The Chiltern Fellowship Team biography

We first entered the ATH in 1993 when Steve Hames' hunt got us intrigued, with its familiar features on the Metropolitan Line to Amersham. We soon realised how much there was to solve and so rallied friends and relations to help solve clues. At this stage the core of the team was Logibod Jon Wallis and neighbours Kevin and Alison. After lots of work, we were excited to get sufficient clues to go to the appropriate wood near Little Chalfont but some missing characters in the final approach instructions led to us trudging around in ever increasing circles without finding the treasure (which we must have walked over several times). Chiltern Fellowship was named after Amersham's surrounding Chiltern Hills with a flavour of Tolkien's "The Fellowship of the Ring" (long before the Peter Jackson film).

We realised that we were OK at researching and solving clues but pretty hopeless at lateral thinking and code solving, so we were very pleased to join forces with fellow Logibod, Ken Shilson, for the following year's hunt. That went well and we actually got to the 1994 treasure to claim our precious raffle ticket in the nick of time on the final morning. Ken had had inspiration overnight and we were able to switch Kevin's destination as he was about to set off in totally the wrong direction.

The team gradually grew over the next few years with a combination of more Logibods and more local friends, but we failed to find the treasure for another 16 years, our growing disappointment relieved and the team stimulated in 2003 by being awarded a special prize for the depth of our research into Christopher Marlowe and the subsequent well-polished submission. From 2000-2003, Jon was on assignment in Australia and captained the team from there –the time difference enabled him to progress the task while the rest of the team slept! Very sadly, Ken Shilson died during this period, losing us a good friend and ATH free-thinker.

We have dragged more Logibods on to the team over the years, helped by lobbying of likely new joiners to the ex-Logibod pub and curry group that meets regularly at *The Euston Flyer* pub near the British Library. Together with our policy of never letting anyone go who has contributed in the past, and some well targeted recruitment of friends by team members this has resulted in the team reaching nearly 20 strong, about a dozen of whom actively contribute in any one year.

Although we now have access to a broad range of skills, the team still feels itself technically weak; we make up for it by determination and a willingness to go and search somewhere where we are convinced the treasure must be despite failing to solve the final detail of the hunt. This bore fruit in 2011 when Alison became convinced early on that the treasure must be in Shenley Wood of Turing's lost silver bars fame: having failed to crack the necessary Enigma code we then went on a brute force expedition to the wood during the final weekend: we scoured that until we found the Logica L on a tree trunk and then combed the nearby area to find the treasure. This won us a special Brute Force prize – ironic to have found the treasure by brute force in a year when it was dedicated to Alan Turing and Enigma which depended on much more artifice than that!

We continue each year, generally getting as far as solving most individual clues but failing to crack the final subtleties. We were able to follow the geographical line crossing of England in 2014 to get to Ickleton, but this year's great circle intersections proved too much and so gave us much more fruitless exercise in Rickmansworth Aquadrome than was wise. While welcoming a change away from ever more sophisticated online tricks and codes, we do hope that we don't have to go into space to plot crossing points next time!

The team enjoys the challenge of the hunt, but too often I can feel the energy draining away after Christmas as many of us realise that we have got ourselves stuck again. However, even the less technically aware of us enjoy solving the questions and it has engrained itself in all our Christmas habits, sometimes to the despair of our families who actively hope that the treasure is found so life can return to normal without a time extension!

Annex: Hunt archive list from the ATH website:

Year	Setter	Theme	Location
1991	Steve Hames	Sherlock Holmes	Cookham, Berkshire
1992	Paul Coombs & Brian Jackson	Sets	Fetcham, Surrey
1993	Steve Hames	London Underground	Little Chalfont, Bucks **Hunted in right place but couldn't find it**
1994	Paul Coombs	"The Armchair" Magazine	Cranford Park, Middlesex **Found**
1995	Rosalind Barden & Jonathan Mestel	George Orwell	Wallington, Herts
1996	Dave Kee	Fibonacci Series	Ashridge Park, Herts
1997	Paul Coombs & Dave Harding	Fact or Fiction	Fotheringhay, Northants
1998	Brian Mills	Food	Beaconsfield, Bucks
1999	Steve Hames	Time	Herstmonceux, E.Sussex
2000	Dave Kee	Snakes and Ladders	Hillingdon Trail, Middlesex
2001	Ian Canning	Tolkien	Port Meadow, Oxford
2002	Mark Abbott	Kit & Philip Marlowe	Chislehurst, Kent **Prize for well researched entry**
2003	Stephen Lees	Sports Cars	Ulting, Essex
2004	Barden Gnomes	Playing Cards	Grantchester, Cambridge
2005	Paul Coombs	Foxhunting	Watlington Hill, Oxfordshire
2006	Steve Hames	Golf	Steeple Aston, Oxfordshire
2007	Paul Coombs	Italo Calvino & Tarot	Coombe Hill, Bucks
2008	Tim North	The Royal Parks	Hampton Court Green **Knew general area**
2009	Barden Gnomes	Dorothy L. Sayers	Witham, Essex
2010	Chris & David Baker, David Manley	Social Networking Sites, Mints	East Hagbourne, Oxfordshire
2011	Garry Smith	Alan Turing's Silver Bars, Codebreaking	Shenley Wood, Buckinghamshire **Found – Brute force prize**
2012	Mike Wood	Bath and (John) Woods	Combe Down, near Bath **Knew where it was**
2013	Brian Jackson & Phil Stockton	Deep Purple, Space Travel	Ridge, Herts
2014	Alcoholus Lubricatum	Life (HHGG, DNA & La Vie mode d'emploi)	Ickleton, Cambridgeshire **Found**