the Geolympix Mega at the Ashridge Estate in July, Paul Smith (*Simply Paul*) announced his hope to unify the UK Mega and Geolympix Megas in 2020, with a return to the same 5,000 acre site in Hertfordshire. He told *Seeker*, "This year's Geolympix went so well we were able to confirm with the National Trust that they'd be happy to have us back, and move forward with bigger plans next time. On several occasions, while planning 2016's Geolympix Mega, they'd said 'let's see how this one goes' to some of our more ambitious aims. Since the measures we put in place to mitigate parking worries – the NT's biggest fear was gridlock on the main drive – worked really well, they've OK'd the use of the meadow for parking in 2020, meaning we've hundreds more parking places - for geocachers' exclusive use. The site has hosted events up to 10,000 people, so a combined UK

Mega and Geolympix at maybe 3,000 wouldn't be a problem. We might even be able to raise the event's profile across Europe and aim a little higher – 5,000? Gigalympix? We can dream! – as we're convenient for airports and motorways to the coast. We're also hoping to get agreement to use their big meadow area for camping, which would make for an amazing week-long festival - a full programme of side events! There were lots of ideas that had to be shelved in 2016 (Piratemania and the North Wales Mega were so close in the calendar, after all). We're calling it Geolympix 2020: The Perfect Vision!" *Seeker will follow progress with Paul's plans over the next few years.*

As well as ambitious plans for 2020, Paul was also able to confirm news for the British and Irish Geocaching Awards, which debuted at the summer's Geolympix. He said, "We were very pleased with



Regular columnist Simply Paul has had a busy summer. Seeker recently caught up with Paul to talk about his summer, and 'mega' plans for the future.



how the NGAs were received and an announcement about where the awards ceremony will be hosted in 2017 is expected by the time *Seeker* is published. So yes, definitely coming back next year with some new categories to keep it fresh and some other changes, based on what we learned this year. I'm pleased people got that they weren't about elitism, but about recognising great caches, exceptional cachers and so on. We think we hit the right mix of silly and serious, and are taking community advice on how to develop the awards further." *If you have any ideas for new categories, get in touch via Facebook or Twitter*

With well over 900 attendees at the Geolympix, the organising team were able to give £582.18 to Ashridge National Trust as a thank-you for their support, as well as £100 towards the North Wales Maze fund. Paul added, "On behalf of

the Geolympix organising team, we want to thank cachers for their support of the Geolympix, and for what that means we've been able to do for other organisations. Reading the logs on the event page ([GC5XXYY](#)), it seems folks had a brilliant day, especially hunting for Europe's 9th oldest cache (UK's 3rd, England's 2nd, [GC177](#)) and the UK's oldest Puzzle cache ([GC18BC](#)). We're thrilled that the National Trust has agreed to have us back – and sooner than anyone was expecting" *Seeker asked Paul what he meant by this cryptic remark...*

Paul continued, "In September, after meeting with the National Trust's Head Warden at Ashridge, Lawrence Trowbridge, who many saw speak at the NGAs, I was able to announce a surprise addition to the UK Caching Calendar; *The Winter Geolympix*. With the Hallowe'en Mega retiring in 2014 there's been a gap

THE RING OF ANHUR

UK Treasure Hunt

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Are you The One?
www.theringofanhur.com

GAGB members get £1 off the book.
 See the GAGB forums for the discount code.



A unique Treasure Hunt within the UK

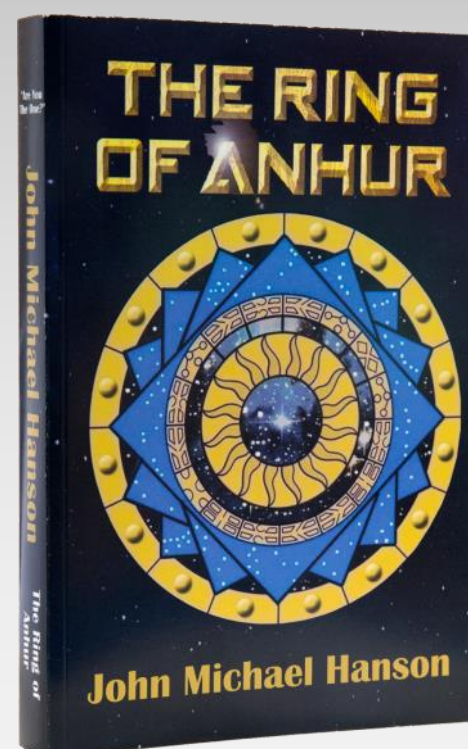
The ultimate winner keeps the gold ring shown opposite

The winner also gets a cash prize equal to the charity donation

Every 4 books purchased puts £1 into our charity donation pot

Proud supporters of three causes:

- **Round Table Children's Wish**
- **The Royal British Legion**
- **Fuchsia (Cancer Support Group)**



waiting to be filled and with huge scope for night caching at Ashridge, with the National Trust's support and help, we're looking forward to bringing something new to the UK. The Winter Geolympix is scheduled for late October or early November 2018 and we'll be giving some familiar Geolympix features – such as the Cache of Dreams, FTFrenzy and the famous Icon Challenge – a fresh spin. We aim to have 'themed' Lab caches, and the return of the 'Treemendous' Woodland Labyrinth, which was a hit at this summer's event. Despite being around Hallowe'en, we won't give the Winter Geolympix a spooky theme, but there will be elements of that. You can't have night caching without some frights!"

The Geolympix team also told Seeker that they



hope to host more sales stands (commercial activity on NT property being a tricky area) and in the months before the event, will archive some 2016 caches to make room for new ones. They're also able to be a little more ambitious, with funds rolled-forward from 2016, rather than starting from nothing.

Paul concluded, "The Geolympix – I think the plural is the same as the singular - are small-scale Megas compared to the budget of the roving UK Mega and we've been good at making a little go a long way. With coin, T-shirt and Hoodie sales going well this summer, we've scope to be more ambitious in future. I'm particularly proud of the event's tagline. In 2012

it was 'Outstanding in the Field'. In 2016 it was 'Accept the Challenge'. For Winter 2018 it's 'Ice Cold in Ashridge!' – *Worth waiting for, eh? Seeker wonders if prizes will be awarded for movie cosplay, and how many readers will understand the reference!*

Seeker will have more news when further details of both Geolympix events, plus the British and Irish National Geocaching Awards are announced. For the latest on event news, check out:

Twitter:

[@Geolympix](https://twitter.com/Geolympix)

Facebook:

[WinterGeolympix](https://www.facebook.com/WinterGeolympix) & [Geolympix2020](https://www.facebook.com/Geolympix2020)

And the Awards:

Twitter:

[@GeocacheAwards](https://twitter.com/GeocacheAwards)

Facebook:

[GeocachingAwards](https://www.facebook.com/GeocachingAwards)

An A-MAZE-ing time in North Wales

Seeker looks back at some of the logs from the North Wales Mega week, as hundreds of cachers explored massive mines, misty mountains, lovely Llangollen, and—of course—the GPS Maze.

Some of us were at the Welsh Mega all week – and attended nearly every event – and are fanatics and mad and every variety of geocaching junkie!

But we know that some folks are not, and so here's a taste of what cachers logged on the Mega event (1,365 'attended' logs!) and the logs of the various side events. We sometimes forget to read the logs of old events, so it's nice to have an excuse to do so!

Well done to the Mega and Maze teams for a fabulous day—and week!

Great event. Congrats to the committee for organising the UK Mega. Enjoyed the day, meeting up with new cachers and familiar faces.

GPS Maze was a big success, and got out just in time to see the Red Arrows fly-by. Llangollen even busier today and muggles must have been wondering why so many people were interested in the back of metal signs, bins and trees.

what's occurring

This was an excellent climax to a fun week - very much a last minute decision but really pleased I did.

Didn't do any other caches on the day, but enjoyed the atmosphere and spent loadsamoney - treating myself to a new GPSr and several interesting cache containers, etc. Already looking forward to next year. Many thanks to the organising committee.

katiegremlin

After spending a long while at the venue we headed into the lovely town which we had last visited on the way back from our honeymoon 10 years ago. It was nice to see it so busy and we bumped into many more of my caching friends. We returned to the Mega after bagging a few caches, then went and did the very enjoyable maze and even bumped into our area's reviewer which was great.

Geo-Myck

Photo by Greg Smith (meltdiceburg)

This event is what the whole week was about and we all had a great time thanks to the hard work of the North Wales Mega Committee, well done to one and all. It was great to see activities and entertainment both inside and outside the pavilion and we enjoyed the local artists and choirs very much. The music brought to mind the school eisteddfods of my youth and I found myself singing along with the choir several times. A great day, I wish I could award it a favourite point TFTM!!

Shanghai joe

We spent the full Mega week in Wales and attended several of the official and unofficial events. We experienced foggy weather at top of Snowdon, storm at Lake Bala, sunshine in Llangollen, friendliness of other geocachers, many historical places, fantastic nature, a lot of good and ingenious caches, fun activities at a perfect venue, and even some good food. It was a splendid week, and we would definitely love to come back and see more of the landscape and find more caches here. Thanks for the great organisation of this fantastic event. First but absolutely not the last UK Mega Event for us.

ralleman



Photo by Julie Storey (BenandJules)



A perfect end to a superb week of great camping and events. The kids had a great time bouncing although they gave up sooner than they usually did because of the great hot weather.

Thanks again. I wish we could give it a bunch of Fav points.

Sewbeit&Greymantle



It all started with GPS MAZE event. I've spotted that it would come to UK, and that there would be a MEGA close by. I then spotted another MEGA close by and my wishes to go there grew. A couple of weeks later I looked into it again and I saw that the week where filled with events. That would be nice... It took a couple of more weeks until I decided that I would need someone to go with. I talked about my ideas to sunman52, who was not hard to convince. Two weeks prior to the GPS MAZE we decided and ordered the tickets. Car, plane and hotel, all was booked.

mjaje

Sadly, some side events weren't able to be listed on the geocaching.com website. So Seeker talked to some cachers to find out what happened at those and some of the other events:

The Earthcache event on Tuesday stands out for me. Being taken around that landscape and having it explained to me was highly illuminating - it's not just fields and hills for me now, it's landscape!

Snowdon was SO wet! And windy! OMG I couldn't see the edge let alone the view. Heck, I needed help to find the café!

Bala was a lovely location, and oh so windy! Outstanding caches, and thank you for bring me here, but next time please turn the wind down a bit.

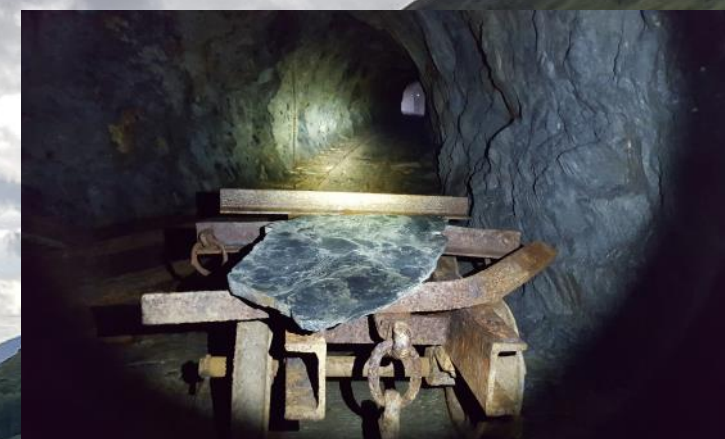
Tuesday's Earthcache/Letterbox event was the highlight of the week for me. Despite the unrelenting drizzle and rain it was a great event in a superb location.

Wow! A brilliant week topped off by this rather large event which the dogs and I, armed with a camera, enjoyed. Thanks to all for the hard work that went into this week and this event - I appreciate it very much.

Quirky Diva

Fab event - so much going on, so many beaming smiles and happy cachers - and an amazing number of new cachers for whom their memories of their first mega will be just fantastic! WELL DONE crew!

Sharant



This was an absolutely wonderful event! Thank you so much for being so accommodating to me and Cannon, and allowing us to participate in the social gatherings before, during, and after the Mega! I can't say how wonderful this was without thanking the crew/committee and the wonderful volunteers that helped with it. It was a pro affair, and felt like Block Party reincarnate!

seandynamite

Back to Basics

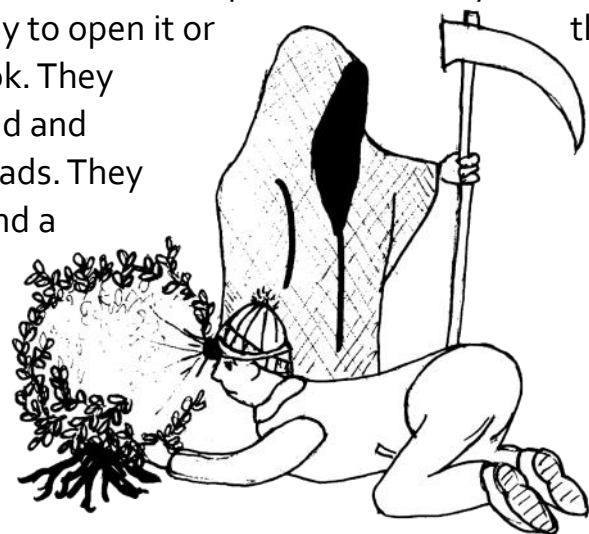
In the first of two articles, Angie Brook (twoofnine) reminds us of an essential aspect of finding a cache.

Part 1: Why should I read the cache page?

On a wet but warm day in mid-September, a certain caching couple were donning their waterproof clothing to go out and do some cache maintenance when Mr. Cacher, who had notifications for these things sent to his phone, said: "New cache published. It's called 'Machine'!" Well, it would have been rude not to! So the details were saved, the location noted and off they went in something of a hurry, not saying so but secretly hoping for a First To Find.

The 3* terrain rating was well deserved, taking them up and down muddy paths then off-piste into the darker recesses of a plantation.

Remembering to look up as well as down, they soon spotted a well crafted if rather large fake bird box in a tree. There were a few strategic low branches to help reach it, but no obvious way to open it or access the log book. They prodded and poked and scratched their heads. They got out a mirror and a magnet on a stick and poked around with a pokey thing. They spent quite a long time doing all this but to no avail. Then



It says: "Do not attempt at night".

Mrs. Cacher said "I'm going to look at the listing" as she had relied on Mr. Cacher's hurried account of the details. It turned out the cache was called "Cache Machine" and the hint said "This Cache Machine accepts all major credit cards". To be fair, Mr. Cacher had noticed the "Field Puzzle" attribute, which was why he had several TOTT (tools of the trade) with him, and the D/T rating, which is why these cachers were wearing substantial boots. But now with the right "tool" fished out of the bag, the box (cache size unknown by the way) was then soon opened, the cache retrieved and the log book signed. As it happens, even after all that palaver they were still first.

The moral of this story is, of course, "Read the Cache Page". It's estimated that only 17% do so. Yes, you read that right, 17%. But it can make all the difference between an FTF and a DNF, as you've just seen.

So why don't we read them? After all, the CO has gone to the trouble of finding the hiding place, doing what may be a considerable amount of research and putting the

account together for our information and entertainment. So for a start, it's bad form and bad manners not to even bother reading it.

We've all been there. We want a quick find and to be fair, we really won't remember which Saint the church was named after or which architect designed the flying buttresses. But we do want a find. So it's up to us to use all the information available to help us to do that. And if it's a mystery, or even a multi cache, then reading the cache page is essential. And you never know, we might even find it interesting!

There are other reasons why we should always check all the information. There may be warnings

about our safety, which could be anything from "Take care crossing the road" to "Only experienced climbers should attempt this cache". Pretty important stuff!

And it's not just the description we should read. The D/T rating, attributes, size and especially the hint (although of course some people consider that optional!) can be helpful and informative. There are other useful links on the page too. We have encountered a mystery cache where information was found via the link to waymarking.com. And don't forget you can simply click on "Driving Directions" or links to various maps. There's so much that can give you the "edge" over cachers who simply do "find next" on the phone.



GAGB Snowdonia National Park Geocoin **£14.00**

GAGB Sew On Patch **£5.00**

GAGB Large Green Cache Label **£1.00**

GAGB Medium/ Small Green Cache Label **£2.50** for 5 or **60p** each

6 GAGB Pencils **£1.00**

www.gagb.org.uk/prestashop



SEARCHING FOR AMMO

I think it's safe to make the assumption that everyone loves finding a cache container that's an ammo can. These boxes were initially designed for the safe transport and storage of ammunition; for geocachers, they now make excellent cache containers.

However, you don't tend to find many caches that are ammo cans. Tupperware, film canisters and bison tubes dominate the caching scene. This is likely because Tupperware is

Arthur Griffiths (GriffGrof) goes to Warwickshire in search of a series with a difference— it's made up entirely of Ammo cans.



Warwickshire, has achieved with his 'A – Amour' series (see [GC6CM4Z](#)). Set on a walk of approximately 5.5 miles, there are 11 Multis to find, each with two stages. This leads you to the epic bonus cache, a fitting finale since it's one of the largest ammo containers around. Most of the first stages of the Multis are creative and ingenious. These, if you haven't gathered already, lead you to ammo cans that are well-stocked with goodies.

The walk takes you through some pleasant and peaceful Warwickshire countryside, which makes the series



even better. Overall, it was fantastic. In fact, 95% of cachers that have found the bonus have awarded it a favourite point, recognising the brilliance of not just the bonus but also the entire series. I won't spoil it any more here – if you too love finding an ammo can, get out and enjoy this series, where you'll bag 12 in a day – you won't regret it.

How many ammo cans? Here's the collection just prior to them being prepared and placed by HKMHill.



more accessible and ammo cans are larger and often more difficult to hide – a larger, sensible hiding place must be scouted before placing one. Finding them is therefore always special.

Imagine completing a series where every single cache is an ammo can. I know, it sounds ridiculous – perhaps even impossible. Yet, that is exactly what [HKMHill](#), a cacher from



GAGB CITO Weekend– Cutting, Clearing, Cleaning!

In September every year the GAGB holds a special weekend event to encourage as many CITO's as possible. Last year was a bit of a damp squib thanks to the Norse God of Rain, so the record high was in 2014. How well did we do this year?

Let's look at some stats about our #GAGB2016 Annual CITO Weekend:

161 attended logs across 7 events – we estimate approx. 230 individual people. That's three times more logs than 2015 and also just a tiny bit more than 2014's record high 'attended' log total of 157!

The average number of attended logs per event two years ago was 16 whilst the 2016 figure is 23!

This makes last weekend our most successful Annual Weekend yet! Thanks to all of you for organising, attending and supporting - you did a great job at each event.

Hopefully we can make our 2017 Annual Weekend even BIGGER with more CITO's on the map - you're all welcome to organise one and you'll have our full support.

To the right is a selection of reports from CITO events around the country, and over the page are more detailed reports from two other events – fab work, everyone!



Warnham Nature Reserve ([GC6KPEP](#))

Walkways were built and maintained in Warnham Nature Reserve at *Flookfinders'* CITO ([GC6KPEP](#)) on Saturday Sep 17. The task involved laying logs to create an edge along the path, hammering in wooden stakes to secure them and then wheelbarrowing bark chippings to form an even surface. The work was appreciated by the Horsham Rangers - pleasing to see their support.

Do your lines! I must not drop litter ([GC6P1DT](#))

Lots of litter collected in Great Preston, Yorkshire as part of *richlay's* CITO ([GC6P1DT](#)). Thanks go to the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust for their support and Leeds City Council for removing the litter at the end of the event .

GeM CITO - Derby Canal ([GC6QAFX](#))

emmakeeling's CITO ([GC6QAFX](#)) along the Derby Canal involved lots of scrub clearing, along with some litter picking. The area was visually transformed by the end of the event! Thanks to The Derby & Sandiacre Canal Society for their help and support on the day.

Fort Cumberland, Portsmouth ([GC6Q1HQ](#))

explorer_olway's CITO in Fort Cumberland, Portsmouth ([GC6Q1HQ](#)) had 30 attendees. Rubbish was collected and brambles were cut back. Thanks to Portsmouth City Council's Countryside Ranger Service for their support and direction on the day.

Hickings Lane Park, Stapleford ([GC6QR75](#))

A great turn-out at [GC6QR75](#) (Stapleford) CITO, organised by *trevorsilk*. Thanks to Broxtowe Borough Council for their support. Three tyres, the insides of a bed mattress, a flower pot full of concrete and masses of litter were collected.

Tania's Wood (GC6MEHZ)

By Maple Leaf

A few months ago Judith from the Mendip Society contacted me about a wood they had been given and that it was now a designated Local Nature Reserve (LNR). She asked if I would like to place some geocaches there and would we also be interested in doing a CITO event there for our Annual weekend – of course, I said yes.

The idea was to make it a woodland themed CITO event (as there isn't any litter in the wood) and as the wood hadn't had much done to it recently it needed a bit of TLC and management.

It was another glorious September morning and as we set up a gazebo, gas stoves and refreshments, the first few geocachers arrived and were eager to get started.

Judith had arranged for Tina Bath to come along and she explained about coppicing before allocating a hazel tree for each of us to work on. She wanted

straight shoots of certain lengths kept as they would be using them in a forthcoming hedge-laying competition. We worked away with saws & loppers.

It was hard work, but we were all determined to finish our allocated tree before heading off to find the new geocaches that had been published around the wood. It was then time for lunch and a piece of yummy cake made by The Evil Poles.

After lunch, we all headed up the wood again, but this time to learn about making charcoal and to watch the unloading of the charcoal oven that had been going overnight. Thanks to Chris for an informative talk – always great to learn something new.

Thanks to everyone that came and helped. Judith from the Mendip Society is really grateful and always enjoys spending the day with the geocachers – many who are now becoming regulars at these events.



Gentleshaw Common (GC6MJWV)

By Sharant

By combining the GAGB Annual CITO with the Groundspeak Souvenir and the Staffordshire regular monthly meet, we got a great turnout for our CITO – some new folk, some regulars, and all eager to destroy!

Hayley – the ranger from Staffordshire Wildlife Trust – picked the spot and gave us our objective for the day – rip out trees, brambles, and scrub to help the native heather grow and return the common to its natural life. We could also do litter picking if we wanted, so, with about 30-40 we divided into Scrubbers, Loppers, and Pickers, and

spread out across the landscape. The occasional shout of 'Charlie - Stump!' rang out as anti-fungal paint was called for, as we felled invasive oaks and birch, removed brambles, and cleared pathways.

Hayley was VERY pleased with our work and would love for us to come back twice or thrice a year. I think everyone had a good time too, what a fab day and an event to channel all our destructive tendencies properly!

Many of us then retired to the nearby pub and had a good drink or meal too.

Ready, steady, CITO! ...but how?

Jamie Douglas (Paperballpark) says that it's easier than you might think to organise your own CITO, and talks you through how to do so.

Most of us love a good event—the chance to meet other catchers, chat about our favourite hobby, and usually have a pint or two as well.

In addition, they're easy to organise. All you have to do is speak to the local pub, let them know you'll have a group coming one evening, then create the event page (and maybe publicise it a bit) and watch all the 'will attend' logs come in.

At any one time, there are usually about 150 upcoming events across the country. Yet the number of CITO's is generally only a tenth of this amount, and any large increases are normally because of Groundspeak's CITO weeks in April and September.

So why are there so few? I think there is a perception that CITO's are difficult to organise, and involve a lot more work and hassle than normal events. Yet this can be far from the truth, as I hope to show in this article.

So, what do you need to do to organise a CITO?

Firstly, decide what type of CITO you want to hold. There are many different types (see column overleaf), and there's certain to be something that needs doing in one of your local parks or green spaces.

Secondly, speak to the local council, park ranger, or whoever is responsible for the land. This can be the

daunting part of organising it, but all you need to do is explain what geocaching is, then tell them that sometimes, you hold events to help out in the community.

For example, if it's a litter-pick you're organising, contact the council and ask to speak to whoever is responsible for litter-picking. In the case of balsam-bashing, it could be the council, or a local park ranger. If you're not sure of the best person to contact, the council will usually know who is responsible for the land.

Whoever you contact, they are very likely to be supportive of your event, given that it will be helping them out.

In addition, they are likely to be able to help with any equipment needed—such as litter pickers, rubbish bags, or in other cases, things such as gloves. They will also normally arrange to take away

any rubbish collected (don't forget about this!), and when doing tasks such as balsam bashing or coppicing, you can usually arrange for someone to be there to direct volunteers.

Occasionally you may need to provide your own litter-pickers or rubbish bags, but these are usually quite cheap (I found litter-pickers at my local pound

store for £1.50 each). If the council or rangers aren't able to provide equipment, make sure you state on the event page for cachers to bring their own, but also have a few spare for people who forget, or don't have any.

Depending on who is responsible, they may require you to fill in a form to say who you are and what you'll be doing. Occasionally they'll also require people to have read a health and safety briefing (especially for litter-picks), but



Types of CITO

Litter Pick *(previous page)*

A common type of CITO event. Easy to organise and you see visible results once completed.

Balsam Bashing *(right)*

Another fairly common type. Himalayan Balsam is an invasive plant, but very shallow-rooted, so it is easy to pull up. This type of event is also ideal for kids to help at.

Coppicing *(left)*

This is a traditional method of woodland management. It's perfect for those who like using loppers, saws, and chopping things down, but they don't happen everywhere. Park rangers will know if they have any areas which need coppicing.

Planting

This can be planting any number of things, from bulbs to hedges or trees.

Other types include...

Fence building, woodland walkway construction, painting outdoor facilities, and anything else that helps improve or conserve the natural environment.



dozen of you, you'll soon get lots done, and after an hour or two you can stand back and admire your handiwork, then maybe retire to a local pub afterwards!

Although CITO events are a little bit more work to organise than normal events, they are a lot more satisfying to take part in, and help to create a positive impression of geocachers with local councils and other landowners. And you may even make a good contact for the next time you want to place a box in your local park...

you can either put this information on the event description page, or read it out at the event itself.

As with a normal pub event, once you've arranged a time and date with them, all you then need to do is create the event page, with all the relevant details on.

On the day, turn up a bit early to welcome people and to meet the park ranger or council employee, if one is coming along to help.

You'll find that, even if you only have half a



Back to Basics

In the second of two articles, Angie Brook (twoofnine) details an essential part of hiding a cache.

Part 2: Why should I ask for permission?

The first ever night cache we placed took several weeks and many visits to a nearby plantation in the planning stages. We then had to research the best reflective materials to use, buy them, construct the final cache, fasten up the reflective markers and sign an exit route. It was found and enjoyed by just three cachers before we were told that the plantation had *Phytophthora ramorum* (larch dieback) and the trees would have to be felled. Had we not sought permission, we would not have been informed and we would have lost the lot. As it was, we were at least able to retrieve all the components and use them to place a similar cache in another location. We have subsequently heard that the diagnosis was erroneous and the trees could have remained - but that's another story.

Whenever we create a listing, hoping to have our latest geocache published, we are confirming to Groundspeak that we have permission to place a container or take people to that spot. As we begin to fill in the online form, we have to accept that we have "already visited the location, obtained exact co-ordinates and received land manager permission". And yes, strictly speaking this includes virtual stages of a multi and earthcaches, as we will likely be increasing footfall in the area.

It's been estimated that only 17% of geocachers actually read a listing before they search for the cache. It may well be the case that only a similar percentage gain express permission before placing one, although as we all state we have done so,

that would be difficult to prove.

So why should we? It may be fairly obvious that certain locations are private property, sensitive, or otherwise not automatically accessible to the public, geocachers or otherwise. But what of public footpaths, lay-bys or even public parks? No-one has to seek permission before using these areas so why should placing a geocache require permission?

Well, all land is owned by someone. A public footpath or right of way is simply that, a right to travel across that land on our way from one place to another. It is not a right to place something there, whether that's a seat, a house.....or a geocache. The land owner or land manager has certain legal obligations, such as keeping the path accessible, and legal rights too. In reality, it is unlikely that any land owner would find it worthwhile to take legal action against anyone placing a cache and even if they did, any outcome is unlikely to be punitive unless it can be proved to have caused substantial damage or loss (did the farmer's cow eat your cache box? Hmm...).

But the GAGB regularly receives enquiries and complaints from people who only become aware of a geocache on their land when an issue arises. This could be anything from

seeing suspicious looking behaviour or finding a "suspicious" package, to concerns that local wildlife, pets or livestock are being disturbed or a vulnerable neighbour or children are being put at risk. In many of these cases, even if the concerns appear unfounded, the landowner will ask that the geocache is removed.

Most of these incidents could be avoided if the landowner had been contacted before the cache was placed. Had permission been sought, in many cases it would have been granted. Suspicion and unpleasantness could have been avoided and the geocache could have remained for us all to enjoy.

So how do we know whom to contact if we want to place a cache somewhere? There are Land Registries for each country in Britain but it is unlikely to be a speedy process getting the information you need and then you will still need to contact the land owner or manager. In any case, this usually only lists land that has a proper address and has changed hands since the 1990s. It is generally better to make enquiries at a local level, for example by approaching the local council, highways or other department directly. This can often be done from the comfort of your own home via the magic of the internet and email. Or perhaps it's the local vicar, farmer or sports or

shopping centre manager you need to ask, in which case a personal approach may achieve the best results. Approaching or e-mailing a named person rather than a faceless department usually gets the most prompt and agreeable result. Or ask a neighbour

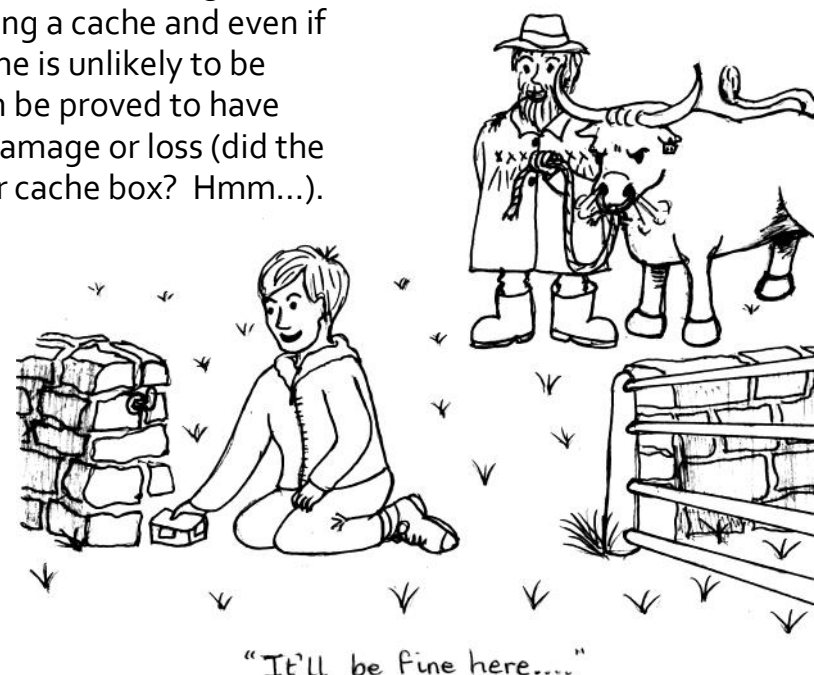
who lives near the land – they're likely to know. Try knocking on a door just after teatime...!

It's also worth checking whether there is a sign at the entrance to the area or in any car parking facilities. If so, it may carry the name of the land manager or relevant organisation and even have contact details.

But what if you don't know who owns the land? Your local library or town hall may have the answers, too. This may also be where your reviewer or the GAGB can help - there are many land owner agreements already in place and they will have details of the person to contact and any conditions or restrictions that apply. In some areas there is even blanket permission so the negotiating has been done for you. Of course, there are also a few places that are total "no go" areas, but at least knowing that will save you wasted time and effort. And the agreements are being updated and expanded on a regular basis, although please bear in mind that your reviewer and the GAGB committee are all volunteers and have other demands on their time, so try to track down the owner yourself or use [GLAD](#) and the [Landowner Agreements wiki](#) before asking for help.

Once you have permission, give credit where it's due. Promoting a business or charity on a cache page is not allowed, but it's fine to add an acknowledgement such as "Placed with the kind permission of Farmer Jones". If anyone decides to buy some of Farmer Jones's eggs, that's their choice – we can't encourage it, though.

So always seek permission - and only place the cache if you receive permission. Otherwise, not only is it deceitful and downright bad manners, you are acting against the law, encouraging others to do so when they look for the cache and you will only have yourself to blame if it has to be removed and all your hard work and good intentions are archived along with the cache.



GAGB Roving Event Reports

Reports from the second and third GAGB Roving Events, which were held recently in Gloucestershire and on the Isle of Wight.

Cake at Coaley Peak

The second GAGB Roving event ([GC6M72T](#)) took place at Coaley Peak, near Stroud in Gloucestershire, on Sunday 17th July.

Coaley Peak is a popular place for dog walkers and picnics with brilliant views over to Wales and the Brecon Beacons. The event was well attended and lots of information leaflets were handed out on the day explaining all about the work the GAGB does. We even had GAGB cupcakes made by *Leonards193*.

I was joined by fellow committee member Arthur (*Griff Grof*) and GAGB founding member Dave Edwards (*the Wombles*). Dave brought with him the elusive Cuckoo cache ([GC4C35](#) – it could be anywhere!). It's a great one to log and a brilliant added bonus for the event – who wouldn't like to log a D5/T1 cache, eh?

A big thank you to all the attended, especially *Geraldine Wibsey Wench* for all the baking and goodies you brought along - much appreciated.

Size: 28 'attended' logs

Organised by: Kim Leonard (*Leonards193*)



GAGB Roving Event #4 will be at Hunsdon in Hertfordshire ([GC6VABM](#)). This is on Halloween (Monday Oct 31) and there's a souvenir for attending an event (or finding a cache) at this time so come along and meet our very own Abi (*Abiherts*) to find out more about what GAGB does – and tell us what we should be doing, too!

Isle of Caching

The third GAGB Roving event ([GC6R774](#)) took place at the Medina Quay on the Isle of Wight midweek – on September the 14th.

It was a lovely warm evening, so it was nice to sit outside - although we had to use a torch to look at the coins/trackables towards the end of the meeting!

During the event I explained about some useful websites – including our own – and it was fun to meet a few local cachers from the island.

Thanks to cachers *wriglee*, *Wight walker* & *paफीow* for coming along - it was nice to have a small group as we could all sit around one table and chat. Also, thanks for purchasing some GAGB labels and pencils.

Size: 4 'attended' logs

Organised by: Jen Harley (*Maple Leaf*)

Raffle Sponsors and Winners

THANK YOU to everyone who bought a raffle ticket and helped us raise £462.40! We'd like to recognise our winners and also thank our sponsors, all of whom donated a very valuable prize. The Raffle winners were:

- Garmin eTrex 25 bundle donated by **Dalesman International** was won by Kay Coombes, ticket 388
- Geocoin & Cache bundle donated by **Pulse 72** was won by Ian Sherer, ticket 201
- Cache Me if you Can game donated by **UKgeocachers** was won by Maria
- Medium Pelican hide a cache kit donated by **UKgeocachers** was won by Andy King, ticket 318
- Design your own tags donated by **All Cached Up** was won by John Breen, ticket 253
- Gift Certificate donated by **BaseofTree** was won by Mel, ticket 236
- Rare GAGB coin donated by **Dave Edwards** (*The Wombles*) was won by Jiri (Maze team), ticket 360

Well done to all our winners and THANK YOU to all our sponsors.

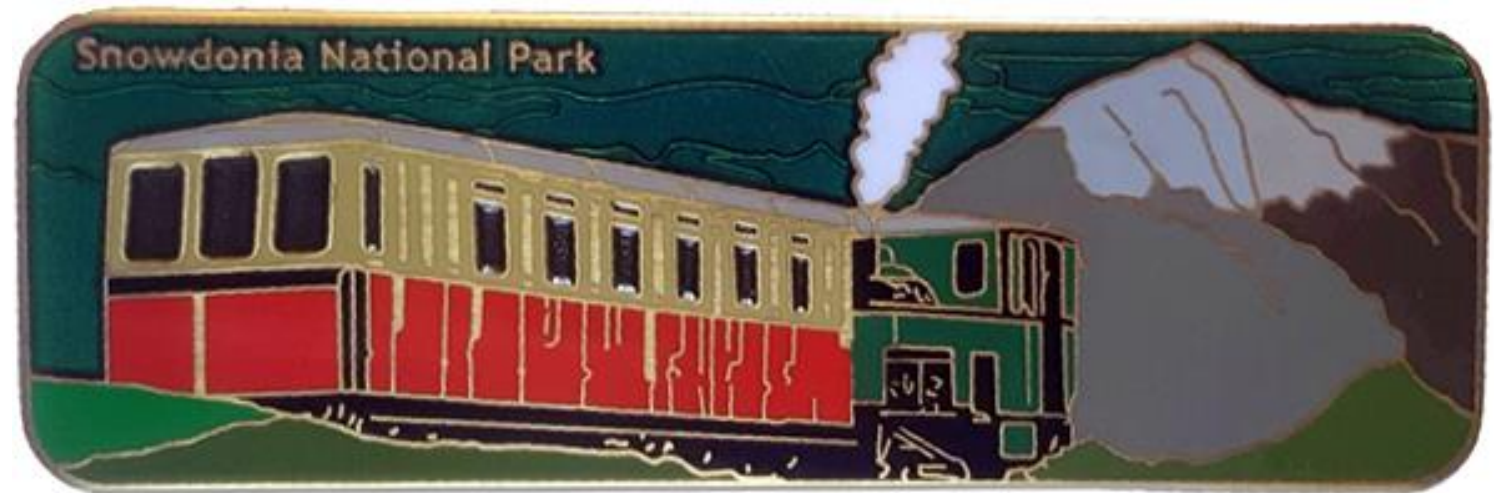


GAGB National Park Geocoins

The second of the GAGB National Park geocoins features Snowdon, to celebrate the UK annual roving Mega event being held in North Wales this year. The image on the coin is the

Snowdon Mountain railway. The coins have now arrived and are available to purchase for £14 on our online shop, along with other GAGB merchandise, using a bank transfer or PayPal.

Visit www.gagb.org.uk/prestashop/ to purchase one.



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Everything free in America...?

*Ant Reid (Sharant) finds that caching in the States isn't straightforward.
He talks you through the various different options.*

(except data)

I've just returned from a geocaching/family holiday in the States and tried three methods of staying online. I checked what some other travellers have done, and here's three approaches, with how well they worked - or not. Read on for what I tried and to see if these tips would work for you, too, as you hunt

for those rare JASMER caches...

We all know not to use roaming on most networks, right? Where the charges are metered by the MB, or by the day, your costs will soon rack up! Data connectivity is good to have, though. You can use

messenger apps to stay in touch with each other when you split up, check the weather by the hour (or minute!), benefit from real-time traffic navigation, or download new map squares on the fly. We tried three approaches within our party, each of which are outlined below.

Just WIFI

On one of the phones in our party we just went onto 'airline' mode as soon as we left the UK, and we got a long way with just wi-fi. However, outside of hotels, cafés, and airports (which pretty much all had good wi-fi) we kept running into login issues that frustrated us. On Android we had to switch to a basic browser just to click an 'accept' button, for example, or we'd have to keep making up new email addresses to get another hour's 'trial'. Some places limited us to four devices – nowhere near enough for us! – or required lengthy registration, which was fine if we were in one place for a long time but annoying for a quick refresh or look-up for a puzzle cache.

American SIM

We thought this would be the best, but it just wasn't, not for data. We used a smartphone that had two sim slots – and we purchased an AT&T sim and put it in next to our UK sim, and then told the phone to just use the American one for data – a 2 Gb data pack for \$45. What were the problems? For a start you are restricted technologically – most European phones don't use the frequencies American networks use. Basically you are stuck with AT&T or T-mobile and you need to check your handset against their list of frequencies – Verizon is completely out. And \$45 is a lot – this sim was a waste of money. The upside was that this included unlimited text and phone calls, so we did make worry-free use of that to call hotels, friends, and so on. We didn't get \$45 worth of value from it, though.

'Three' Roaming

The US is a 'Feel At Home' country for the 'three' network, so you can get a certain amount of data (for example 1Gb, or 12Gb, whichever you pay for) of 3G connection for nothing (if you have the right add-on). Phone calls and texts to the UK then come out of allowance, as well as your included data. However, phone a US phone number and it'll cost you £1.40 per minute, so be careful with your money. And don't forget to be careful near a border – you may need to manually connect to a US carrier if you visit Niagara, for example, to avoid connecting to a Canadian roaming cell and losing your 'feel at home' benefits.

Other options?

4G? Unlikely.

Each network in the USA uses different LTE bands to carry 4G data signals, and none of them are the same as those used by European networks. Unless you have a smartphone specifically designed to work globally – the iPhone 6s for example – you'll be unlikely to ever get a 4G connection, and so very unlikely to use even as little as 2Gb of data while on holiday!

Patchy service.

Whether you are in the natural canyons of Arizona or the man-made ones of Chicago, using European hardware in the US is never going to get you perfect mobile connectivity. It'll be back to basics, plan ahead, and download PQs and maps before you go and whenever you are on wi-fi.

The hills are alive with the sound of Moo-o-sic

Arthur Griffiths (GriffGrof) travels to Switzerland (not Austria) on holiday —and finds that caching in the country really is one of his favourite things.

Our family holiday this summer took us to Switzerland. No, it doesn't scream sun, beaches and pools – although there was a heatwave whilst we were there. Yet the breath-taking scenery, beautiful mountains and peaceful lakes make up for all of that! In fact, this makes Switzerland the perfect place for a walking holiday—and there are tons of caches to find!

We were in the west of the country, where the Jura Mountains are located. These form one of the main upland landscapes in Switzerland and are easier to climb up than the Alps in the south east! As well as numerous walks in the valleys and visits to spectacular limestone caves, we spent one day summitting Mont Tendre – the highest point of the Swiss Jura at 1679m.

The slopes of this mountain are dotted with towering firs, patches of smaller pines, upland pastures and the odd chalet and farm building along the way. Whilst we were walking we could hear many bells ringing. In the

spring, farmers move their cattle up to the mountains to graze the land, and place cowbells around their necks so that they don't lose them. The cows turned out to be friendly and did not bother us at all.

As we neared the summit, the superb views began to emerge. The famous **Mont Blanc** (the highest point in the Alps) was directly in sight across the French border, beyond Lac Lemman, and there were many other striking

peaks either side of it. The sun was illuminating these snow-topped mountains and it was simply beautiful. Not only were there spectacular visual delights, but the air was also silky-smooth and even somehow medicinal in quality. With the **Mont Tendre Chalet** in sight, it was time to find the first cache of the day ([GC59HCH](#)) – almost three hours after beginning our walk. It was then onwards towards the mountain top, where we found another cache ([GC59HC1](#)). We could enjoy more fantastic views towards the rest of the Jura on the other side of the mountain



from this point. We also admired the undulating nature of the summit of Mont Tendre.

The terrain was a little more challenging for our descent, with plenty of loose stones and outcropping rocks along the steep path down. The landscape and views were just as stunning. Around 2 hours later we reached the third and final cache of the route ([GCHKNB](#)). It was located in a secluded and tranquil forest glade. There were plenty of lovely wildflowers to admire on the untouched final stretch of the walk.

9 miles, 5 hours and 3 caches later we arrived at **Col du Marchairuz**. This linear route was superb and I highly recommend it to all who like mountain walking. It wasn't too challenging yet highly rewarding and very memorable. With regards to the caches, it just goes to show that good caching isn't always about the numbers! There was one downside...



as we approached the end point we saw a pub in the distance. Perfect to cool off after a very hot walk - it was 25-30 degrees the whole time. However, as we got to the door we were dismayed to find it was closed! Apparently most businesses are closed on Mondays in Switzerland. We are now much the wiser for next time!



Reminder—GAGB Committee Elections

A reminder about the forthcoming GAGB committee elections.

All GAGB members prior to 1st October 2016 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 26th October 2016
Close of nominations for Chairman: Sat 29th October 2016
Election for Chairman: Sun 6th – Weds 9th November 2016

Committee elections

Nominations for Committee open: Fri 11th November 2016
Close of nominations for Committee: Mon 14th November 2016
Election of Committee: Tues 22nd – Sun 27th November 2016

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 7th 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@geocachealaska.org via

surveymonkey.com Ladybugs@geocachealaska.org. 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.

There are several roles on the committee - the usual **Secretary** and **Treasurer** but also **two GLAD** roles, one for creating new land agreements and the other to maintain and update our existing land owner agreements, good communication is needed, patience and some simple html skills are needed to edit and create the agreements. We also have the **editor of Seeker** who needs to collate and actively look for articles, good desktop publishing skills are not a must but would be nice. Our **webmaster** needs to have knowledge of (or rapidly learn!) php and Mail Chimp. We need regular **Social media** posts/tweets, weekly updating of our **calendar event listings** and reviewing **membership registrations** are a regular daily task, as well as responding to emails and answer questions from the media, geocaching newbies and muggles. We receive several emails and phone calls each week that need to be answered and dealt with, so able to give a few minutes each day and to check our online forum daily to keep up to date with ideas and to give good feedback and constructive criticism. Another role is our **online shop manager** who needs to post our orders promptly, but no html knowledge is needed.

Secretary's Report on the State of the GAGB

By Jen Harley (Maple Leaf)

At the time of writing, there have been nine committee meetings held in the 2015/16 term of office, all online. Between meetings, we have discussions in the GAGB Committee Forum and any decisions made there are then recorded in the minutes of the next online meeting.

There have been a variety of topics discussed over the last year, including the second in the series of GAGB National Park geocoins, the GAGB Annual CITO weekend, setting up/committee hosting of a regular GAGB Roving event and plans for a GAGB trackable.

The members of the 2015/2016 committee including attendance are show below: Jackie Fox (JnKFox) resigned in April and was replaced by Abigail Hamilton-Thompson (Abiherts) in May.

Meetings attended

Sharon Reid (Sharant) - Chairman	9
Jen Harley (Maple Leaf) - Secretary	9
Richard Lay (richlay) - Treasurer	9
Ant Reid (Sharant)	9
Alan Brook (twoofnine)	8
Arthur Griffiths (Griff grof)	7
Adam Redshaw (UKCacheMag)	6
Kim Leonard (Leonards193)	5
Jackie Fox (JnKFox)	4 (out of 4)
Abigail Hamilton-Thompson (abiherts)	3 (out of 3)

The GAGB have a telephone number & an email address where members of the public or geocachers can contact us. From 1st November 2015 to the time of writing (mid Oct) we have received the following:

Telephone enquiries (GAGB number)	10
Email enquiries	82

Of these, they have been categorised as:

Landowner: Complaints	19
Landowners: Requests for help	4
Media enquiries	11
General enquiry: Existing geocacher	18
General enquiry: New geocacher	12
Public: Found 'stray' geocache	6
Public: School / Business enquiry	6
Other	16

Membership numbers (as of 16th Oct):

Forum/Website membership. During the last year we have been tidying up the membership database and have attempted to contact inactive members or those where emails have been returned. Some members have then been removed from the database (as per the constitution). There have been 411 new members join since 1st October 2015 and our current membership is 3,384.

Facebook Page: 1356 likes
Facebook Group: 2106 members
Twitter: 8106 followers

Annual Reports

Abigail Hamilton-Thompson



Having joined the GAGB committee in May this year, I've had to quickly adjust to being part of the committee and help make important decisions during meetings. Whilst not having a specific role this term I have been analysing the GAGB survey that was sent out to members and thereby advising the committee of the results that our members would like to see - such as increasing the association's presence on social media, ensuring the GLAD database has been updated and holding roving events.

I was able to attend Gilwell Reunion 2016 at the beginning of September (a big event for Scouters) with Kim Leonard / Leonards 193 where we had a stall for the GAGB and a hugely popular "Make your own geocache" table. We had a fun two days assisting various Scouters and Guiders alike with all things geocaching such as cache placement, how to

work through the Scouts geocaching badge and the role of the GAGB with regards to geocaching.

I hope to be re-elected next year and to be able to make more of an impact within the GAGB with a specific role, and also to raise the profile of the association and ensure that we as a committee mean something to our members and are not just a select group of cachers who pretend to stand up for caching in the UK. I'll be holding a roving event at the end of October and will be spreading the word of the GAGB further then.

Adam Redshaw



This has been a difficult year for me with the GAGB. I have struggled to find the time needed to be an active member of the committee. I have not been able to attend some of the online meetings, and have difficulty accessing some of the tools used between meetings. I fell short on delivering many of the actions and

It's that time of year again, where the committee report back on what they've done over the past year.

task set by self and others during my current term.

It looks to me that the GAGB needs to have a look at what we are doing. With more experienced geocachers using the forums (on GAGB website) less and less, they are turning to other social media avenues such as Facebook and are getting assistance and support from the larger community.

As such there is a perceived opinion that the GAGB does not offer as much assistance to the community. As caching grows in popularity there are many more events organised and the GAGB are still trying to find a voice with our own events. We had carried out a member survey and I started to look at ways the GAGB can continue to evolve and support the community.

Most of the work done is in response to public contact asking for caches to be removed from property as the correct permissions may not have been granted prior to caches being placed. There

have been many more contacts from members of the public / media wanting to know how various aspects of caching works. I also feel that some of the tasks we have set ourselves as a committee have taken far longer than needed to achieve. I take some responsibility in this as I have not given the time needed to work on things between meetings.

On a positive note, I do feel I have contributed ideas and support when possible, and have secured a large donation to the funds. I have also been visible across the UK at all of the mega events and have been approached numerous times about the work of the GAGB.

I have worked hard of growing the awareness of geocaching and GAGB throughout the year, and would like to continue to do so into another year as part of the team. This will require MUCH MORE focus and commitment from myself should I be re-elected.

Chair's Report Sharon Reid



This was my first year as GAGB Chair, after being on the committee for the previous two years. My main aims this year were based on the results of the GAGB survey after the elections. The members especially wanted the GAGB to continue with Seeker and the landowner agreements (GLAD). This year Ant was the editor and has produced four Seekers. I was heavily involved in issue 28 - learning a new desktop publishing program to arrange the whole layout of that issue! Alan has been very busy with GLAD and checking a lot of the existing agreements and checking that they are up to date and creating ten new agreements, eight of which allowed

geocaching.

What have we achieved this year?

- In the survey, you said that we need to increase our presence and be more accessible and promote Geocaching within the UK. Arthur has done a brilliant job of making more tweets and Facebook posts this year and setting up an Instagram account, members have moved away from the forum and use online social media much more.
- To meet our members, explain what the GAGB does and to promote Geocaching we also started our GAGB roving events – to chat with you, listen to you, and explain to all geocachers what it is we do. By November we will have hosted a total of four events. I jointly hosted the first roving event in Shropshire in June, Kim hosted an event in Gloucestershire in July, Jen hosted the third on the Isle of Wight in September and there is a

fourth in Hertfordshire in October by Abi.

- At the North Wales Mega our raffle and map game raised an outstanding amount - £875.80 in just one day. THANK YOU to everyone who helped and visited our stall.
- GAGB were at Geolympix (thanks Alan, Arthur, Jen and Kim).
- The GAGB has been involved with several media enquiries this year and there have been several Geocaching articles such as the BBC, the Gadget show and in the Guardian. One article in a teaching publication resulted in several enquiries from schools around the UK.
- We regularly get emails and phone calls from the media, as well as schools, youth organisations as well as geocaching newbies, some have resulted in the GAGB hosting a stall such as

Annual Reports — continued

Alan Brook

When I took over the role of GLAD Manager, after being elected to the committee, the first job was to renew a couple of agreements. One of these was for the Forestry Commission New Forest district and we managed to increase the number of permitted geocaches in the New Forest by an extra 50. I soon learnt from all this that our landowner agreements were not only for the benefit of geocachers and landowners but were also used by our reviewers. But, and it was a BIG 'but', such agreements were of little use without a map showing the areas they covered. Many of the GLAD agreements were also published on the Groundspeak Regional Wiki pages maintained by Chris (Graculus), so I took on the task to align the two. So, to cut a long story short, by the end of April I had updated or fixed map links to no fewer than 56 agreements. At the same time I took the opportunity to fix broken web links and contact details and respond to all the feedback given online by users of the GLAD.



At the beginning of the year we conducted an online poll asking for our members' views on the work we do. It was clear that those who responded to the poll thought that the Landowner Database was out-of-date. Also some thought that we didn't do much for our Scottish members. So when I started updating the agreements I started in Scotland with Aberdeen City Council and the mapping took 5 days to complete! I also negotiated one single agreement to cover the Scotland Forestry Commission districts and Graculus provided the mapping.

Throughout the year I have added 8 new landowner agreements permitting geocaching and 2 that do not allow caching on their land. I have answered two dozen emails enquiring about geocache placement, the majority of these from landowners who say that geocaches have been placed without permission. Most of these cases have led to the caches being archived after consultation with the reviewers. It is a shame as not all these landowners were against geocaching, just upset at not having been asked for permission to place.

The GLAD holds a lot of information, which needs keeping up-to-date. It cannot all be done at once, so I have just chipped away at it, bit by bit, throughout the year. There is still a great amount to do but I really think it is a worthwhile service provided by the GAGB.

Still, I have learnt some new skills and made some new friends over the year but sadly, for personal reasons, I will not be standing for re-election in November. I will, however, continue to be a member and fully support the GAGB.

Ant Reid

As editor of Seeker this year I have returned us to a four-per-year format and even experimented with landscape instead of portrait. Our editions are not quite as pretty - in past years the images were gorgeous - but I hope you'll have found the articles interesting and helping you to have ideas about where to cache and what to do.



First port of call - I've been on the front-line of responding to queries from so-called 'newbies' - new to caching, media, commercial, or journalists. This needs me to be really responsive, so often

lunchtimes are spent checking the emails and looking through our forums for ready-prepared answers.

I co-hosted the Roving GAGB Event in Shropshire, where my focus was on welcoming new cachers into the fold and helping them into boats and solving puzzles - there's not many organisations that have that particular combination of duties! I've negotiated new members' discounts too, and brought in a little advertising revenue for the GAGB from related enterprises that some members may find of interest - every little helps.

At the Welsh Mega I organised the raffle prizes and tickets, and ended up on the GAGB stand or selling raffle tickets in the grounds all day - and helped raise a massive amount for GAGB as a result.

I encourage any of you who can help out in any of these sorts of things to either stand for election yourself, or simply let us know that you'd like to help - I'd love to see a much broader 'gang' of GAGB helpers offer to be a crew to help us do more and achieve more next year - whether you want to be elected to a decision-making role or just volunteer to help out with specific roles or jobs, please do get in touch and get involved!

the PHEW at Cardiff university by Kim in June and the Gilwell Scouting reunion in September by Kim and Abi. This increases the interest in and understanding of Geocaching within the UK.

- Most GAGB enquires were dealt with by Alan and Ant with myself as backup and Jen answered some enquiries.
- Our GAGB CITO weekend in September was a fantastic success this year, the most successful yet with 161 attended logs across 7 events. That's over THREE TIMES last year's Annual Weekend attendance, it's also more than our previous record from 2014's. Sharant, Rich, Jen, and many of our members organised CITO's that weekend - well done all!

Our events calendar continues to be the most visited part of our website, and Rich continued to run that and enhanced it to include European mega events too. Our

shop also got a lot more popular this year, and thanks go to Kim for keeping up with responsibilities there.

Another suggestion on our survey was to increase the help for new cachers on our website. Arthur and I have created six new help pages and updated the links to Facebook groups and other useful geocaching websites. I also created a 'What is Geocaching?' leaflet for newcomers to download.

Unfortunately Jackie Fox got too busy with her new job and resigned back in April. Before she left, she was involved in updating our web pages and created the new FAQ webpage. Jackie continued to help the GAGB - hosting a stall in September at Stafford MOD to promote geocaching. Jackie was replaced by Abi, who joined the committee in May.

As well as chair, due to a lack of web skills on the committee I took a lead in updating our entire web pages to html 5 and I worked with Jen to organise the GAGB membership database, removing 'inactive' members. I also updated the GAGB registration process, automatically linking new registrations to our new mass email system 'Mail Chimp', and also noting which members email addresses were invalid and checking that our unsubscribe list was correct and up to date. Mail Chimp has largely solved the problem we were getting last year of our members not receiving our emails and allows us to send emails to all our members much more easily - including Seeker. I also used my visual design skills to help create the info panel used in the Maze, the trackable tag that hopefully will be available soon, and a lot of the web site visuals - I hope next year I'll get some help from some of you to do more...!?

Annual Reports — continued

Arthur Griffiths



I have really enjoyed being part of the GAGB committee this year. I have contributed in various ways, but clearly I can't mention everything here. So much goes on behind the scenes!

I took up the role of webmaster with an ambition to update the website and create some new pages. After several months of planning, writing and editing, six new help pages are now live on our website. I worked on them in conjunction with our chair, Sharon, in response to the feedback on our survey that indicated that people wanted our website to be more resourceful. I am happy with the final versions of these pages and hope that you all find them informative and helpful.

In addition, I was tasked with updating the existing pages on our site, since some of them were becoming out-dated having been last edited a couple of years ago. Most notably, I have updated our external links pages, added more information about the GAGB and begun to add new elements to our homepage. I have also helped mail out our Seeker e-magazine and have kept the news articles on our website up to date, in a press-release style.

My webmaster role has also included the management of the GAGB's social media channels. I have made posts as frequently as possible, making a greater effort to interact with users on Twitter in particular. My fellow committee members have helped me by making social media posts themselves. I have also linked our Facebook and Twitter accounts so that a post on Facebook automatically tweets, meaning that a wider audience sees our announcements.

Following a review of our survey, it became apparent that Instagram was fairly popular amongst our members. As a result, I launched a GAGB Instagram account that has been gaining popularity. It is linked to our Facebook and Twitter accounts, facilitating visual and stimulating social media posts on all three platforms. We have posted more photos/images this year than ever before.

When I was nominated for a role on the committee, I made my case for GAGB roving events in the run-up to the election. It is a key way by which the GAGB can become more accessible to the geocaching community, and a method for greater GAGB participation from non-committee members who volunteer to organise roving events of their own. It was decided that, this year, only committee members would organise these events. I am thrilled that the GAGB have successfully held four events in June, July, September and October. These events have been a great success, and I am looking forward to attending some more and organising my own in the future.

Throughout the election process, I felt many members were thinking that there was further room for improvement with regards to the GAGB. Making our website more resourceful, expanding and interacting more on social media and organising events are a great start. However, it will take time to convince everyone of the importance and relevance of the GAGB today. Future committees must build on the success of the GAGB this year to ensure that it remains at the heart of geocaching in the UK.

Jen Harley



Having been on the GAGB Committee for 6 years, 3 of those as Chairperson, I took on the Secretary role again this year, which is primarily recording and then writing up the minutes at the online meetings as well as regular interaction with the committee in our online forums.

I have been the primary liaison with Pulse 72 regarding the second in the series of National Park geocoins (Snowdonia National Park). However, the progress of the coin this year has been very frustrating and despite having the ideas finalised before the committee changeover last December we actually missed our main marketing opportunity at the North Wales Mega in August.

We are very grateful to Steve (GeoTrowel) from the Essex Mega committee for converting our photo/ideas into an initial design, but it was from that point onwards that the delays happened and decisions on final design/finish etc just seemed to take ages (often the case when you have to wait for up to 9 members of a committee to give feedback) as well as communicating with a UK supplier and an overseas manufacturer during holiday periods. I am now pleased to say the coin is available in our online shop and the pre-order sales have all been posted.

The committee agreed to redesign the GAGB banners slightly by putting the original GAGB trackable icon/number back on and adding social media information. I arranged for 4 of these to be made and then distributed them to the committee members that had requested them. (In circulation, we now have 4 new style horizontal banners, 1 banner with logo only, 1 vertical pull up banner).

Events that I have represented the GAGB at:

- Mega North Wales Mega event: I helped on the GAGB stand (map game) for the majority of the event.
- GAGB Roving event: I hosted an evening event in Newport, Isle of Wight.
- GAGB Annual CITO weekend: I hosted a full day event helping out with coppicing in a Local Nature Reserve & learning about charcoal making from the cut trees. (It is the fourth year that I have held an event for the annual GAGB weekend)

In the past year I have also attended events in Scotland, Ireland and central London as a GAGB Committee member. I've also communicated with some landowners in Somerset and have set up new GLAD agreements with the Mendip Society and WWT Steart Marshes.

The most frustrating part for me has been the lack of communication from some committee members in between the online meetings. We are an online committee and therefore should be reading, discussing and interacting with our colleagues so that ideas can be shared, things can be discussed and decisions made. It hasn't only been this year – the same was happening last year and was one of the main reasons I didn't re-stand for the Chair position last year. Having looked back through the forums – this is something that I brought up in the last year elections Q&A and reading it now, that question could have been written this year!

I therefore request that anyone who is considering standing in the forthcoming election (whether re-standing or wanting to stand for the first time) look at the position as (a minimum of) a year-long job that will involve communicating with your fellow committee members and working as a team. The GAGB always need new ideas suggesting, decisions made and tasks done. It is not just a case of 'cherry-picking' the ones you feel like and attending online meeting a few times a year.

Annual Reports — continued

Kim Leonard



The last year has flown by and it's been really interesting, some of my highlights were:

Attending Cardiff University Health and Wellbeing Day. I was lucky enough to attend this day alongside two South Wales reviewers, Big Ragnor and Graculus. We had an interesting day explaining all about caching and the health benefits of getting outdoors, I pointed people in the direction of the GAGB for further information. I hope to go back next year too.

Hosting a GAGB roving event at Coaley Peak. Well attended open air event, GrifGroff was able to join me and it was lovely to meet up with him. We had a display of cache types, lots of different size containers and lots of trackables to swap. The cakes and biscuits made for the event were really lovely, adding a homely touch which is always appreciated. We had cachers from Charter Members, cachers with lots of finds under their belts as well as complete newbies attending their first ever event finding all about what we do and represent.

Being on the GAGB stall at the North Wales Mega. I was there for the setup and stayed till lunchtime, I was due to be displaying geocoins in the Coin Collectors corner in the afternoon too.

It was extremely busy with shop sales and pre orders for the Snowdonia National Park coin. I was impressed that despite all the people, there were still cachers who managed to find me and drop off and collect items discussed on Facebook or Twitter, so the stall was a good focal point there too!

Having the cuckoo cache on the stall was yet again, a great draw as people from all over flocked (pun intended) to log it. I'm already looking forward to the Devon Mega.

Running a stall at Gilwell Reunion with Abiherts. Camping for the weekend to run a stall and free craft with Abiherts at Gilwell Reunion, in Essex first weekend in September was a lot of hard work but also good fun. I really hope to go back next year. The feedback at the event was very positive, people loved talking about caching, finding out about the GAGB, landowner agreements, who to ask for permission to place a cache etc..

As part of the Scout Programme, there is a geocaching badge, for which they need to find 5 caches, some of which are multi caches and also hide three, two of which should be at least two stage multi caches. So, a lot of explaining all about multi caches went on!

It was lovely to meet Abi, local to the area and very knowledgeable, so it was great that she was able to come too.

I was offered help by local Scout Leader cachers if we do go back next year and I think this kind of PR is a fabulous opportunity to spread the word about the GAGB. I ran out of leaflets and roamer cards to give out, so would need to produce something else before next year.

I have enjoyed the social media side of the GAGB this year, orders for the shop have even come through there after I posted photos of items, so that's good! I do hope a tag gets commissioned too, so that we can offer that alongside the coin for sale.

I will be standing again for 2017 and look forward to the challenges that brings!

Rich Lay

A change of career direction taking me to work in Scotland for 6 months and an already busy family life has left precious little free time. In fact, in the last 12 months, I have logged only 284 caches, 50 of those being events. So it's been a quiet term on the committee for me, nothing to write about for Seeker because I've cached so infrequently and with little consequence. However, the things that I committed to doing, I have kept up with quietly and efficiently.



In my role as treasurer, I have seen the available funds grow from £1400 to £2100 and paid for the second in our series of coins which you should all be seeing around now. I would encourage the new committee to get on with producing the third coin straight away, hopefully it will then be ready for any of next year's mega events. We have updated the promotional banners to the new logo and our website and phone service continue to have their funding secure.

I have continued to maintain the events listing at <http://gagb.co.uk/events.php> I have added to this latterly in the year by building in mega events. It is a piece of the website that I visit most frequently, it came about because of people's frustration with the change to the Groundspeak newsletter, years ago, I would encourage everyone to use it, it is a really useful tool.

Across the year, 268 people have been vetted and added to the Facebook group, of which I have added 129 of them. Each one of them takes a few minutes' background checking to ensure we don't let the spammers in. We've been fairly successful at this, with very few requirements for admin intervention. I'm not sure how many we have

declined but it is probably more than we've added!

It was great once again to spend time on the stall at the UK Mega at Wales, though my time was split with another stall and in reality was only lunchtime cover but it's always great to catch up with Sharon and Jen. It remains our biggest fundraising opportunity and it was fab to see so many people happy to part with their money on the various activities we had.

As ever I was delighted to host a GAGB CITO in September. It is an area where we can really make a difference and it is concerning to me that the ethos of CITO is getting left behind, with large numbers of cachers only really turning out for CITO's when there is a souvenir on offer. It was one of the early principles of geocaching that we CITO as we go, an important requirement that we leave our playground better than we found it. It was also disappointing to see so few of the committee being able to host CITO's this year. I would hope that as part of the hustings that members really dig in to this, challenging and raising expectations for 2017 and equally holding committee members to account.

It has been great to see some facets of what we do really move on this year. Alan has done a great job with GLAD for example and seems like he has a good working relationship with the reviewer liaison. That hasn't always been the case and long may it last. The requirement for the GAGB is always questioned, our need evolves but I still firmly believe that if it wasn't here it would be necessary to invent it.

Thank you to all the committee for helping to keep the GAGB going this year.