

ISSUE 40 WINTER 2019/20

SEEKER

THE MAGAZINE OF THE GEOCACHING ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN

TOP 10
THINGS TO DO
IN SEATTLE

HOW TO
PLACE A
GEOCACHE





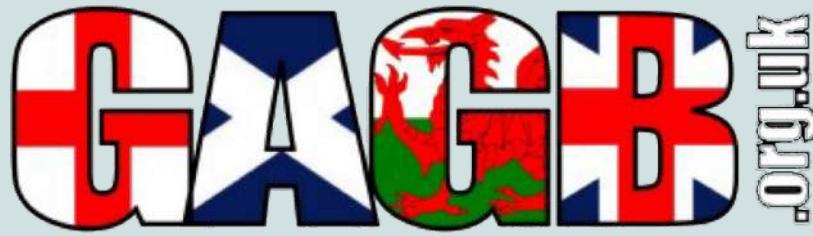
SEEKER

40

IN THIS ISSUE...

Cover: Sunset near Warminster, Courtesy of Griff Grof.

Above: Sheep near Wrexham, North Wales. Courtesy of sharant.



The **Geocaching Association of Great Britain** 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.

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Meet the Committee



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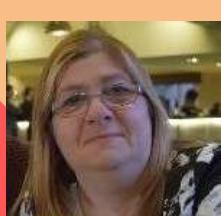
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Chair's Message



Welcome to an exciting new year. It's geocaching's 20th birthday, look out for the new Community Celebration events and the new Locationless geocache by finding Signal the Frog®. We have lots of information to help you plan this amazing year, guides to the Mega events set to be held in the UK this summer as well as Seattle, if you are planning to attend the 20th Anniversary Celebration event (GC896PK). We also have an article on placing geocaches and two articles on amazing worldwide Geocaching trips, see how the Texans geocache in the UK attending two Mega events last summer and a group of cachers travelling to the Spanish GEOALICANTE Mega event to meet Signal the Frog®.

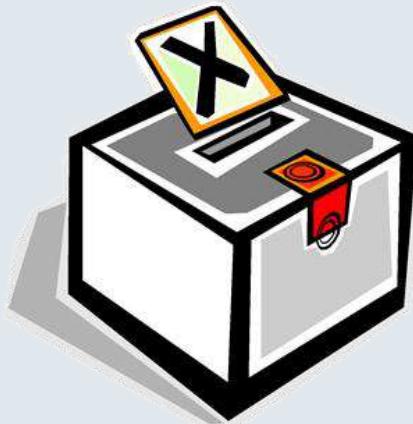
Have an exceptional year of geocaching and start planning your trips, goals and finding lots of caches.

Sharon Reid
GAGB Chair

NEWS ROUND-UP

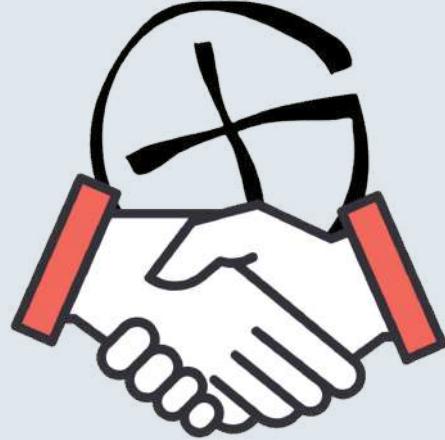
New GAGB committee

The new GAGB committee was elected in November: Griff Grof (Arthur Griffiths), richt2000 (Richard Tucker), Border Caz (Caz Turver), jennthefunkyranger (Jenn Hill), Moira Crackers (Mel Read), maattmoo (Matt Faulkner Collins), happygirlie (Debs Griffiths) and Geocaching Womble (Dominic Murray). Unfortunately, Debs has now resigned. Thanks to everyone who took part in the elections. You can find out more about the 2020 committee on page 26.



New landowner agreements

The GAGB has been busy contacting various landowners in an effort to negotiate new land agreements. At the time of writing, eight new agreements have been negotiated with local councils, and advanced discussions continue with ten others. If anyone has any contacts within councils, or other landowners, that may be of help, please email glad@gagb.org.uk.



GAGB roving event report

The GAGB held its Start of the Year event at Yarnfield Village Hall, Staffordshire, on Jan 26th. Geocachers from near and far attended to make their own cache containers, learn how to solve puzzle caches and find out more about upcoming Mega and Giga events. It also gave people a chance to learn more about the GAGB and meet some of the committee. Thanks to all for coming!



Photo credit: sharant

Hello 2020

2020 is going to be an exciting year in caching! It is 20 years since the very first cache (called a stash) was placed, and now there are over 3 million live caches worldwide, and even on the International Space Station. There will also be the chance to get several new icons.

Will you be in Seattle on 15th August for the Geocaching 20th Anniversary Celebration at GCHQ? Many cachers are planning on making this pilgrimage this year, and not only can you pick up this cache, there is the chance to pick up the Geocaching HQ icon, the APE mega the following day, with chance to find one of the very rare APE caches.

If heading to America is not an option for you, you will still get the chance to pick up one of the special 20th anniversary event icons by attending a Community Celebration Event. Groundspeak are releasing more of these each month to people who have applied, and we are pleased to announce a GAGB event, GC8HKYR, on 14th June at Moira, near Derby. Keep a look out for other events in your local area.

How about the Locationless cache icon? Locationless caches, which do not have fixed coords, were all archived many years ago, and now only veteran cachers have this icon. But this year there is the chance once more. Signal the Frog will be attending Mega and Giga events, get a photo taken with either the amphibian himself or the official Signal 2020 banner and you will be able to log GC8FR0G (yes, that really is the GC code).

There will be two opportunities to log the rare GPS Maze icon in Europe this year. The first is at the Giga in Prague in May, and the second is at GeoNord in northern France in July.

How many of these icons will you manage to bag? We look forward to hearing your stories!



Geocaching.com cache icons © Groundspeak, Inc. Used with permission.

Top 10 things for a cacher to do in Seattle

By maattmoo



2020 is a special year for Geocaching as it celebrates its 20th Anniversary. While there will be activities and celebrations worldwide, I am sure there are many of you who are thinking of going to Seattle, visiting Geocaching HQ and for the 20th Anniversary Celebration event (GC896PK) in August. If you can find time to go, DO IT... I would go back if I could, I went to celebrate my own anniversary with my 10,000th find on my 7th year geocaching anniversary, and it was also my Birthday too.

It was a really fun celebration, I met Bryan the CEO and several Lackeys who attended my birthday meet, each of whom gave me their "lackey tag" (a TB), where 12 are currently hopping around the world and in a TB race.

To help you consider if Seattle is worth the journey and if Seattle is just about Geocaching... or is there other stuff to do, read on for my TOP 10 tips including nearby geocaches, things to see and activities to do while you are in Seattle.



10

MUSEUM OF FLIGHT

Visit on the first Thursday of the month (5pm-9pm) with FREE ADMISSION. (\$25 adult at all other times).

The museum is a brilliant place to visit with models and real aircraft from all eras of flight history, including Concorde, Air Force One and one of the real Space Shuttles. The museum also has a series of Adventure Lab caches plus a bonus final (GC5GT6J) inside the space center half of the museum. There may even be a free TB in the cache for you to launch.

Bus 124 from Seattle are regular and take about 30-40 mins. \$2.75 for an adult each way.

9

AQUARIUM and SEAFRONT

Buy a CityPass which gets you a saving on multiple “tourist attractions”, available at many outlets, but we bought ours at the Aquarium. The Aquarium is interesting and have many interactive chats designed to entertain kids of all ages. Then once you have met the Octopus come outside to find his cache (GC30EQY).

And just a short stroll along the waterfront can bag yourself 3 caches with 3 icons. An EarthCache (GC2HVOX), the octopus Traditional mentioned above and a Virtual (GC7B9G7)

8

MONORAIL and SPACE NEEDLE

Ride the monorail to the Space Needle. Do some shopping downtown and find the nearest cache (GC7VZXR) before joining the queues for the monorail inside the Westlake Shopping Center. Enjoying this relic of the World’s Fair in the direction towards the Space Needle gets the best impact and allows you to see the Space Needle as it was intended by the designers all those years ago.

When you reach your destination there are plenty of interesting caches and more tourist attractions, including the Space Needle itself. World Wide Web (GC7VTN3) was my favourite cache found in the park.

7

ADVENTURE LABS

You have just hopped off the monorail, what do you do... Take photos of the fun sculptures and buildings, play the pool ball musical “device” and find some Lab Adventure caches. A series of 9 Labs is entirely within the center as well as 4 more Labs from a separate Adventure. Load up your Adventure Lab app, and find the “Curiosity Days Adventure”. Complete them and then look for the nearby “Adventures in Queen Anne History”. If you are also keeping an eye on your Geocaching app or GPS you can also find 4 Traditionals (GC4R6T6, GC3G2EH, GC7VTN3, GC28FGB) and a Virtual (GC7B6BC) as you pretty much pass by each one on your way around the Labs. Oh yeah, GO UP the Needle too the views are amazing. Dusk is perfectly romantic.



The Space Needle from below

6

VISIT QUEEN ANNE

Load up your Adventure Lab app again, and finish the “Adventures in Queen Anne History”. Get a bus or taxi to the highest point and spiral yourself downhill. Follow the Adventure and check for Geocaches after each Lab. I found these caches in this order which felt like the least uphill route back towards the city centre (GC5VJR2, GC84XJE, GC608MC, GC5EAFC, GC62C8, GC81APT, GCMCEX, GC3EGFC). Enjoy the views from the lookout spots you visit on the way back downhill.

5

TAKE A FERRY or TOUR BOAT

There are lots of options to take a ferry over to Bainbridge Island or have an hour mini cruise around the bay. I recommend the Locks boat tour. Solve “Fred and Bill” (GC3PD0P) and collect that geocache along with “A Streetcar named...” (GC49N9V) when you get off the boat at the end of your tour.

4

GO OLD and GO APE

About 1 hours drive from Seattle is the famous Ape cache (GC1169). But also nearby is a Y2K cache, Iron Horse, GC79 was placed on 7th October 2000 and is approx ½ mile from the Ape cache. Nearest parking for the Ape is in a small car park very close to another cache (GC6PJDR). But the more popular and suggested experience is to walk through the Iron Horse, something I am extremely jealous if you do... I went in March and the tunnel was under snow.

Start at the tunnel’s EarthCache (GC3TT7R) for a 2 mile each way walk through the tunnel where you will pass a couple of other caches (GCJMDK) and (GC32ZV1 although this one is above the tunnel) and a few hundred meters after exiting the tunnel, Iron Horse (GC79). The Ape cache is about 1 mile further than the exit. So expect a 6 mile walk there and back.

There is an Ape event “Going Ape 2020” on Sunday 16th August, the day after the 20th Celebration event.

Please be aware you may need a permit to park your car in the mountains car parks.



Ferry



View from Queen Anne

3

GO TO CANADA

Canada is about 100 miles from Seattle. So a day trip to Vancouver could be an option. Or an overnight mini break within your holiday. Or even for the week, as after the 20th Anniversary event, just one week later on 22nd August, there is a Mega in Abbotsford Canada (GC86VDF). Vancouver is approx 3 hours by car and a bit longer on the way back due to US immigration. Or 3hr45 each way on a train. I would do the train myself. And head to Stanley Park for a cycle around finding some of the many many caches.

2

VISIT GCHQ & HQGT (GeoTour)

OK this was going to be the no1 but you need to do this before you do something else... Visit HQ (GCK25B) and get your GeoTour Passport. Sign in and buy some merch. Check the area nearby for mini events as there is bound to be one around the time you are visiting... or if not host your own. If you host at the end of the working day you will get a bunch of friendly GC Lackeys attend.

Once you have your passport booklet go and find the tour. Don't forget to collect the ones inside HQ first and stamp your way around Fremont finding the Troll, the Rocket, and the Chairs... expect the tour to take between 2-3 hours and find the many caches in between the tour caches. (PS the multi you solve is correct as there are several caches within usual proximity limits in Fremont).



Geocaching HQ Visitor Centre



10,000 finds at the HQ cache

So, that's nine. But what has Matt ranked as number 1? Find out on the next page...

1

ATTEND THE CELEBRATION EVENT

So here you are, you are in Seattle for the big event, GC896PK. It's Saturday 15th August. It's 10am... You're at the Space Needle again. If you hadn't gone up already go up and take a photo of the Geocaching party below. Find Signal the Frog (if you haven't already). And ensure you log him in 2020 for the "Locationless" icon (GC8FROG). Now just enjoy the party. Find some more caches. Play the Lab Adventures. Do all you can. Then come home and tell us all about it in the autumn edition of Seeker!



Outside Geocaching HQ

Write an article for
SEEKER

You'll earn the 'Seeker Writer' profile badge

Email all articles:
editor@gagb.org.uk



EN BUSCA DE LA RANA GRANDE

A STORY OF LOVE, ADVENTURE AND GEOCACHING BY
JIMCASHION STARRING TCMUFFIN AND SMHALLS



It was a rainy afternoon in January of 2019 when I was cheering myself up by looking through maps, statistics and more on the geocaching website trying to devise a couple of targets for me to aim for in the upcoming year.

Suddenly I was woken from my dreams of sunny days of geocaching when I received a distraught message from Jayne of TCMuffin which changed the course of the next five months of my geocaching plans. I was told that during 2018 the second half of TCMuffin, Caroline, had become increasingly distraught at missing a number of opportunities to meet with her forbidden love, Signal, known as La Rana Grande by our Spanish friends as we later found out. Jayne was desperate and worried about her partner so was seeking my help to locate the elusive overgrown kermit, arrange a meeting and thus restore the normal tranquility in the TCMuffin household.

How could I refuse a damsel in distress and more importantly, how on earth could I complete this mission? I'm going to need help I thought to myself, so after twisting her arm for well over 5 nanoseconds smhalls volunteered herself. Now smhalls, or Rachael, is a researcher extraordinaire, and within an hour I received a message from her that La Rana Grande was going to be visiting Alicante

in April to make a guest appearance at the GEOALICANTE Mega event, in Alicante of course. A plan was hatched but like all good plans we needed a code name, after much deliberation we decided on GC7R143.



Jim, Rachael, Jayne and Caroline

So the team was complete and the preparations started immediately with me arranging accommodation and identifying suitable transport, Jayne ensuring we would have plenty of provisions as well as identifying and acquiring attire to enable us to blend in and get close to La Rana Grande unnoticed. Rachael, being the brains of the team, isolated two large sets of mystery geocaches close to Alicante (code names of GC7DAY2 and GC8627F were assigned) and also the amazing Via Verde Series (GC2ZCVB) which we believed would lead us to La Rana Grande. Unfortunately we had to solve the riddles which were written in Spanish, a language none of us were familiar with.

As the date approached Caroline was growing weaker almost daily with the sobbing now being audible from 40-50m, thankfully we managed to solve over 400 of the riddles between us before setting off on our quest at end of April.

Due to the rapid decline of Caroline's strength, no doubt caused by the uncontrollable sobbing, it was decided that she and Jayne would set off a few days early whilst Rachael and myself continued to work on the details of the quest from our homes.

This improved Caroline's condition significantly, it was as if just being in the same country as the globetrotting amphibian biped had given her the strength to continue. In the days before I arrived with Rachael they had mapped out the whole of Alicante and had found some good leads as to the proposed movements of our *objetivo verde*.

Eventually the day arrived for Rachael and myself to set off from South Wales to join our friends on their quest. We met up and travelled through the night collecting various geocaches on the way and questioning geocachers at a meeting in Bath where we were made very welcome by the Bathtime Buddies.

We also tried questioning several historical figures in Bath and Winchester including King Edgar (GCBA8A) and King Alfred the Great (GC7MB66), although neither of the two kings were very talkative. Especially Alfred who refused to descend from his plinth, perhaps because it was 1am by the time we found him, making identifying the rock types a little difficult.



At King Alfred the Great (GC7MB66)

It was about midday when Rachael and I landed in Alicante and met with the other two after smuggling various geocaching and other espionage equipment past the security guards. After only a half an hour of bartering with some local black market dealers we were soon on the way in a hire car to our accommodation for the week.

It took an hour to take possession of the apartment, mostly because the messenger sent to meet us and grant us entry could only speak what appeared to be Klingon despite us being assured that he would be able to speak both Spanish and French. Unfortunately, despite my name being Jim, my Klingon was sadly lacking, but by use of sign language and speaking English increasingly louder we eventually entered our excellent apartment.

Having rested from our journey it was soon time to seek out food which turned out to be a very easy task indeed, the only problem being what turned out to be the norm for the duration of our time in Alicante, which was ordering at least twice as much as could reasonably be eaten in a single sitting.

Over the next few days we searched Alicante and the surrounding mountains for La Rana Grande but only succeeded in finding hundreds of fantastic geocaches and acquiring a nice sun tan at the same time.

However, we did hear about several meetings where our objetivo verde may be spotted, so we attended all of these with hope in our hearts as concern was growing for Caroline once again. We shouldn't have worried, eventually we had a tip-off that he would be hanging out at the University of Alicante so we made our way there almost carrying the sobbing and weak Caroline by now.

The University is a big place, but we had acquired some coordinates where Signal (as Caroline was now insisting we call him) would most likely be. So, we parked the car and walked, and walked and walked until we could eventually hear a commotion up ahead, but we still couldn't see anything or indeed anybody.

Caroline however forged on ahead, her instinct telling here which direction to go to find her beloved frog. All we could do is

follow hoping for a happy ending. Soon we turned a corner, descended some steps, turned another corner and there he was amongst a group of a hundred or so people. Suddenly there was a break in the crowd, and he was alone for a few moments. Was this the moment we had all been hoping for?

Caroline took her chance and galloped towards him with her arms flailing and lips pursed. Surprisingly he stood still and held his arms open to greet her with the world's biggest hug. We had found La Rana Grande and reunited our friend with him. They joy and love in the air was choking, at least it was choking me, but the ladies in the group thought it was sweet!!

To celebrate out success and the miraculous improvement in our friend's health who was still smiling and intermittently sighing for no apparent reason, we put on the local dress that Jayne had acquired during our preparations and joined in the GEOALICANTE mega on a glorious day. It is with heart felt thanks to manupor3 (Manuel and Anna) from us all for the fantastic time we had in beautiful Alicante.



Caroline and Jayne



Jim and Rachel

Texans on Tour

MsPatt (Patricia Elkins) recounts her trip to the UK



I've been geocaching since 2014 and love the places it takes you to and the friends you make along the way! MsPatt is always looking for her next adventure!

One day at home, I was scanning the map for a Geocaching Adventure with my geo-buddy Rambetta on the phone, and we came upon a Mega event in the UK - Piratemania, a costumed event with camping. It sounded very interesting, but as I sat here in Texas, I wondered if I really could step that far out of my comfort zone. We continued to search the map.

As we convinced ourselves that this could be a possibility, Rambetta and I researched and made a wish list, a must list, a maybe list, a must-visit list. To my surprise, we found a second Mega event - Aberdeenshire in Scotland, at a Castle. Score!!!

Immediately, plans were made. We arranged flights, car rental, (upgrade to an automatic car for MsPatt), hotels and vacation requests

were made. Not a minute went by when I get a phone call from geo-buddy 5472 wanting to know where MsPatt's next adventure would be. It took her three minutes to confirm she was going with us!

With our combined bucket/wish list, 5472 and I met up with Rambetta in Atlanta and boarded the plane to our Mega UK Adventure. Our list was long - some things were optional, while others were not. Two Mega's; all the webcams on the island; Virtuals, Earthcaches; different icons; tourist sites, such as Stonehenge, Loch Ness; Abbey Road (to walk in the footsteps of the Beatles); and castles: Dunnottar, Edinburgh, Eileen Donan; Scotland's First Geo-tour ERDGT, (that's only 20 caches, no problem); Arthur's Seat; and we wanted every county in the UK, but soon settled on all 14 regions.

We were on a mission...

We landed in Manchester on the day of Piratemania, photo op at the entrance and into the event tent, picked up swag, coins

and t-shirts and met a lot of wonderful geo-friends, thanked the host and volunteers! As a group, we had a dilemma: we could stay and rub shoulders with the finest pirates in these lands or cache a few and hit the road. We met and walked with Grahamthegray and Jenthefunkyranger and a few others for a few finds, (we really enjoyed their accents). I think we shocked them when we shared our itinerary, and asked if we would see them at the next Mega.

We headed for the Webcam around the corner from us, enjoying the countryside, as MsPatt gets accustomed to driving on the left, and the Navigator gets very cozy with rock walls and hedges. Onward we go! We wanted to explore Liverpool this evening and make it to our first night's hotel back in Manchester.

Liverpool lived up to all the Beatles hype, with more photo ops. We found Leasowe Lighthouse and were rewarded smileys on an Earthcache, Multi, and a Webcam!

We picked a lovely historic B&B and felt like royalty with a skeleton key in hand. I would stay there again if ever in the area.

Up bright and early the next morning! Day two is a day wandering the back roads of England and Wales, picking up smileys through the regions. When we reached Exmouth, we gladly parked the car and spent the afternoon enjoying the view, walking the shoreline with a Webcam, an Earthcache and two Traditionals to keep us company. Our second night in England was at a lovely B&B home in Shaftesbury, to position us to be at Stonehenge at daybreak.

We awoke to a grey overcast day. Our disappointment was quickly whisked away when we arrived to close parking, no traffic, no lines, only a few sprinkles and off we went. We quickly gathered all the info needed (through the field of sheep and thistles) for the Earthcache and Virtual and we made our way over to Woodhenge.



MsPatt with jennthefunkyranger (left)

We marveled at this location and Stonehenge and the mystical meanings this area has on the World. Yes, a bucket-list location checked off because of Geocaching, and the friends we meet along the way. Side note: it's hard for me to comprehend the faster traffic on the right, but I'm going with the flow.

Onward towards London, well the regions below... Oh, look! Another Webcam!!

Have you ever put the coordinates in with one digit off? Well, when MsPatt does it in a foreign country, we end up on a very tiny back road, but it makes a very good video. The laughter and banter make up for all the curbs we ran over.

At this Webcam, we met a couple from Germany and posed with them. At this cache, you had to have your hands in the air. Oh, 5472, should I tell of our parallel parking spot that had the neighbors looking out their windows and giving us the thumbs up!

Everyone warned us not to drive into the London downtown area, so we decided we would take the loop around London towards St. Albans and go directly to our targeted bucket/must have cache, and follow in the footsteps of the Beatles (GC6F12). I guess Tuesday evening is the best time to get those famous photo ops!

Onward we go, making our way, meandering through the countryside, stopping for a smiley in every region. We head towards Edinburgh. (By the way, we each love county caching. Texas has 254 counties over 268,000 square miles. There is a Texas County Challenge GCRX6F, and proudly, we have each signed that log. I say this so you know we were very disappointed that we had to cross that quest off our list.)

We landed in Edinburgh in the evening. This was perfect for strolling through the streets, listening to the bagpipes in the background, while we were after GCHWAP Webcam and a



At Stonehenge, Wiltshire

Virtual and two Earthcaches before the rains crashed our party. We spent the night close by, so we could wake up early and hike up the Arthur's Seat GCNTAB. What a great write up on the cache page. Yes, a targeted cache for 5472, and she checks this off her bucket list.

Next, caching our way up A90 to the first event of the Aberdeenshire Mega. It's at the Dunnottar Castle (my heart skipped a beat when I was researching and found this event). We ran into familiar faces from the Piratemania Mega, caught up on Adventurous geo-tales, enjoyed exploring this beautiful medieval castle and then worked on the Earthcache at the water's edge.

We then headed into Aberdeen, where we rented an apartment for the remaining three days that we would be in Scotland – ah, a home base. Good thing I had become comfortable driving on narrow roads, because the alleyway into the parking lot would have been nerve-wracking scary! Oh, and as an American, I learned a valuable lesson, the 2nd floor means walking up three flights of stairs!

Well rested, we got a full tank of gas, and we were off! We had events: Explore Royal Deeside Geo-tour GC5XQH9., The write up is wonderful, the caches will bring you to castles full of history.

We stayed with our list, we cached until it was time for the event, then headed back to Aberdeen. The next day, we were going after GCWBPY, one of the Geo-tour caches. We, parked at parking coords and hiked in, taking the most direct route. The satellite view didn't show any trails, so we started

bushwhacking our way up, and up. We got within 100 feet of GZ and found the trail, and the trail is stair stepping up roots and rocks. Down along this steep trail is a group of Muggles who explained they were celebrating a birthday at the summit of Scolty Tower.



An ammo box!

Before we could part ways, they invited us to help celebrate and produced a cake, knife, plates from one of their backpacks, much to our surprise! We make sure to document this fun moment with a photo in our logs. This cache meeting will forever be etched in my memory bank! That's what Geocaching is all about, right?

Besides caching the GeoTour and meeting other cachers from all over the world, another check off the bucket list for Rambetta was to eat Haggis. We found ourselves in a quiet village, Boat of Garten, in a hotel restaurant overlooking the goings-on of a

train station. This was while we were heading towards Inverness Castle Earthcache, and to Loch Ness. One of my favorite locations was Urquhart Castle, and a push past this beautiful medieval castle to Eileen Donan Castle. Ok, those two were on MsPatt's bucket list! Then, it was a race back to evening event, and dinner in Aberdeen.

On Saturday, the day of Aberdeenshire Mega, we pack up, grabbed a couple caches and headed out. This was going to be a long day.

Aberdeenshire Mega was held on the grounds of Crathes Castle, a big event with lots of happenings. Bagpipes were playing in the background. Munro was wandering around the grounds, (turns out if you flipped his kilt it showed the Lab cache code). There were lots of friendly faces. We ran into cachers we met on the trails. We also ran into Irishmizd, who I met back in May in Ft. Worth, Texas at Geowoodstock. I even saw Ireland cachers who I met while touring that

island on a previous trip.

We picked up souvenir coins said our goodbyes and headed back towards Manchester, caching all the way....

I must admit, with all the accents at the Mega while in this country, I didn't have a hard time understanding anyone until we hit Glasgow. LOL.

We spent our last night in Manchester, with our heads filled with memorable moments - too many to pick the best of trip. It was hard to pick a best of day experience!

This could be considered a once-in-a-lifetime experience with everywhere we went and with all we encountered, but with Geocaching, you never know where you'll end up, or who you'll meet!

Hope to meet many of you, again, out on the trails!



Cake, anyone?

How to Place a Geocache

By Dominic Murray

One of the most frequently asked questions about geocaching by new catchers is how do I hide my first cache? This article provides you with a step-by-step guide.

Find a suitable location

The first thing you have to do is find a suitable location where you think your cache would be appropriate. In order to do this you cannot stray from publicly accessible areas without express permission. There may be some areas that require additional permissions or restrictions such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's). Also think about why you are bringing people there – is it a spot of particular interest, or a particularly scenic spot?

Get permission

Once you've identified a suitable location you need to find the registered owner of the area where you wish to place the cache – you need landowner permission before placing a cache. In order to identify who the relevant landowner is, the land registry is a good place to start. In some cases your local authority planning department can also help with this.

Choose your container

Once a location has been identified and permission granted you need an appropriate container. The type of container depends on the environment the cache is going to be in, for example an urban cache may be a small magnetic nano whereas a rural cache could be a large box. It's all about what is suitable for the area.



Place your cache

You are now ready to place your cache. You should take accurate GPS readings (taking multiple readings by coming back to the same spot is always a good idea) and ensure that your cache is well hidden so it cannot be easily found by muggles.

Write your cache page

It is now time to write your cache page. If the cache is in an area of high muggle traffic, a good hint is essential for a quick find so that catchers can locate it quickly without arising too much suspicion. If your cache is in a low muggle area a cryptic hint may be more appropriate.

Submit your cache for review

Once you have completed your cache page it must then be submitted to your local reviewer for review prior to publication. If your reviewer asks you for further information please do your best to provide this as it will help your cache get published.

Wait for First To Find (FTF)

Once your cache is published you may wish to congratulate your first finders on the cache page. Once your cache has been found you are now a successful CO (Cache Owner) - congratulations !

Plan your visits to the three UK

MEGAS

It's always good to plan ahead, and you can now book your camping for the three Mega events set to be held in the UK this year. For this issue, Seeker caught up with the organisers of the three Megas to find out what's in store.



Piratemania is returning for its thirteenth year (GC8GC64)!

This time, it will be held at Pastures Country Park, near Reading, on Saturday August 1st. As Piratemania is a camping event, you can arrive from noon on Thursday July 30th, and you must leave by noon on Monday 3rd August. So, you can camp for all these nights, some of these nights, or just attend the Mega itself!

Pack yer rum, don yer best pirate wear, and sail up to yer berth! People attend in fancy dress, and it's probably the only time you'll see that many pirates in one place! Don't worry about fancy dress if that's not for

you, landlubbers are tolerated too. The main event is on the Saturday with usually two caching loops released, but the main bit is the evening, will the silver or the gold team come away with more doubloons and be crowned the pirate winners, and who will walk the plank?

There will be plenty of icons available to find on the Saturday, including Lab caches and an opportunity to log the 'Find Signal the Frog®' Locationless cache.

You can now book your camping by visiting Piratemania's online store... simply [click here](#), and don't forget to log your Will Attend! Arrrrrrr!!!



The UK Mega Event

The UK Mega is an annual event held in a different region each year. The last few years have seen it move all over the UK, from Devon, up to Yorkshire, then even further north last year to Aberdeenshire in Scotland. This year it drops all the way back down to the South East and into Sussex for the first time. It's not just for one day - it's a weeklong affair with daily events at both the venue and surrounding area, with the main Mega day falling on the Saturday and attracting the biggest attendance of the week.

Welcome to Sussex - where it all started

For the Sussex Mega team our journey started a couple of years ago and job number one was to find a venue. We drew up a shortlist and visited a few of the candidates where we soon found that what was on offer and what you get for your money varied hugely. After a few more detailed site visits and much debating we chose 'The South of England Showground' in Ardingly and celebrated our decision with a launch event.

About the venue

We picked this venue for a number of reasons but mainly because, as this is a permanent showground hosting everything from music concerts to agricultural and

antique fairs, a lot of the infrastructure we need is already in place, such as mains electrics (so no noisy generators) and a tarmac road network making getting around nice and easy in all conditions. The venue is spread over 150 acres and, although the showground itself only uses part of this, it's still on the large side! The location should also work well being quite easily accessible, just 10 minutes off the M23. Being down in the south east corner we are also hoping to get plenty of visitors from Europe, and maybe further afield.

Our mission now is to convert it into a campsite for a week which we have already been working on for a while. Although we will be bringing in more toilets and showers, we already have access to four toilet/shower blocks giving us a massive head start. Camping has been available to book for a while now. We have electric and non-electric pitches available (both 10x10m), as well as some smaller non-electric backpacker pitches aimed at those who only bring a tiny one or two-person tent. All the information you need and how to book a pitch is on our web page mega2020.org.uk

What to expect

We are planning a full week of events, some are already sorted and some still being worked on, but we aim to have nice varied selection of

entertainment each evening, with a lot more on Mega day itself. Signal will be visiting from HQ and anyone who has their photo taken with him will be able to claim a Locationless cache icon. This is a rare opportunity as the icon has not been available for over ten years and, other than the Mega, there are very limited chances to get it this year.

More caches are planned for release in the run up to the event but with almost 2000 caches within ten miles there will be plenty of choice whatever type of caching you like.

Ardingly is ideally situated for you to head off in all directions to discover East and West Sussex. Away from geocaching Wakehurst Place, owned by the National Trust, is right next door and the Bluebell Railway heritage line runs by just a couple of miles away. The beautiful South Downs Way runs right through Sussex and currently incorporates England's only GeoTour. If you fancy leaving the car behind, a short bus ride will take you to Haywards Heath railway station and from there you can be in Brighton in less than 30 minutes with its huge diversity of shops and culture; its famous pier is a must as well as Brighton Pavilion, as featured on one of our geocoins. Heading north on the train will take you to London Victoria in one hour and is by far the best way to get to the capital. From there the whole of the city is easily accessible by public transport.

If you would like to join us at the UK Mega this year, it's August 3-10th with Mega day on the 8th GC800TQ. To book your camping slot or if there is anymore information you need then please visit mega2020.org.uk.



The Sussex Mega Team



Beachy Head Lighthouse



Bodiam Castle

August 30th



STOWE GARDENS



The Geolympix Mega returns this August. Organising team member Paul Smith explains what is in store for the fourth incarnation of this popular series of Megas.

When we started in Oxford back in 2012 we hoped the event might become a regular feature and were thrilled to run it again at Ashridge in Hertfordshire in 2016. We reused that huge estate in 2018 for a Winter Geolympix but whilst it is an amazing venue, we wanted to offer something new for 2020. The National Trust at the world-famous Stowe Gardens liked our plans and so will be hosting what we like to call the UK's friendliest Mega at the end of August, over the bank holiday weekend.

Plans include the return of popular Geolympix features, such as The Cache of Dreams (a big give-away cache and contents, randomly given to someone who signs in at reception), the FTFrenzy (when caches go live on the day), other new series/caches in the area, fun Adventure Lab caches, and various challenges.

Paul commented, "In the past we've run things like 'find as many letterbox caches as

you can in a day', or 'find 11 different cache types - multi, trad, puzzle, etc. - in 11 hours, but for 2020 we're trying something new with a series of actual Challenge caches. Three walking loops to provide something for all cachers, with an entertaining goal:

- Bronze – easy caches
- Silver – a little trickier
- Gold – contains a few more quirky caches

Perhaps the biggest Geolympix news of recent months was the reveal that the popular Gnome Games – previously held annually from 2015 (GC5NRRW) to 2018 (GC7D5WX) – will be joining as the Sunday Mega's Saturday 'warm-up act', as Paul put it. He added, "Folks loved the Gnome Games stand at the 2018 Winter Geolympix, and their 'biathlon' Lab-cache game with wooden skis and water pistols. It set off an idea, which became a discussion, that turned into plans that the National Trust approved. With the event rested in 2019 we're thrilled to have the Gnome fun-and-games joining us at Stowe. We needed something memorable for Saturday the 29th and think this popular series of events, which started in the Cheshire area, will help attract folks down the

M6/M42/M40 or M1 to Buckinghamshire.”

The important information

Geolympix IV: Stowe 2020, GC8C8C9, will be held at Stowe Gardens – with free entry for cachers – on Sunday August 30th, with a Friday-evening-to-Monday-morning programme of events around it. There will be retail stands, refreshments, ample toilets – including ones with disabled access – and various upcoming Mega and the organisers of other events in attendance. At the time of writing the recommended camping site has not been announced but this is due shortly. There are many options in the area as Silverstone is only a couple of miles away across the fields from Stowe. For those who like a little more comfort, there are many options in the area, with Milton Keynes and Buckingham, Towcester, Bicester, and Brackley all within easy reach.

Paul concluded, “I think our venue inside The Temple of Concord and Victory is probably the most spectacular venue for any UK Mega yet. Think Downton Abbey meets Geocaching! In fact, the whole Stowe estate is beautiful and we’re working closely with the National Trust to show it off to its best advantage with a variety of temporary Adventure Labs and more permanent caches. We hope to have some of the follies which are usually closed to the public open for the day too and have a few secret plans up our sleeves too. We’ll be revealing more across 2020 at our various touring Countdown events and online at Twitter.com/Geolympix and Facebook.com/Groups/Geolympix2020”

Of course Seeker will bring you updates when further details are made public, but one snippet we do have is Stowe has been used for many films, and planned Labs will have you walking in the footsteps of James Bond, Indiana Jones, a Puerto Rican Werewolf and others!



An entrance to Stowe Gardens

Racing Hounds - *the winners!*

In January 2019, the GAGB's biggest ever trackable race kicked off in the village of Keyworth, Nottinghamshire, at our eleventh roving event. The Racing Hounds waited eagerly at the starting line; before too long, the pistol was fired (not literally!), and they were off!

There were five categories: the Long Distance Runner race and four Best of Breed races...

- Retriever: the Racing Hound that is 'Retrieved' the most times.
- Pointer: the Racing Hound that has the most 'Discover' logs.
- Setter: the Racing Hound that clocks up the most kilometres without leaving the British Isles.
- Boxer: the Racing Hound that is 'Dropped Off' or 'Visits' the most caches that are 'Small', 'Regular' or 'Large'.

Dozens of Racing Hound tags got a head start on the day of our event, with many more being purchased elsewhere and released in the months that followed.

The race was very close at times. It officially ended on January 3rd, when the GAGB committee began to verify the winners. This involved checking whether the displayed mileages were correct, and whether the rules had been followed by the winning tags. Hundreds of logs were checked as part of this process.

We are now pleased to be able to confirm the prize winners...

76

TAGS IN THE RACE

495,776

KM TRAVELED

31

COUNTRIES VISITED

5

CONTINENTS VISITED



*Map of the countries visited by Racing Hound tags
(shown in red)*

Furthest distance travelled:

the_dolan's Racing Hound is the winner, with a grand total of 77,758 kilometres. This tag travelled the length and breadth of Great Britain, and also visited several other countries including Ukraine, India, the United States, and Malta.

Winning retriever:

Griff Grof's tag was retrieved 1,741 times, thanks to a couple of dedicated geocachers who placed and retrieved it from almost every cache they found! However, as current committee members cannot win a prize, it is awarded to both Collie Wobbles and Joolswools, who came in joint second place.

Winning pointer:

The winning pointer tag belongs to thecatts, with 27 discovered logs.

Winning setter:

Paulared's setter travelled 15,058 kilometres within the British Isles. The most southerly cache it visited was GC5N0Z9, in South Devon, and the most northerly one was GC739JZ, on Orkney!

Winning boxer:

hedgegog3's Racing Hound was placed in 844 'Small', 'Regular' and 'Large' caches - this is more than six times the count of second place!

Prize draw winner:

All the non-winners were entered into a prize draw. Congratulations to MsWinning!

So, that's it! Well done to all the winners, and thanks to everyone who took part. We are looking forward to donating 50% of the profits from the tags to the UK Mega events.,



Cairngorms National Park Geocoin
Standard Edition: £14.00



GAGB Pencils: £1.00



GAGB Pen: £0.50



GAGB Badge: £0.50



Dartmoor National Park Geocoin
Standard Edition: £14.00
Limited Edition: now £15.00



Yorkshire Dales National Park Geocoin
Standard Edition: £14.00



Clothing (can be personalised)
£10.00 - £29.00



Set of three National Park geocoins,
displayed in a photo frame with an antique
map as a background.
£45



Maintenance kit: £0.50



Racing Hounds trackable tags
£5.50 each, £20 for a full set



Geocache Labels
Medium : £0.60
Large: £1.00

Meet the 2020 GAGB committee

Jenn and Matt are new to the committee. Check out their bios to find out more about them!

jennthefunkyranger (Jenn Hill)



I'm Jennthefunkyranger, a cacher in North Staffordshire. I got into caching in 2012 after trying it with my Guides at our local campsite, and was soon hooked. I set up the Staffordshire Cachers Facebook page, and subsequently our monthly events, the SOS (Stoke or Stafford) events. I am new to the committee this year, but I have helped the GAGB out quite a bit previously, including several articles in Seeker, which is how I ended up with the role of writer.

I love travelling, and have cached in 18 different countries (including six in a day), and plan to add onto this this year! I've found that by caching my way round a new city has been a great way to get to know the places off the beaten track.

As well as caching abroad I love getting out and about in the UK countryside, and I'm lucky that I live very close to the Peak District, for some more remote, tougher terrain walks.

In my day job I am a customer service advisor, working with our French customers. I am a fluent French and Spanish speaker (as well as being able to get by in German, Greek and Dutch), which also helps with caching abroad - if you need help with any translations I'm the person for it!



maattmoo (Matt Faulkner Collins)

Hello, I am Maattmoo, from Kent... I love Geocaching and it takes me to many wonderful and varied places. I love travelling with

Geocaching and it is the first thing I look at when planning a trip somewhere, as there is no point booking a hotel with no caches nearby. I think EarthCaches are excellent tour guides and can take you to places that "normal" tourists just don't know about...

I also love getting out and about on a series with a group of fellow cachers or hosting events to meet new friends. I host at least two meets every month and schedule regular walks on my local geocachers facebook group. Maybe one day you can join me...?

Now that you know Jenn and Matt a little better, get to know the re-elected committee members as well!

sharant (Sharon Reid) - Chair

I'm Sharon and I live in the lovely rural countryside of Staffordshire, West Midlands. I have been caching since January 2009 along with husband and my family of two.



I really enjoy walking and through geocaching have discovered that I have an undiscovered sense of adventure by canoeing, caving and tree climbing. Geocaching has combined my love of travelling and meeting new friends and has taken me to some wonderful locations which I wouldn't have discovered without geocaching.



Griff Grof (Arthur Griffiths)

Hi! I'm Arthur, I live in the Cotswolds, and I've been geocaching for almost ten years. I've seen so much whilst caching, and have been to so many new places, which is what I love most about it. I've had some great experiences - from heading underground to find several of the Below Above caches (near Bath), to caching by boat, and everything in between! I love going on long walks... there's nothing better than a good series! It's always great to come across a quality cache, whether that's a well-stocked ammo box or a creative hide, and I often decide where to go based on the number of favourite points a cache or series has obtained.

Since 2012, I have served as one of the admins and moderators for my local geocaching groups, CacheWalker and Cotswold Caching. In 2015, I was involved in getting Twitter's #UKCacheHour off the ground, and helped to run it for its first twenty months.

Outside of geocaching, I recently graduated from Cambridge University, where I read Geography, and am currently on a gap year, filling the time with work experience, travel, and completing job applications.

This is my fifth year on the GAGB committee. I would like to thank everyone who voted for me in November. We currently have lots in the pipeline, so it should be a great year!

Border Caz (Caz Turver)



I am Border Caz because I live very close to the border with North Wales so my “local” caching adventures have taken me backwards and forwards across the border many times, indeed 10 of the 82 caches I have owned have been in Wales. My real name is Caroline but many people call me Caz for short.

I am a widow and now mostly retired from paid employment; I have two grown up children and a Springer spaniel called Reg, who likes going out for walks in the country.

In 2011 I was one of the founding members of the committee which planned and brought to fruition the 2013 West Midlands UK Mega. I acted as Treasurer on that Committee and was happy to take on the same role on the GAGB committee when I joined it 3 years ago, as I have a background in finance from my working life.

I found my first caches in July 2009 but I'm not a numbers chaser so only have 6,304 finds under my belt. Particular favourites of mine are those based on history and I do enjoy many urban caches for that reason. There's something very satisfying about completing a multi in a town or city and I also enjoy Wherigos and the new Lab Cache Adventure caches. My other hobby is travelling around in my campervan and I find the two activities complement each other very well and often overlap, both take me to interesting places and have a good social scene where I have made many good friends. I have converted quite a few muggle campervanners to geocaching.



Geocaching Womble (Dominic Murray)

My Name is Dominic and I'm Geocaching Womble. I have been caching since 2008 and I spent from 2010-2017 on the

Opencaching UK (OCUK) management committee, including 6 years as GAGB liaison officer for OCUK. This is my third year on the GAGB committee. For the first 2 years I spent that time as GLAD manager, during which I updated several agreements, took GAGB friends from concept to working model, helped rewrite the constitution and update the guidelines, and for the last year I have also been the GAGB publicity officer. I am looking forward to working on this role in 2020 now that I am able to give the role the time it deserves, and continuing to build upon my successes so far.

richt2000 (Richard Tucker)



As a seasoned cacher since 2011, I am well experienced in the ups and downs of this hobby we all enjoy. I appreciate the rules of the hobby and I look forward to furthering the GAGB's work in enforcing good practice within the UK Geocaching community. I enjoy organising events and have run events and CITO's both in the UK and abroad. I see these as a great conduit to helping the GAGB engage better with the community. My real life job as an IT consultant mostly gets in the way of Geocaching but it does mean that I am very familiar with all aspects of IT and Social Media. On the plus side, the work is where ever the next large, complex project is so, whilst during the day, I am sat in front of a monitor, by night, I am caching in another part of the country, making friends at Geocaching events and furthering the reach of the GAGB there. In 2020, I have taken on full responsibility as the GLAD manager. As part of this role, I am contacting all councils in Great Britain with the aim of creating agreements with as many land owners as possible. So far, this has resulted in more than 10 new agreements being added.



Moira Crackers (Mel Read)

Hi my name is Mel, I'm married to Tony and live in Moira in the Midlands, we have a geohound called Cracker, hence our caching name Moira Crackers. Between us we have a large family, spread around the country although most seem to be heading towards the Cornish coast. Surprisingly behind the Midlands counties Cornwall is the next county we have found most caches in. I've cached in all counties of the UK and last year gained our first 2 countries outside of the UK. Heading towards 5,000 finds now, and I look forward to adding more this year and hopefully I will do my first Giga in Prague. I look forward to meeting a lot of new people and introducing them to our crazy addictive hobby. If you come to an event ensure you pop over and say hello and I look forward to meeting you soon.

Remember that you can assist the committee by becoming a GAGB Friend. As a Friend, you could serve as a local point of contact, organise GAGB events, help us out with technical and design matters, and lots more. It is an informal arrangement, meaning that you only have to commit yourself to something when you have the time and ability to. You can find out more [here](#).

GAGB Financial Report

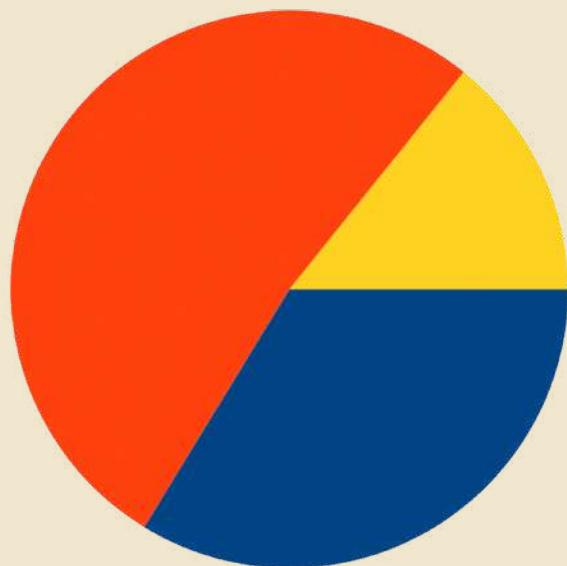


GAGB run our accounting year from September-September. The formal accounts for the financial year ending 30.09.19 have been posted on our forum. Here are some highlights from our Treasurer, Caz.

INCOME

Total income for the period was £4,667.06. Over half of this (2) was generated by sales, in our online shop and at events, of geocoins, clothing, tags, pens, labels etc. Donations (1) includes donations received from members via our website, amounts paid to us by outside organisations for assisting with training, cache placement, etc, and contributions from attendees at events for refreshments and materials for making caches and trade items. Fundraising (3) accounts for the remainder - our popular map game at major events is the principle contributor to this but we have also had tombola and raffles.

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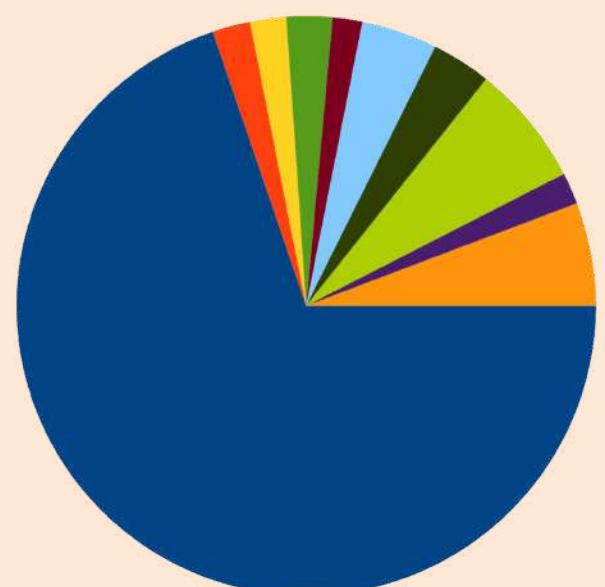
Our finances are now in the healthiest state they have ever been and this means that we will be able to finance more events where we can help both existing cachers and newcomers to the sport, and also support the Mega events in more substantial ways than has been possible previously.

EXPENDITURE

Total Expenditure in the period was £3,563.69, made up as follows:

- 1.The cost of producing our National Parks series geocoins.
- 2.Paypal and card payment machine charges.
- 3.Our GAGB telephone number and answering service for use by the public, landowners and anyone else who needs to contact us.
- 4.Supplies to create caches at our Makers Madness events and for prizes in the map game, also donated to some major events.
- 5.Stationery, postages etc.
- 6.Website costs.
- 7.Donations to Mega events.
- 8.Insurance and legal costs.
- 9.Hall hire for events.
- 10.Wholesale costs for shop sales exc. Geocoins.

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MEMBER DISCOUNTS

15% off

COTSWOLD
outdoor

CICERONE

15% off

20% off



5% off

BASE OF TREE.COM
GEOCACHING SUPPLIES

5% off



10% off

GeocacheKit

10% off

Pulse

72 Geocaching

5% off



5% off

Geotees
Geocaching Supplies

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Quality, Value & Choice

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5% off

All codes are available to GAGB members at:

<https://www.gagb.org.uk/forums/forumdisplay.php?64-GAGB-Member-Discounts>