

Hunters' tales



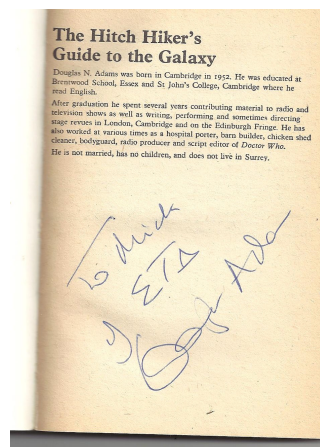
Many hunters sent in their tales of bravery, which was chiefly limited to negotiating level crossings in the absence of oncoming trains.



Apopheniacs Anonymous took a cautious approach:

Unexpectedly we found out that there was no bridge nor was there an underpass we had to walk across the railway track! Last year we were shot at and this year the setters are looking to get us run over by a speeding train! Fortunately we had a teenage girl with us who we bravely pushed out first across the tracks ...

The **BistromATHmaticians** proudly displayed the signed front matter from their copy of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*:



Bruce Hindsight visited the treasure site well prepared:

Once the others arrived, we compared notes, looked around a bit and sat down at the corner of the field. Timothy was very pleased with himself for being the only frood among us who'd been hoopy enough to bring a towel... On seeing the Meander, whose profound mysteriousness we impressed on him, Colin had a brainwave which expressed itself in the form 'Then it isn't as simple as...'. At this point we realised that there were limits to our hoopiness: none of us had thought to bring the quiz answers. Colin, with a dodgy smartphone connection and battery threatening to run out at any moment, read the letter pairs out in order. As Timothy transcribed them, parts of the other message emerged.

The first part of the new directions ('south east one seven five paces') was clear with some interpolations... but clearly we had some errors somehow and were supposed to look under the BRIDGE. A concrete ledge made this possible if one was prepared to wade through a few inches of water. With one accord, Colin and Mark looked at Tim, who was no longer looking so pleased with himself for having remembered his towel.

Dave Kee's team made an unsuccessful trip to Great Shelford (at the south end of the DNA cyclepath):

So back to the Square and Compasses for a swift half in the hope of inspiration... I should have copied Arthur and Ford and had six pints and a packet of peanuts!

Perhaps we have to join the Masons to solve this. I'll roll up my trouser leg and see if someone hands me the secret of the holy grail.

This strategy proved successful, and the treasure was soon found. However:

At this point a man with a dog appeared from nowhere and asked what I was up to. He was a game keeper and did not like people disturbing the wildlife. Evidently I looked like I was up to no good! But he was highly entertained when I explained all about the treasure hunt, and agreed not to tell anyone about the box, at least until the hunt is over.

Deep Thought got their priorities right:

The friendly vicar was only too happy to show me the frescoes, but only after I'd found the treasure of course—a low numbered treasure ticket is more important than visiting an ancient artwork I'm afraid.

Lady Strange and the Earl of Yarborough were also cautious at the level crossing:

I carefully looked both ways before crossing. The path southeast is obvious... I carefully looked both ways again before crossing the... footbridge over the Cam. There's a big birdbox on a tree just south of the river, you can't miss it, so naturally I walked past it the first time... I met two dog walkers on the way, and wished them a good morning. The second asked me what I was looking for, as if he were fed up with treasure hunters cluttering up his footpath. I equivocated.



One member of their team, Barry Rigal, was inspired to compose a poem reminiscent of Georges Perec's 'threnodials', or isogrammatic poetry, and the so-called sestagrammatinas of Michelle Grangaud. The poem contains many anagrams of 'Arthur Dent' (can you find them all?):

I ranted thru the ATH
 My hatred turned me scarlet red
 I'm ardent, hurt and mad as hell
 Stuck in the glue on each runt thread

Drat hunters, seekers, anagrammers,
 Following the truant herd
 The ball drops with an errant thud
 I haven't solved a single word!

The **Psychological Eagles** visited at an auspicious time:

At about 10:42, 24th December, I left the house and made my way to the village of Ickleton... like a fool I had not taken a copy of Sarah's map, but had remembered the name Mill Lane, which I soon found, and walking to the end found the railway crossing... I came to the footbridge. Now it was here that I got a bit confused with the instructions and counted out 175 paces after the footbridge, all the while looking for a bird box in the trees through the low lying winter sun. Having reached the end of my count I searched around this area (sewage works, not quite up to my neck in it) and came up blank, so retraced my steps back to the footbridge. I noticed the bird box immediately as I now didn't have the sun glaring in my face, and couldn't believe I had missed it, because of its size.

Team Norway encountered some local fauna:

I was poking about behind these trees when I realised that someone was walking down the opposite side of the river. I wondered which way he would go, but of

course he turned onto the bridge towards me. So I had to say hello, and we ended up having a conversation on the bridge.

He was an old bloke—80, he told me—with a couple of dogs, and some sort of country accent. He first of all asked me if I had seen anything yet. I admitted that I hadn't (which was true!). He said he'd seen some bullfinches the other day. Not being a nature lover, I wouldn't recognise a bullfinch if it walked up and hit me in the face...

Then he started going on about how the 'sparras' were killing everything off. I was thinking 'Bloody hell! I know that's the Genome Institute over there—what sort of weird experiments are they doing if there are killer sparrows around?' But eventually I realised that he was talking about sparrow-hawks...

In the middle of this I noticed that a tree beside the bridge on the other side of the river had a bird box in it! But I had to be polite... I was begging to get away, and praying that no one else—local or treasure hunter—turned up.

Team Poirot had a brief moment of jubilation:

Is that a bird box I see above me? Do you know, I really think it is. And below the bird box... We stumbled upon this by accident, so were about to replace it until... we noticed a number of jigsaw pieces with numbers on. Excellent... we were first to the treasure! Then George pointed out the second digit...



Team Poirot's leader approaches the treasure

Twelve Pack encountered more than they bargained for:

Our fearless leader, being the adventurous groovy go-getter that he is, battled... a ravenous bugblatter beast which some nasty Vogons hid inside what appeared to be an ordinary bird box. Luckily, he had his towel with him... and so ends our journey, here on the 42nd page of our submission. Where else would you expect to find our treasure ticket?