

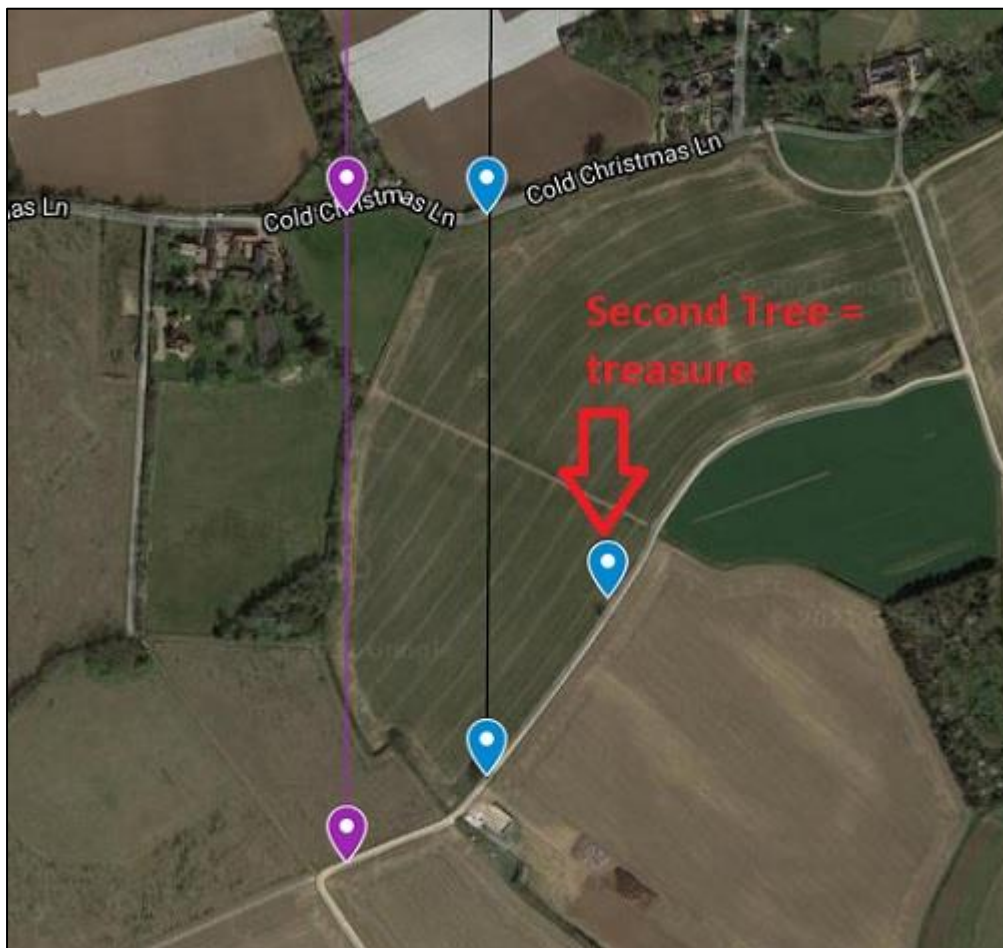
Apotheniacs Alternate Treasure Route

Apotheniacs Anonymous have sent an alternate treasure route as we are busy attending another puzzle completely of our own making.

[1] When we finally ventured out to Cold Christmas on Saturday 8th January, we had only the following decoded instructions:

- **SECOND TREE**
- **THIRTEEN STEPS**
- A map on which we had drawn the meridians that pass through the Cold Christmas Lane Greenwich Meridian bollard marker (purple) and the zero degrees meridian (blue) and where they intersected footpaths north and south of Cold Christmas Lane.

We noted that the latter zero degrees meridian passed through a large tree south of Cold Christmas Lane, and that there were another couple of trees further north-east. The location of the second tree treasure was added later.



[2] We assumed that we needed to start from the Greenwich Meridian bollard. We spied a pole carrying telephone lines and presumed that the teeming rain probably accounted for the absence of any calling birds. Just to be sure, we checked there was nothing hidden behind this particular south pole.



[3] We headed west along Cold Christmas Lane past Swangles Farm, and of course stopped to take the traditional tourist snaps by the village sign. We had expected Cold Christmas to be flooded with meridian tourists on the last weekend of the hunting season, but we did not see another soul in the entire few hours of our sodden wanderings. As Sid noted, the new version of *Last of the Summer Wine* commissioned by the BBC doesn't look all that great...



[4] Opposite the village sign, we headed south up Public **BRIDLEWAY SIXTEEN**, which surely had to be the decode from the final page of 16 photographs?! These landmarks emboldened us with confidence that we were surely on the right route.



[5] At the top of Bridleway 16 we emerged to find **JAMES'S WOOD**, one of three nearby planted as Diamond Woods in 2012. A nice reminder of the man responsible for the last four weeks of carefully crafted and stimulating puzzles. Surely this was the route that James would have taken to the treasure site?



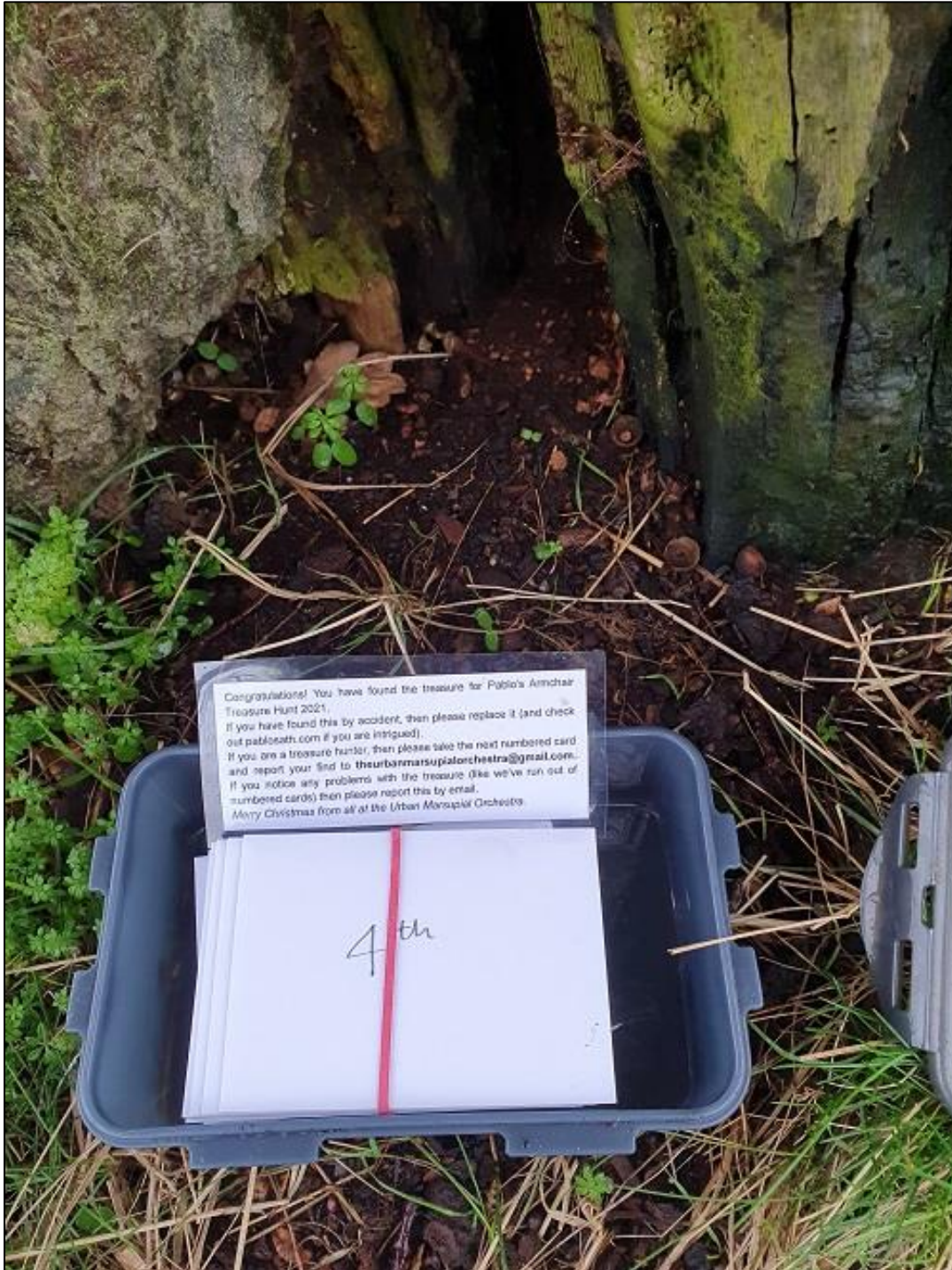
[6] The entrance to James's Wood was at a crossroads of paths. After some faffing about left and right, we decided to continue straight ahead along Bridleway 16, and were soon rewarded by two Gas PIPELINE signs either side of the path. Nuno was an old if somewhat exasperating friend by now, although he was still hiding something from us. But surely the old piper was sending us a sign here, nay two signs, that we were on the correct route to treasure?!



[7] We had of course chosen a day of classic hunting weather, and the rain had not let up since dawn. Vast lakes had formed on Bridleway 16 that ran alongside James's Wood, which we had to wade through waist-deep with not a second thought for Sid's rather dapper Chelsea boots. It was a veritable armchair obstacle course, and so it was our good fortune that all these landmarks told us we were on the right path, or we might not have persevered. At the end of Bridleway 16, another cross-paths, but also a post confirming that we had been following the **GREENWICH MERIDIAN TRAIL**. The ATH Gods were looking out for us!



[8] Minded of the tree that we had pin-pointed before we set out as being located precisely on the prime meridian, we headed east. This was surely our first tree? In the distance we could see a second tree, and indeed a third close by in a pair, although they were much further than thirteen steps away?? No matter, we reached the second tree and after bravely vaulting a treacherous ditch were rewarded by espying the corner of a plastic box in a hole high up in the back of the tree's trunk. Hurrah!



[9] Alas the partridge had long since flown this second of our pair of trees, but on opening the box we were pleasantly surprised to be serenaded by four lovely calling birds on a hand-made Christmas card, reminding us gently of another puzzle we had yet to solve.



[10] Flushed with the satisfaction of having meticulously followed the treasure directions to our second tree and found the treasure box, Compo, Haven't-the-Foggiest and Clegg took time out for one last triumphant photo in the rain.



[11] On Tuesday morning there is some quiet satisfaction in the Apopheniatic camp. We had submitted our ATH entry, and despite not getting to meet the group of much sought-after Uninvited Guests we could console ourselves with having followed the treasure route from minimal information and recovered ticket number 4. Hey, we didn't even need to use those Thirteen Steps!

Then a tweet from the Urban Marsupial Orchestra sharing a [video of the Treasure Route](#) from the meridian bollard to the second of a pair of trees. What?! Not even close! An alternate route! It seems we may have been attending another puzzle for the last four weeks after all. No matter, for we had enjoyed ourselves hugely during a very addictive ATH, and had once more claimed our traditional 4th place just outside the virtual prizes.

