

SEEKER

The Newsletter of the Geocaching Association of Great Britain

emCache

Caching in the
East Midlands

Geocaching with a disability

Scouting around
the caches

Portrait of Snowdonia



Issue No. 7: March 2012

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In this issue

Meet the Committee

So that you know who we are, here's the 2011-2012 Committee:



Dave Edwards
(The Wombles)
Chairman

Jen Harley
(Maple Leaf)
Secretary



Richard Mullans
(DrDick&Vick)
Treasurer

Colin Bracher
(The Wobbly
Club)



Paul Burroughes
(Palujia)

Cass Flowers
(cassandy)



Terry Marsh
(countrymatters)

Lilian Maund
(Mollyjak)



Tony Pinnington
(mongoose39uk)

<i>Chasing FTFs</i>	3
<i>Profile of emCache</i>	4
<i>Geocaching with a Disability</i>	6
<i>Memorable caches</i>	8
<i>Portrait of Snowdonia</i>	10
<i>Mega 2012</i>	12
<i>Poet's Corner</i>	14
<i>GSAK and Me</i>	15
<i>Adding images to a cache page</i>	16

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 2004 to provide a voice for its members in the United Kingdom with the aim of establishing good Geocaching practices, providing a focal point for public liaison, and supporting the growth and enjoyment of Geocaching within the UK. Find us on www.gagb.org.uk

Cover picture: Tryfan, Snowdonia
© Terry Marsh 2009

Message from the Chairman



I am sad to report the passing of GAGB member Sven (Steve Love). Steve passed away in February under sad circumstances. He was active in the GAGB elections last year and known for his popular geocaching videos on his YouTube channel. We would like to extend our condolences to his family.

This edition of the Seeker magazine includes a mix of interesting and entertaining articles. We have included details of the latest developments and how to add photos on the geocaching.com listing site, and also the experiences of our committee member Colin who provides an insight into geocaching with a disability.

We have included an introduction of one of the regional forums, emCache (East Midlands) and would like more of these – are there any other proud regional forum owners who would like to contribute? Memorable caches and amazing views are some of the most important reasons for my caching, and Terry has shared some of the best – do you have any special memories?

In addition, we have a summary of the UK Mega 2012 and a competition, discounts on geocaching gear and even poetry! We want to hear your experiences and contributions, please get in touch.

Chasing FTFs...

...and it's not illegal!

How to send Instant Notifications to your mobile phone:

First, find the email address associated with your phone number: search the internet for "Email-to-SMS", followed by the name of your mobile service provider. You should be able to find details regarding how your service provider configures their email-to-SMS addresses. The address will typically be your ten-digit phone number followed by some version of "@MobileCarrierName.com."

Sign in to your Geocaching Premium account and visit your Account Details page. Find the box that says "Your Validated E-Mail Addresses" and click on "Change."

Enter your Email-to-SMS address and your Geocaching.com password. Click "Add Email Address."

A text message that includes an email account validation link will be sent to your phone. Click on the link to validate (*to do so, you will need to have internet access on your phone*).

Visit the Instant Notification page to add a new notification. You will have to select a cache type and log types to watch. If you want to be alerted to newly published caches, select the log type "Publish listing."

Set the location (e.g. home location) and distance (around that point) you want to watch.

Select your Email-to-SMS address in the "Send to" dropdown.

Make sure "Enable Notifications" is checked and then hit the "Create Notification" button. Your notification is ready to go. Start this process again from step 5 to set up additional notifications. You can set up 40 notifications max.

emCache

emCache is one of the regional forums for Geocaching in Great Britain, and is focused mainly on the East Midlands. Adam Robbins (Bobbinz) introduces its players...

I recently took over the East Midlands Geocaching forum emCache, based in the East Midlands, with over 250 active members. The website www.emcache.com is, however, far more than just a forum: we are a group of friends who met through geocaching.

Nor is it just a forum for problem solving and asking opinions (although there is a fair bit of that, too), emCache is also a social group arranging caching events, and trips to Difficulty 5, Terrain 5 caches. One recent trip was to visit to Jonah's Journey (GCJA3V) at the top of Froggatt edge.

As a site, I want emCache to continue leading the way as a regional caching forum, a place where people can chat to other cachers, the cache owners, reviewers and anyone else with an interest in geocaching.

The members of emCache have worked closely together in the past to coordinate an East Midlands wide series. For example, the "Cache EM If You Can" series originally consists of 10 individual caches with codes to the location of the final (which has only been found by 13 intrepid cachers in its 3 year lifetime). Because there are emCache members spread all over the East Midlands (and beyond), spreading the caches far and wide was an easy task. The ethos of the series was quality first: caches placed in great locations, with a 'No micro' rule.

Regular travel bug races have also been organised between members,



the latest of which, The Great Travel Bug Knockout is now only a few months away from ending! – <http://travelbugknockout.blogspot.com>.

As I've said, our members are widespread. Our most Northerly member is Nottins, based in Leeds; the most Easterly are The Amasons in Lincoln; Clipper 247 takes the biscuit for being the most southerly member, based in Southampton, a remote settlement loosely attached to the East Midlands! One of our most revered members is also our most westerly, Deceangi (aka The Boss), based in Prestatyn (North Wales). In spite of this wide catchment most emCache members live in the geographical East Midlands, so the members live in and around Nottingham, Derby, Loughborough and Chesterfield.

The youngest member is mini cooper trooper, the daughter of cooper troopers a caching team from Matlock. mini cooper trooper also has her own geocaching.com account. I have no idea who the oldest cacher is, and wouldn't dare to guess!

The most prolific cacher we have would probably be stevo185 who has (at the time of writing) 13,119 cache finds. Just looking through the UK rankings on Cacherstats.com I can see several members, quite high up in the list. The winner of the 2011 GAGB mileage race is also an emCache member, living in Market Warsop.

With emCache's live chat feature it is easy to keep up with the latest cache news, especially FTFs: Cats-eyes, at one point was grabbing them all and has a whopping 1,408 FTFs! Occasionally the chat also comes in useful for providing hints and tips in the field, as an alternative to the traditional PAF (Phone a Friend).

All living in the same area means it is also easier to talk about a specific cache or a new series. Some series, notably the Alphabet Soup series in Darley Dale by Smart451, have been launched at events with over 80 attendees, and reaching wider than the core emCache membership. This series remains my all time favourite and has some brilliant caches, while remaining family friendly. One of the caches in the series has over 130 favourite points.

Another of the emCache traditions is the annual EMMY awards, awarded every year at the Christmas Event. This year there were a lot of nominations, but the winners were:

Best Photo - Ve8 for a photo from Jonah's Journey
Best New Cache or Series - Smart451 for Alphabet Soup.
Funniest Log - GL557X3W - lgxkls for Pinnochios Predicament.
Best Cache Container - GC2M97J - Smart451 for Alphabet Soup "A".
Best Event - GC32829 - The Halloween Crew for Halloween Hides and Creepy Caches (The Resurrection).
Best Cache Description - GC2N4C6 - Sid James for Local History 1, Bladon Castle

The full results can of course be found online at www.emcache.com

We like to think we're a happy, independent-minded bunch, probably no more or less so than other regional groups. But, wherever you are, you're more than welcome to come and join us.

By Colin of The
Wobbly Club

(so named because we **wobble** a lot!)

Geocaching with a Disability



My wife Daphne and I are both leg disabled so this makes Geocaching rather challenging for us both. We can't climb stiles or steep banks and are limited in the distance we can walk.

Before any caching trip we do some research of the area using Ordnance Survey maps, Memory Map and Google Earth to see if stiles, kissing-gates, steps, etc., may block our way. If the caches are located on a byway we may attempt to drive to them, but not if they are on restricted byways or bridleways.

Our latest acquisition is two car transportable/folding mobility scooters which we've named George and Georgina, and both are travel bugs. They had to be small and light enough for us to get them in and out of our small hatchback car by ourselves.

For our first trip with the mobility scooters, we decided that the "Wander in Wilcot" series by Foxonthescent might be suitable. We contacted the cache owners who confirmed that there should be no problems for us.

Off we set on a nice sunny day and were soon parked up and ready to go. We managed to negotiate the farm tracks, slopes and the very bumpy canal towpath. We would never have been able to walk this series. We managed to access some beautiful countryside, which without our mobility scooters we wouldn't have been able to do.



When travelling slowly along the canal bank, it was amazing how many people on narrow boats spoke to us and commented that they'd never seen our type of transport on the towpath before. The only thing we had to consciously keep an eye on was the power remaining in the small batteries.

On getting back to our car with power to spare, the total



distance travelled was around 3½ miles, and all the caches found.

Since that first day, we've travelled down old railway tracks, restricted byways, farm tracks, public paths, public parks and around towns and villages.

A disability should be no barrier whatsoever to you getting out into the countryside and enjoying yourself.

While we're out Geocaching and following that little arrow we don't think of our problems at all.

Without the mobility scooters we couldn't take part in this fantastic game of Geocaching and would just stay at home.

Disability doesn't have to be about things you can't do, but, with a little bit of encouragement, about the things you can do. Give it a go; you have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Recently viewed caches

A new innovation to your 'Quick View' page, means that you can now log into Geocaching.com and check out, "Recently Viewed Geocaches" on your profile page. The last 50 viewed geocaches are saved in your profile for 10 days.

You can also find "Recently Viewed Geocaches" by selecting "Log a Cache" in the Play section of the top navigation. The new feature will save you time when you come to enter finds, especially after a long day caching, and may get you smileys faster.

MEMORABLE CACHES

Cometh the tower, cometh the man



Yes; it's up there. Good luck!



Countrymatters
(Terry Marsh)
wanders along
the Nantlle
Ridge in search
of a 5/5

It was my son who got me interested in geocaching a few years ago, and then, while considering whether to start on the lower half of a bottle of Lagavulin (we did!), laughingly threw down the challenge, 'Why don't you write a book about geocaching?'

Of course, in order to do that, I had to understand what it was all about. I'm not suggesting that people who don't know what they were talking about have never written books, indeed there are those who might say I'm one of them. But I can't resist a challenge, not if there's royalty money at the end of it.

Anyway, some way down the line, having stood next to caches I couldn't see, wandered for miles in the wrong direction, and generally committed every basic error of geocaching, I reached a stage where, with almost 1,000 caches under my belt, I felt confident enough to make a pitch to a publisher. They hadn't a clue what I was going on about, but since by now they were used to me 'going on' about something or other, they decided to give it go...it was a publishing leap of blind faith.

Then my son told me about this great cache on the Nantlle Ridge, west of Snowdon in North Wales, and explained about D5/T5 ratings (GC11DZJ). What made this cache 'special' was that it was at the very top of a drystone pillar constructed for Queen Victoria's Jubilee, and it involved climbing up one of the faces, balancing on tip-toes and elbows while you signed the log, and then getting back down in a co-ordinated fashion.

As it happens, I was writing a book about mountain walks in Snowdonia, and had to walk the Nantlle Ridge. But, I tried to persuade myself, I didn't need to go any further than was necessary to get photographs for the book. But, as I scrambled onto Mynydd Drws-y-coed and looked out along the ridge to Trum y Ddysgl, I thought, 'Just a bit further...not that I'm really interested in that 5/5...much too difficult...what if I fell?'

Trum y Ddysgl came and went, and then that lovely scamper down the narrow neck of land above Cwmffynnon (see page 9), and...'Well, I'm almost there now, and there's another couple of caches here...don't have to bother with the obelisk.' But I'd read a log that said the cache log book needed replacing, and I already had one in my pocket...like you do.

Come the tower, cometh the man! I don't know who he was, but he was perched on the rocks below the obelisk, finishing his lunch...'finishing' being the operative word. He would be on his way soon. But I could see a stream of ramblers heading along the ridge. Luckily, lunchman left, and I faced the dilemma: should I really be climbing on these ancient monuments? Should I really be climbing at all at my age? What if I got up and couldn't get back down?

Then there was a very definite 'B*gger it!' moment. I quickly signed the replacement log, clambered up, perched precariously, somehow wriggled the log out of my pocket, and got back down just as the troops arrived and ranged themselves and their butties among the rocks all around. But I'd done it, my first 5/5.

But there's a sad ending. The cache was placed by someone from West Bromwich, and it frequently got mugged by wind and rain. Said man was planning on replacing the cache on his next trip to North Wales, but his son became very ill, and later died. So, you could see why his mind was on rather more important priorities.

As a result, the cache has been archived, until he, or someone else (I nominated my son), can get back up onto the Nantlle Ridge and replace the cache. It would be a shame to have such a monumental cache archived for too long. But it's a hell of a way to go only to find 'real walkers' cluttering the place up, and preventing you from doing the deed. You may have to carry lots of goodies and sit it out until they've all gone.

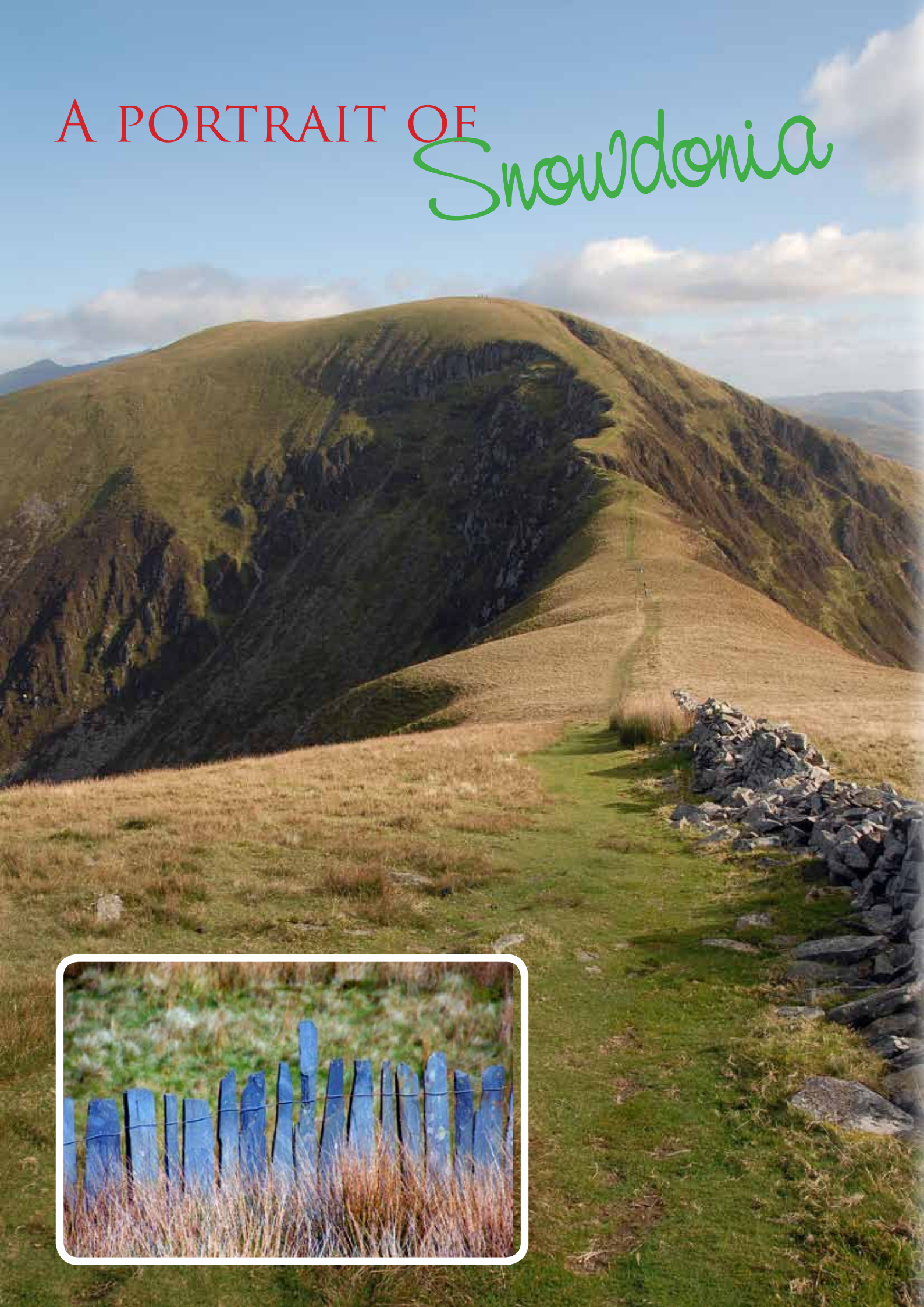


Did you know.....?

.....that the third Saturday of August each year is now **International Geocaching Day!**

A souvenir commemorates the first International Geocaching Day on 20th August, 2011 and shows that you found a geocache or attended an event on this new "holiday." Make sure to take time every International Geocaching Day to celebrate this fabulous hobby and the community that it has created!In 2012, it will be the 18th August.

A PORTRAIT OF *Snowdonia*





All images © Terry Marsh

Main image: The Nantlle Ridge
Inset: Slate fencing alongside the
Watkin Path

This Page:
Top: The Rhinogs
Above: Y Lliwedd from Cwm Bychan
Top right: Pen yr Ole Wen and Cwm
diwal
Centre: Approaching the summit of
Snowdon
Bottom: Aber Falls

MEGA 2012



August will soon be upon us, and the coven that is the North-West MEGA Event Committee have been brewing up a fine potion of attractions to sit alongside the main event. A full report will appear in the July issue of Seeker, once all the events have been finalised and published. But, for now, here's an insight into what's on offer to whet your appetite, starting a week in advance of the big day.



The opening event is planned to be a short Flash Mob, probably in Cartmel market square, following which you can explore Cartmel, have a drink or meal in the village, or return to your accommodation. But, being in this odd corner of England, it just wouldn't be right not to take a walk, okay, grinding slog, up England's highest peak, Scafell Pike (Picnic on the Pike). This will be a circular walk from Wasdale, ascending Lingmell first before descending by Brown Tongue.

Come Sunday there will be a traditional pub themed event where anyone can drop in at anytime for a drink, bite to eat and chat. Monday will feature a walk up nearby Hampsfell from Grange-over-Sands, along with a nature-themed event at Leighton Moss Nature reserve.

Tuesday will bring a chance to follow an EarthCache Trail to visit limestone features

on Humphrey Head; its planned to picnic near the trig point. And you get a chance to play at Swallows and Amazons by visiting 'Wildcat Island' (Peel Island in Coniston Water), rounding off the day with something suitably batty, a Bat Walk.

If you managed Scafell Pike, then a 'Crawl up Coniston' on Wednesday will be a doddle, or you can opt for a CITO event, probably in association with the South Lakes River Trust.

For those arriving on Thursday, there is an invitation to a 'Welcome Cuppa in Cumbria', to drop in

*Images:
Top: The Old Man of
Coniston
Below: two images of
Cartmel
Opposite: Crossing
Morecambe Bay, 2011.
© Terry Marsh*



for a chat, drink and bite to eat at the Hideaway Coffee House just east of the motorway, on the A65. Thursday afternoon brings a family orientated event with games and activities for the youngsters, hopefully at Fell Foot Park (National Trust) on the shores of Windermere.

Friday brings the first of two cross-sands walks, with a picnic on tidal Chapel Island walking across the Cartmel Sands from Ulverston to Cark. Nor have we overlooked our canine friends, and have arranged an event specifically for those with Geo-dogs.

'Mega Camping' is traditionally on the eve of the Mega at the campsite. Looking at a Cowboys and Indians theme (fancy dress, etc.) with suitable games and food.

For those who survive the mayhem of the MEGA itself, then, come Sunday, we



have the walk experience to beat them all, a walk across Morecambe Bay in the company of the Guide to the Sands, Cedric Robinson MBE. There is a Bay walk each year now, a popular and well-attended event, but this year it's being run in conjunction with the MEGA event. This will start in Arnside, and finish...somewhere else, vaguely over there!

Sunday will also see an event for wheeled catchers – prams, bicycles, wheelchairs, followed on Monday by Deci's Traditional Mega Bun and Brew, a chance to have a last cuppa and bite to eat after packing up and heading home...but, not quite, for the diehards will want to join an evening walk up Orrest Head from Windermere to watch the sunset, the last event of the MEGA programme...the walk, not the sunset...not sure we can publish a sunset as an event!

UK Mega Event 2012

**Looking forward to seeing
you all there.**

FOR YOUR DIARY: The annual UK Mega Event for 2012 will be on
Saturday 11th August 2012 at Cartmel Racecourse, Cumbria.

For more information visit www.mega2012.org.uk

Dalujia's Poet's Corner

I write bad poetry – William McGonagall and I have a lot in common.

Can you do better ?!!

I am sure that there are lots of you out there who can write limericks, verse and even blank prose I will write a poem about the joys (?) of caching for each issue of Seeker, and also to start a limerick competition; any entries received (other than really obscene ones) will be published.

The committee of one (Me!) will give a small caching related prize for the best. Other poems will also be published and the entire committee will judge the best over the year - Results for Christmas and another small prize awarded !

The first line of the limerick should be
"There was a young cacheretc etc".

Here's one to start the ball rolling:-

There was a young cacher called Fred
Who followed the arrow, it's said
He jumped into a bog
In pursuit of a log
And ended up over his head !!

(You CAN do better than that)

Now for the bad poem !

Follow the Arrow

I follow the arrow wherever it shows
Over hills and dales,
the highs and lows.
It leads me in search of elusive caches
Some large, some small
Some nanos, some stashes

The map leads me on to the spot
Where on earth should it be ?
I look round for a sign
If it's here
where it could be ?

I look at the logs;
some finds, some not
I read the hints,
it helps a lot.
Some hints can be helpful
To find it you see
Unless – You guessed it –
the ivy-covered tree !

Some caches are small
And some are large pots.
It's the skill of the hider
that makes finding the spot
the best bit of the lot.
Open the box, and sign the log
Take a picture and go,
another smiley we've got

Home now and put on the tea
Download the logs
the smileys to see
Let's write up the comments
And thank the "CO".
So its TFTC,
and onwards we go

GSAK and me

...We're just good friends!!!

by DrDick&Vick



When we started to realise how much fun geocaching was going to be and became Premium Members, I realised that I needed a way of managing my PQs and finds.

I looked at GSAK, I even paid for a licence and then disregarded it as I felt it looked difficult to use, relied on macros too much and generally just looked 'clunky'. So, instead I started using another database that had been set up for geocaching.

I used that program for around 18 months before I realised that it just wasn't being developed to keep up with the changing face of geocaching and the new style of paperless caching GPS units.

I decided that it was time to bite the bullet and give the dreaded GSAK another try, with great trepidation I once again downloaded V7 and started to try and make sense of what I had to do.

Why, Oh, why? did I not just persevere in the first case as once I spent some time getting to understand just how it works and, more importantly, just how much it can do I was hooked.

It only goes to show that first impressions can be so wrong, so if you have looked at GSAK and thought 'What am I supposed to do' give it another try and persevere

I have since upgraded to the latest version V8, which makes use of the Groundspeak API and everything is now simplified.

I have since set up various macros that perform tasks that would involve a lot of work without GSAK and its macros. I now have Macros that create my personal Stats, Find Series, Populate Memory Map with my 'To Find' database, View all the caches in my database on Google Maps/Satellite view and many more. And all of this got so much better with the upgrade to V8.

Now I run separate databases for the South East, the South West and the New Forest plus a separate database for My Finds and My Caches. I have set up multiple locations so as can use them as a centre point for my filters and often add an extra one if I am going somewhere just to cache. I have created various saved filters that cover radiuses from 2.5km to 35km to enable me to get the best out of my GPS unit.

One of the best things of all is GSAK's ability to interrogate my GPS when I return home from a caching session and match the 'Found It' logs on the GPS with the cache listing in its database, from this I can then sit and write all my logs off-line and with one click let GSAK publish them (V8 only).

A brilliant package that I would recommend to anyone who is a cacher.

This is just a short view of my experience with GSAK and I will be writing some guides in future issues.

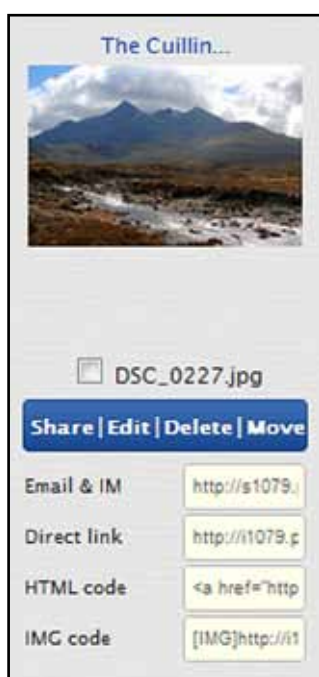
Adding images to a cache page

DrDick&Vick explains

There are two ways to directly add an image to your cache page. This issue will deal with using Firefox and Xinha Here! Next Issue I will explain the basic art of using HTML. For both methods you MUST ENSURE that the tick box marked 'The descriptions below are in HTML' is selected.

Both methods require an account with an image hosting site, and for the purposes of this description I will be referring to Photobucket (www.photobucket.com).

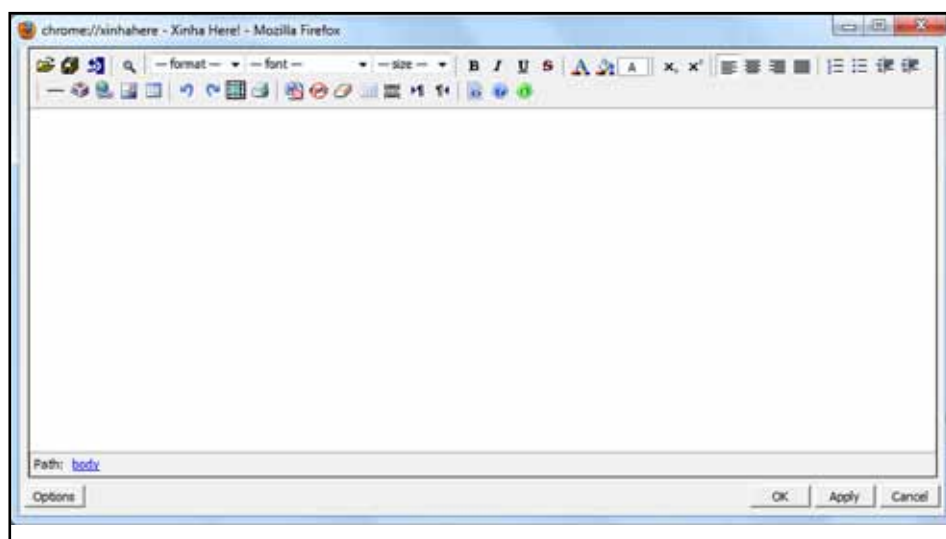
Once you have uploaded your image to Photobucket and you hover the cursor over the relevant image you will get the screen on the left displayed: Copy the line against 'Direct Link'.



Using Firefox and 'Xinha Here!'

Download and install Xinha Here from <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/xinha-here/>.

Once this is installed, go to the online form on geocaching.com that you use to prepare a new cache page. When you right click in either the short or long description boxes you can choose 'Xinha Here! > Open in Window', and you get a WYSIWYG editor (below).



Xinha does much more than just adding pictures to your cache page. It will let you completely tailor the

page to your requirements, if you can use a basic programme like Wordpad then you will be able to design a clever layout on your cache page.

For now we will continue with adding an image: Click on the Insert Picture button and paste the line that you copied from Photobucket into the Image URL: line. Select 'Preview' to check that it looks okay, and then click on OK to add the image to your page. You can then have your picture centred on the page by using the 'Text Position' buttons

Xinha Here also allows you to format the text that you want to insert so as you have different colours, bold print, italics and underlined. You can left, centre or right align the text and use different fonts and sizes. Once you have made all of the changes to the page that you want to do simply click on OK and the Xinha window will close with all of your layout left on the cache page.

GAGB Notes...

The GAGB Competition

The GAGB competition now runs in line with each issue of Seeker.

This issue's competition will end at midnight on **15th April 2012**.

To enter you have to have become a FULL MEMBER of the GAGB before the 1st March 2012.

Prizes for this competition are:
Personal Caching Stamp
3" Reflective Travel Bug Decal

All answers should be sent to competition@gagb.org.uk, with a subject heading of 'Competition'.



**The GAGB now has its own
cache label.**

Actual size: 8.8cm x 5cm. Priced at 60p each; £2.50 for 5 (plus P&P at only 50p for quantities up to 10, and £1 for 10-20).

To order contact DrDick&Vick via their profile, here.
Payment to paypal@gagb.org.uk

Money, money, money

The GAGB can now accept donations and payment via Bank Transfer or cheque. For further details email donations@gagb.org.uk.

Questions:

1. In issue 7 there is a Portrait of ??????????
2. In issue 4 what did Bernie Hughes write about?
3. In issue 6 which GPS was reviewed?
4. Issue 6 'Caching Is, verse 3, last line ?'
5. Issue 5 'Who wrote the article on Push the Button?'

WINNERS of the last Competition were Graham Wardle, Jubs Angell and Ivan Morley, and the ANSWERS to the questions were (1) Rhyl; (2) GAGB Cache label; (3) Chris Dale aka Graculus; (4) YOSM Ye Olde Survey Monuments; (5) Colin Finch: 'Really, Only one...Enjoy'.

Check out the **GAGB Calendar**

for a list of 'Events' and
'Camping Events'.
And keep up to date with
events specifically in
your area by creating an
Instant Notification for
'Events'.

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.



We are pleased to announce the renewal of the **10% discount** from Cotswold Outdoor which was offered last year.

More detail and the discount code are available from the Members' Chat section of the GAGB forums.



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.

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.



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.