

THE MYSTERIOUS CASE



OF THE MUDDY BOOTS

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Treasure Ticket 17 Retrieved

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1. Introduction

1.1 THEMES

This year's Hunt was principally based around various authors within a range of genres (including crime, fantasy, thrillers but particularly detective novels) and their main protagonists.

Each page (excluding the first) had its own literary theme:

2. Arthur Conan Doyle (Sherlock Holmes)
3. Rex Stout (Nero Wolfe)
4. Agatha Christie (Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple)
5. Neil Gaiman (Sandman)
6. Ed McBain (87th precinct)
7. Tibor Fischer (and Twin Peaks)
8. Alistair MacLean
9. John Steinbeck
10. Ruth Rendell
11. JK Rowling (Harry Potter)
12. Émile Gaboriau (Monsieur Lecoq)

In addition, there were references to Ruth Rendell on most pages. These are explained in greater detail within each page-related section of this document. The Ruth Rendell thread is enough to imply that she has a special significance, and so it proved when searching for the treasure.

The literary themes were not evident in the poster (newsletter) published in November. This and subsequent additions to the website appeared to point in a very different direction, to the life and work of Sir Charles Wheatstone.

1.2 CIPHERS

Ciphers figured very heavily in this Hunt. Two in particular were essential in deriving the directions to the treasure:

- Playfair cipher
- Hill cipher

These were usually linked together, with the plaintext from one decryption giving clues to a keyword for the next. The linked strings of encoded text, together with multiple pictorial representations of "Playfair" and "Hill", were helpfully contained within boxes made up of envelopes. In general, the keyword for the first cipher in each linked set was provided by an acrostic formed from the answers to questions on the same page.

The Vigenere and Caesar ciphers were also used to a lesser extent.

It became apparent that each cipher had its own font for its encoded text: black serif font (in fact called Playfair Display) for Playfair, red font for Vigenere, and a bold black italic font for Hill Cipher. (The Caesar encoded text was only obtained as an acrostic.)

1.3 THE TREASURE

We are delighted to report that we succeeded in finding the treasure (ticket number 17) on Saturday, 11 January - just two days before the closure of the Hunt. Further details are given in the related section of this document.

2. Poster (aka ATH News) and Other Publications

2.1 ATH NEWS

Banner

The day (Tuesday) is wrong for 18 November 2019. It should be Monday.
Could it be a pointer to another year when it did fall on a Tuesday?

The fellow in the photo is Pablo Neruda, Chilean poet and diplomat. (Pablo link.)

The Small Animal Teaching Hospital is part of the University of Liverpool.
Together they make up **PabloSATH**. (Hunt link)

Text

Some letters in the text are different colours:

- Orange "a" in 2nd word "at" of para 2.
- Blue "y" in "honestly" in line 4 of para 1.
- Indigo h in "the" in line 10 of paragraph 3.
- Green "l" in "l'll" in penultimate line of para 4.
- Yellow "l" in "will" in penultimate line of para 5.
- Violet "o" in "From" in line 1 of para 6.
- Red "T" in "The" in line 1 of para 7.

If the letters are ordered as per colours of rainbow (Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet), they spell **TALLY HO**, the cry used to alert others during a Hunt! (Hunt link)

Bullet Points

The bullet points are mostly maps:

1. Kansas
2. Czech Republic
3. Berkshire with a red dot on Reading
4. Switzerland
5. (Bridge silhouette)
6. Sheffield
7. Greater London

Bullet 1 "Christmas Pantomime Cancelled"

Looks like it was the Wizard of Oz - in which Dorothy isn't in Kansas anymore.
Reference to a "hunt" in the last line.

Bullet 2 "Chess Champ Floored by Czech Mate"

This set of moves is consistent with the text:

1. e4 Nc6
2. Ke2 Nd4+
3. Ke3 c6
4. Kf4 Ne6+
5. Ke5 Qa5++

The question is, why doesn't the white King take the black Knight at move 4? But the text does imply that Ivan wasn't taking the game too seriously.

Bullet 3 "Reading on the Increase"

Berkshire map implies pun on "Reading".

The reference to "the new Postmaster General" is odd, as there hasn't been one in the UK since 1969.

Reference to "The Matrix" presages the use of the Hill Cipher in the Hunt.

Bullet 4 "Subverting Swiss Security"

Numbers where multiplication moves the last digit to the front are called parasitic numbers. The smallest 9-parasitic number is ...

10112359550561797752808988764044943820224719

This is 44 digits long, the same length as the alphabetic string at the end of the paragraph.

If you take the number away from the letters (e.g. X-1=W, E-0=E. I-1=H etc) you get the message **WE HOPE YOU GREATLY ENJOY THE ARMCHAIR TREASURE HUNT.**

Thanks very much!

Bullet 5 "Tragic Death of Tennis Chairman"

The silhouette shows Prague, and features the Charles Bridge. Coincidentally, Sir Charles was a bridge enthusiast.

The reference to his personal code points to him being Sir Charles Wheatstone, who invented the Playfair cipher (much used in the Hunt) and promoted the Wheatstone Bridge.

The reference to the West Hills Tennis Club alludes to the West Hills Golf Club from Fer-de-Lance by Rex Stout.

Bullet 6 "Goalkeeper to be Honoured"

Gordon Banks was born in Sheffield on 30 December 1937 so his birthday is during the hunt.
The renowned 1970 save was from Pele, not Rod Sill.

Bullet 7 "Holiday Weather Forecast"

"Woodland walks will work well" stands out, with 5 initial w's in a row. Given that there's a London map, this could be a pointer to the W5 postal district - roughly Ealing. The five Ws could also be a reference to the 5Ws (who, what, where, why and when) which are considered the basic questions for problem solving and therefore a loose reference to the theme of detectives.

2.2 NOVEMBER 25 UPDATE TO WEB PAGE

Lady Emma has requested we add: "Thank you to all the Newsletter readers for their kind messages of condolence. Sir Charles wished his ashes to be scattered abroad, in a country well-suited to his creations. With this aim, a coach will be departing very early this morning from Leicester Square. All who wish to come are welcome, but please be punctual and mention the booking reference ONCRKAZM to the driver, who is our eldest. My husband loved hill-walking, especially in places with nearby hostelryes for when he began to flag: that's a big plus!"

Sir Charles Wheatstone was married to an Emma West so this bears out the identification of him as the tennis chairman.

The final sentence points to Switzerland as the destination. Its flag is a large white cross (plus sign) on a red background. Using "Switzerland" as the keyword in a Playfair cipher, ONCRKAZM decrypts to "**PABLO RIP**". (Pablo link)

The eldest of the Wheatstones' five children was Charles Pablo Wheatstone. (Pablo link)

The references to Leicester Square and hill-walking ties in with use of the Hill Cipher created by Lester S. Hill.

2.3 DECEMBER 1 UPDATE TO WEB PAGE

Three clocks were added to the web page, saying 8:05, 8:12 and 8:19 respectively, misleadingly implying a start date of 5/12/19.

2.4 DECEMBER 9 UPDATE TO WEB PAGE

The UK hunt release clock is ticking... ... towards what would have been dinner-time tomorrow, were it 1582 in Lyon.

1582 was the year that the Gregorian Calendar replaced the Julian Calendar, advancing the date by ten days. Therefore December 10th would become December 20th.

2.5 DECEMBER 25 UPDATE TO WEB PAGE

A festive cryptogram was added to the page. This decodes to "pablosath.com/chanukah.htm", which links to a page containing a picture of a zebra, with its stripes bizarrely shaped in the form of a menorah (central to the celebration of Chanukah). Possibly a loose reference to the Alistair MacLean novel Ice Station Zebra which makes an appearance on page 8.

2.6 ATH NEWS - SECOND ISSUE

The second newsletter was released to announce the "Muddy Boots" award to Gordon Banks - on his birthday, 30 December! This time, the date and time are consistent with 2019.

The picture at the top, to the left of the date, is Mexican goalkeeper Pablo Sisniega (Pablo link). Combine this with the SatH logo as in the first newsletter, to obtain PabloSatH (Hunt link).

Significant contents include: "Nobody notices the mud when they're close to the goal." This is likely to be a quote by Banks himself. This is very true of the treasure site when the proximity of the treasure makes the hunters momentarily forget the amount of mud they have to traipse through to get there!

3. Page 1

3.1 TEXT

The font of the text string under "Pablo's ATH" (bold italic) suggests it's Hill Cipher. Using PABLOSATH to populate the 3x3 matrix gives **"EACH PRIME LETTER"**.

Picking out the prime number letters of the first paragraph gives:

"A boat ride is not needed but water is near".

As we would later discover, the treasure is indeed near water. Namely 'The Lost Pond' in Epping Forest.

3.2 PICTURES

Column 1

1 Tornado jet aircraft

2 Rites Of Thy Degringolade. La Dégringolade was an 1872 novel by Émile Gaboriau, a pioneer of detective fiction.

3 Red box. Contains the treasure. Also a Rex Stout novel.

4 Silkworm. JK Rowling novel.

5 Golden Gate Bridge. Alistair MacLean wrote a novel called Golden Gate.

6 Lightning Strike. Ed McBain 87th Precinct novel "Lightning" (concatenated with JK Rowling's detective Cormoran Strike).

Column 2

1 Banks peninsula, New Zealand. Relates to Gordon Banks, a key figure in the first newsletter and winner of the Muddy Boots award.

2 Relates to a story about a Hungarian zookeeper called Tibor Toth. Therefore a Tibor Fischer reference.

3 Tortilla Flat. John Steinbeck novel.

4 Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side. Agatha Christie novel.

5 Six Napoleon Bonaparte 20 Franc coins. Sherlock Holmes story The Adventure of the Six Napoleons by Arthur Conan Doyle.

6 David Bowie in character as Ziggy Stardust. Stardust is a Neil Gaiman novel.

So 10 of the pictures relate to our identified authors. The other two are a Tornado fighter jet and the Banks Peninsula. The latter is a reminder of Gordon Banks, one of the subjects of the first newsletter, and recipient of the Muddy Boots award in the second.

3.3 OTHER CONTENT

There appear to be five Oreo cookies in the middle of the page.

The symbols at the foot of the page translate to "pablosath.com/christmas.htm", which links to a page containing a drawing of "Carol the Ancient Yuletide Troll".

4. Page 2 - Arthur Conan Doyle

This page focussed on the works of Arthur Conan Doyle, particularly the Sherlock Holmes novels.

4.1 QUESTIONS

0 Hill. Dr John Watson poses as Dr Hill Barton, a connoisseur of Chinese pottery, in the Sherlock Holmes story "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client".

1 Conan (from Arthur Conan Doyle). Barbarous relates to Conan the Barbarian and the rest of the question relates to the fact that Conan is often mistaken to be part of Doyle's surname rather than a forename.

2 Illustrious. In "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client", Kitty Winter throws vitriol in the face of her former lover, the roguish Baron Gruber. (The "client" is implied to be Edward VII but not named.)

3 Priory School. In "The Adventure of the Priory School", Holmes observes that there are cow-tracks but no cows. And the pattern of the tracks indicate trotting, cantering and galloping.

4 Holmes, Katie. She starred in "Dawson's Creek" and went on to marry Tom Cruise. Surname link to Sherlock.

5 Empty House. In the novel "Flashman and the Tiger" by George MacDonald Fraser, Sir Harry Flashman finds himself in a scene from "The Adventure of the Empty House", and has to endure the humiliation of Sherlock Holmes analysing him while he is pretending to be a drunken tramp. Flashman had originally set out to murder someone but then had to pretend to be a drunk as Holmes had arrested the intended victim.

6 Red circle, which is top right of the Olympic rings. "The Adventure of the Red Circle" is a Sherlock Holmes short story.

Using the full answer to question 0, and the acrostic formed from the other answers, gives HILL CIPHER. Hill Ciphers use matrix inversion and are used extensively in the Hunt.

4.2 PICTURES

First two rows of pictures

Dylan Thomas

Katherine Hepburn

Elizabeth I

D.H. Lawrence

Isabella I of Castile

Maureen O'Hara (playing Esmeralda in "Hunchback of Notre Dame")

4828 metres converts to 3 miles, which (on land) is a LEAGUE.

Willie Nelson
Tilda Swinton (playing the White Witch in "Narnia")
Alex McLeish
Adele
Holly Near
Esau and Jacob by Matthias Stom

All the people shown are redheads, so it's a reference to "The Adventure of the Red-Headed League", a Holmes story.

Their initials also spell out The Lions Mane. "The Adventure of the Lions Mane" is another Sherlock Holmes story.

Below the envelope

The series of fractions is symmetrical, except that 3/4 is missing. "The Adventure of the Missing Three Quarter" is a Sherlock Holmes story.

The phrase transcribed from Greek means "Translated it as 'Interpreter'". "The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter" is a Sherlock Holmes story.

Next row pictures are references to Holmes stories:

- The Adventure of the Devil's Foot
- The Adventure of the Second Stain
- The Adventure of the Copper Beeches
- Violet Hunter is a character in "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches", hence why these pictures are connected. (Hunt link)

And the next:

- First image refers to a 'three-pipe problem', a term coined by Holmes to describe a problem which requires the smoking of three pipes whilst pondering the solution. "It is quite a three pipe problem, and I beg that you won't speak to me for fifty minutes."
- Treasure route photograph.
- The bird in the crocodile's mouth is a plover. This page's Ruth Rendell reference: "The Crocodile Bird".
- Skandál is Czech for scandal so this refers to the Holmes story "A Scandal in Bohemia".

Right side of the envelope

The yellow smiley face is a reference to "The Adventure of the Yellow Face".

The dates to the right of the envelope are those of Christian Doppler. The line above the dates refer to red-shift, and therefore the Holmes story "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle". Carbuncles are usually red.

4.3 CODES

First row of pictures:

- The A1 Scrabble tile is a clue that the alphabet option with A=1 (as opposed to A=0) must be used for decryption of the Hill Cipher.
- Leicester City, a homophone of Lester (S. Hill), who invented the Hill Cipher and spent most of his career at Hunter College. (Hunt link)
- Silbury Hill - the "S Hill" part of Lester's name.
- Background from Neo's conversation with The Architect in "The Matrix Reloaded". Indicates that a 2x2 matrix is to be used for Hill Cipher decryption.

Rod Steiger as "The Pawnbroker", and the initials JW and the equivalence symbol.
The pawnbroker in "The Adventure of the Red-Headed League" is Jabez Wilson.

A 2x2 matrix with keyword SHJW (Sherlock Holmes, Jabez Wilson) decodes to
JABEZWILSONY.

The next line also decodes with the same 2x2 SHJW matrix:
NOW USE REKORBNWAP AS A PLAYFAIR KEY I AND J NO Q

REKORBNWAP is pawnbroker backwards. So using NOSLIWZEBAJ as the Playfair key with no Q on the final line of coded text gives **TAKE SIGNED FOOTPATH WEST.**

The final line of encrypted code is written in the font "Playfair Display" - which is also used on other pages to denote the Playfair cipher.

5. Page 3 - Rex Stout

This page focussed on the works of Rex Stout, particularly the Nero Wolfe novels. Rex Stout's middle name was Todhunter. (Hunt link).

One of Stout's books is "The Red Box". The treasure is (according to page 1) buried in a red box (it's actually pink), and there's a picture of one on page 1.

5.1 QUESTIONS

- 1 A (given). The three "given" letters on this and pages 5 and 8 spell out ATH. (Hunt link)
- 2 Osgood. In "Some Buried Caesar", Frederick Osgood is a neighbour of Thomas Pratt who planned to barbecue a bull named Caesar. Osgood is also the name of a family of suspected Zygons in Dr Who.
- 3 Rowan. Lily Rowan is a character in the Rex Stout mysteries and Rowan Williams is a former Archbishop of Canterbury. Johnny English and Mr Bean are Rowan Atkinson characters.
- 4 Cramer. Inspector Cramer is a recurring character in the Rex Stout mysteries and "Cramer's Rule" can help with Matrix Inversions. (Reference to the Hill Cipher.) Banque Cramer is a Swiss bank
- 5 Hills. In the first novel "Fer de Lance" the victim is murdered on a golf course (while driving the ball) In the novel and the film adaptation "Meet Nero Wolfe", the golf club is called West Hills. This is the same name as the tennis club in the poster for this year's ATH.
- 6 "In The Best Families". Nero Wolfe's nemesis Arnold Zeck is finally defeated in "In The Best Families". Peter and George relates to Pete Best (Beatles first drummer (beater)) and George Best (nicknamed the fifth (o quinto) Beatle).
- 7 Death. Rex Stout has novels entitled "Death of a Doxy" and "Death of a Dude".
- 8 Stout. Nero Wolfe is a portly man so could be described as stout, which is of course Rex's surname.

The acrostic is (A) ORCHIDS. "Black Orchids" is a Rex Stout Nero Wolfe novel.

5.2 PICTURES

Top row

- 1) a Rottweiler. This page's Ruth Rendell connection. There is a Ruth Rendell novel called "The Rottweiler".
- 2) Reference to "The Mother Hunt" by Stout. Also a Hunt link.
- 3) "The Father Hunt", also by Stout. It's Father George Hunt, former editor of an American Jesuit magazine and the man whom the "Hunt Prize" is named after. Another Hunt link.
- 4) The Doorbell Rang by Pat Hutchins. Also the name of a book by Stout.

The cover of Gambit starring Colin Firth is on its side next to the questions. "Gambit" is another Stout novel.

Bottom row

B4071 and B3129 are roads.

The B4071 leads to the village of Saul. Next to the tank, this makes Saul Panzer, a character in the Nero Wolfe novels.

The other tank is a Chieftain and also pictured is Alfred Hitchcock. There's an Ethelbert (or "Geoffrey") Hitchcock in the Nero Wolfe novels. The B3129 runs from Bristol to Flax Bourton via the Clifton Suspension Bridge.

The final picture is of golden spiders. "Golden Spiders" is a Nero Wolfe novel.

To the untrained eye, they resemble aphids; Nero Wolfe is a keen orchid grower and obsesses about searching for aphids and other pests among his flowers.

5.3 CODES

Below the codes:

- 1) Ludo
- 2) Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme
- 3) Regal Stout (obvious Rex Stout reference) by Scarborough and Whitby brewery

Ludo is a game you PLAY; and Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme is a reference to the Simon and Garfunkel song "Scarborough FAIR".

PLAY + SCARBOROUGH FAIR - SCARBOROUGH = PLAYFAIR.

So another Playfair cipher reference akin to the images inside the envelopes on other pages.

Regal Stout was also made by John J Hunt Ltd of York. (Hunt link)

4) Rex Hill Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Gris - Rex Stout and Hill Cipher reference.

5) 3x3 scene from "The Matrix" - clue to decoding the Hill Cipher.

Using the Playfair cipher with AORCHIDS as keyword, the first string decodes to NEXT KEYWORD IS DETECTIVE'S FAVOURITE FISH EGGS.

Using SHAD ROE, the second string decodes to ENCODING MATRIX IS THE DETECTIVE'S NAME X.

Converting Nero Wolfe to a 3x3 matrix by substituting numbers for letters and using Hill Cipher, the decoded text returns **FOLLOW PATH TO RIGHT BY FENCE CROSS ROAD.**

5.4 OTHER PUZZLES

In the line of text below the questions:

"Das Oophoroma folliculare" is an article published by German physicist Fritz Brenner. Fritz Brenner is also a character in the Nero Wolfe novels.

The rest of the line is a quote from Star Wars in a language called Sullustese:

"Nyeb mlu, Solo. Tsun knetto eihcra niwdoog, bnef nlle!"

("We copy, General Solo. We'll keep you on our tracking screens. Good luck!")

"(Note: *eihcra niwdoog* is Archie Goodwin reversed, a reference to the famous writer and Editor.)"

Archie Goodwin is also one of the main characters in Rex Stout's mystery novels.

Y mynydd du, in bold after the italics, is Welsh for "The Black Mountain", a novel by Stout. Nero Wolfe is Montenegrin. Taken literally, Montenegro also means Black Mountain.

So overall, this line is a reference to Archie Goodwin and Fritz Brenner

The countries in silhouette are Dominican Republic (DO) and Great Britain (GBR).

The two arrows could be a reference to Fer-de-Lance which is French for spearhead.

6. Page 4 - Agatha Christie

This page focussed on the works of Agatha Christie, particularly the Hercule Poirot novels but also many others like Miss Marple.

6.1 QUESTIONS

1 Mirror crack. A reference to the Miss Marple novel "The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side" (a quote from "The Lady of Shalott" by Tennyson), and ties in with a picture on page 1.

2 Appointment With Death. US metal band Lizzy Borden have an album entitled "Appointment With Death" This is also the title of an Agatha Christie Poirot novel published in 1938. Somerset Maugham wrote a 1933 play called "Sheppey" in which the main character literally has an appointment with Death. The title of the Christie novel is thought to come from the play.

3 Ridgeway, Philip. A million dollars of bonds in the care of Philip Ridgeway goes missing in the Poirot novel "The Million Dollar Bond Robbery". The long distance footpath known as The Ridgeway ends at Ivinghoe as discovered in a recent ATH.

4 Poirot, Hercule. Greek Labourer = Hercules; Leek chez lui = Poireau (French for leek). "Heard" (or "we hear" etc) is classic cryptic crossword code for sound-alikes.

5 Lord Edgware. In the Christie novel "Lord Edgware Dies", he was murdered because his estranged wife Jane Wilkinson wanted to marry the Duke of Merton but as he was Roman Catholic he couldn't marry a divorcee.

6 Endless Night. The title of the Agatha Christie novel "Endless Night" was inspired by the poem "Auguries of Innocence" by William Blake. A polar night (when night lasts for more than 24 hours) is a feature of tidal locking, as is an endless night. (Neil Gaiman also has a Sandman novel called "Endless Nights".)

The acrostic formed from the answers is MARPLE - Miss Marple being a prominent Christie sleuth.

6.2 PICTURES

Above the codes

- 1) "The Big Four" - Agatha Christie novel.
- 2) A blue train - "The Mystery of the Blue Train" is a Christie novel.
- 3) A pub called The Crooked House near Dudley. "The Crooked House" is a Christie novel.
- 4) "The Man in the Brown Suit" - another Christie novel.
- 5) "Curtain" - another Christie novel.
- 6) "The Fallen Curtain" by Ruth Rendell. This page's Rendell reference.

Below the codes

Christie novels:

- The Body in the Library
- Five Little Pigs
- Cards on the Table
- The Ambassador's Boots (the photo is Peter Westmacott, ex UK ambassador to USA)

Bottom row

Wheatstone Bridge, invented by Samuel Hunter Christie
minus

An icon showing the prophet Samuel

= Hunter Christie (Hunt link and Christie reference in one go)

6.3 CODES

Below the codes:

1) "Huttonian Theory of the Earth" by John PLAYFAIR.

2) Andover and Churston are the locations of the first and third murders in "The ABC Murders" by Christie. The second murder takes place in Bexhill.

Next to this is the character Bex from Eastenders.

Bexhill - Bex = Hill (indicating Hill Cipher)

3) The numbers in the 3x3 matrix spell out THE MATRIX when converted to text, pointing to use of a 3x3 matrix for decryption.

MARPLE used as a Playfair keyword decodes to NEXT KEYWORD ON WHAT BONDS
VANISHED.

Using keyword OLYMPIA, the second ciphertext decodes to BELGIAN'S NEURONES AND
GLIA X.

Using Poirot's GREY CELLS for the Hill Cipher, gets **HEAD DOWN TO L. NOTE RUNGED
TREE AND BENCH TO R.**

7. Page 5 - Neil Gaiman

This page focussed on the works of Neil Gaiman, particularly the Sandman Universe but also many of his other publications.

7.1 QUESTIONS

1 T (given). The given letters for question 1 on pages 3, 5 and 8 spell ATH.

2 Saraquael. In "Murder Mysteries" by Gaiman, the angel Saraquael murders the angel Carasel whilst the angels are busy creating the universe. This kicks off a chain of events that leads to even more murders.

3 Hunter. "Hunter, due to a curse which prevents her from entering London Above, remains in the abandoned British Museum underground station." from the novel "Neverwhere" by Gaiman.

4 "American Gods". The novel starts with Shadow Moon being released from prison (gaol) three days early after his wife and best friend (kin) are killed in a car crash, only to discover they were having an affair (sin).

5 Dream. "In the first volume, Dream is mistakenly captured by Roderick Burgess, from the Order of the Ancient Mysteries, who intended to capture his older sister Death to achieve immortality. In fear of penalty, Burgess keeps Dream imprisoned for 72 years."

6 Omens. The full title of Good Omens by Gaiman and Terry Pratchett is "Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch"

7 Wednesday. Shadow Moon and Mr Wednesday rob a bank in "American Gods" by Gaiman

The acrostic is (T) SHADOW. Shadow Moon is a Gaiman character.

7.2 PICTURES

Above the codes

1 Cover of the book "Sloths" by William Hartston. Gaiman wrote the story "Sloth" as part of the "Seven Deadly Sins" collection. The cover has been placed upside-down because that is how sloths spend most of their lives.

2 Shadow of the moon during a total eclipse. Shadow Moon is a Gaiman character. The "Moon Shadow" episode of the "American Gods" TV series was based on one of Gaiman's novels.

3 "A West country street leading towards the Sea" by James Heseldin. This is a reference to the Gaiman novel "The Ocean At The End Of The Lane"

Below the codes

First row

1 "Snow, Glass, Apples" is a story by Gaiman that tells the Snow White story from the Queen's point of view.

2 Cinnamon (name of Gaiman novel)

3 The Stardust Mission launched by NASA in 1999 to collect dust from the coma of Comet Wild

4 "Stardust" is a Gaiman novel.

Second row

The bottom left picture is a sculpture called "The Sand Man" so an obvious Gaiman reference. The satellite image is Wexford Harbour. It's Irish name is Loch Garman which is close to Gaiman! Principally though, Inspector Wexford is the main character in Ruth Rendell's novels, so this is the Rendell reference for this page!

Letters at bottom right look like clipped bits of Atha Cliath, a shortened form of the Irish name for Dublin. ATH appears twice.

7.3 CODES

Below the codes:

The full Jefferson quote is "I can never fear that things will go far wrong where common sense has fair play." so is a Playfair cipher reference.

The Morse Code decodes to HILL HOUSE.

The picture next to this is Hugh Laurie in House.

Hill House - House = Hill so another Hill Cipher reference.

Hill House is also the publisher of some of Gaiman's books.

Playfair decryption of first line using TSHADOW gives MUM(X)MY MAKER WITH (X)
HONORIFIC IS NEXT KEY.

Mr. Jacquel (Anubis, the Ancient Egyptian god of the dead and mummification) is an expert at preparing bodies for the wake at funerals (from "American Gods").

Using I instead of J though (because J is not normally used in Playfair), it's MRIACQUEL. That decodes to MAIN GOD IN STORY, TWOXTWO, NO Q.

The main god in "American Gods" is ODIN. Using 2x2 Hill Cipher with no Q decodes to **AFTER A BOGGY FURLONG NOTICE NO NUTS OR SPOONS.**

(A furlong is equal to 220 yards, 40 rods, or 10 chains - or about 200m).

8. Page 6 - Ed McBain / Evan Hunter

This page focussed on the works of Ed McBain, particularly the 87th Precinct novels. McBain also wrote as Evan Hunter (to which he changed his name) and Hunt Collins. Double Hunt link!

8.1 QUESTIONS

1 (T)

2 Heckler. Heckler and Koch is a German defence company with the slogan "No compromises". "The Heckler" is a novel by Ed McBain.

3 Evan Hunter - a pen name of Ed McBain. Relates to the movie "Evan Almighty" and the car Hillman Hunter. (Hunt link)

4 Bank. All of the plants (left to right: Musk Rose, Eglantine, Oxlip, Woodbine, Thyme, Violet) feature in the lines from "A Midsummer Night's Dream" beginning "I know a bank where the wild thyme blows" [Act II Scene I Line 249].

5 Isola. Albert Isola was elected to the Gibraltar (rocky) parliament in 2013 (duemilatredici). Isola is also Italian for island and the setting for the 87th precinct novels by McBain.

6 Robbery with Violins. Peter Knight and Rick Kemp were members of folk band Steeleye Span. Their 1973 song "Robbery with Violins" is also known as "The Bank of Ireland". Also a reference to the Ed McBain novel "Fiddlers". The image implies no violins are allowed; so no robberies and no fiddlers please!

7 "Deaf Man". The 27th Book of the 87th Precinct series by Ed McBain was called "Let's Hear It For The Deaf Man". There are 57 books in total in the series.

8 (S) The formulae are Citric Acid and Ecstasy / MDMA respectively.

The acrostic spells THE BIRDS, for which McBain wrote the screenplay.

8.2 PICTURES

Below the questions

Haydn's epitaph (In the 1st person, hence "auto") is "Veni Scripsi Vixi" - "I came, I wrote, I conquered")

The 5 birds (McBain wrote the screenplay for the film The Birds) are:

Merlin

Egret

Yellowhammer

(Bald) Eagle

(American) Robin - "The April Robin Murders" (McBain novel)

The initial letters spell out MEYER. Together with the superscript 2 (Meyer squared), this makes Meyer Meyer who is a detective in the 87th precinct novels.

Below the codes

First row:

- 1) The Fuzz - "Fuzz" is a McBain novel
- 2) "Eight Black Horses" - McBain novel. It's the fourth 87th precinct novel to feature The Deaf Man.
- 3) The "mischief" half of the painting "Mischief And Repose" by JW Godward. "Mischief" is an Ed McBain novel.
- 4) Hark, the Herald Angels Sing, with the arrow below pointing to Hark. "Hark!" is a McBain novel. He also wrote a collection of stories called "The Merry, Merry Christmas".

Next row:

A dove and a swede. The Deaf Man uses many aliases including Dendove. Den döve means 'The Deaf' in Swedish.

A still from the video for "Hunter" by Björk. An Evan Hunter reference, and a Hunt link as well. Treasure location photograph.

Steve Carell in Evan Almighty. Both a reference to Evan Hunter (as in question 3 above) but also makes Steve Carella, the main character in the 87th Precinct novels, when added to the A next to it.

8.3 CODES

Below the codes:

- 1) The PLAY that goes wrong
 - 2) New York State FAIR
- So 1+2 = PLAYFAIR
- 3) Equations relate to Hill's Spherical Vortex, so is the reference to Hill Cipher.

Playfair decryption of first line using THEBIRDS gives THEMATIC AUTHOR'S PSEUDONYM.

Playfair decryption of second line using EDMCBAIN gives DEAF NOVEL FOUR FOURXFOUR MATRIX.

Using Hill Cipher and keyword Matrix EIGHTBLACKHORSES, the third line decodes to **TAKE MAIN PATH UP WNW A HUNDRED RODS TO CLEARING WITH A POST.**

(100 rods is approximately 500 metres.)

9. Page 7 - Tibor Fischer / Twin Peaks

This page focussed on the works of Tibor Fischer and also the movie Twin Peaks thanks to a few rather tenuous links between the two!

9.1 QUESTIONS

1 Thought Gang. Michelangelo's David - (Claude) Michel = Angelo Badalamenti and David Lynch = "Thought Gang" (an album by the two pictured men). "Thought Gang" is also a novel by Tibor Fischer.

2 Weinberger, Tibor. During the championships in Milwaukee, future champion Bobby Fischer defeated Tibor Weinberger - whose name is so thematic.

3 If you're stupid. "Don't Read This Book If You're Stupid" by Tibor Fischer

4 Night. Track 10 on Thought Gang features the line "The Black Dog Runs at Night" over and over again. This song also features on the Twin Peaks soundtrack.

5 Pot. All of the words listed can precede 'Pot' so this is a reference to "The Collector Collector" which is narrated by a pot.

6 Eddie Coffin. The first picture is Eddie Murphy as Buckwheat. The second is the funeral of IRA member Alex Murphy. "Murphy" is slang (especially Irish) for potato. The last picture in the equation is Alex from the Daily Telegraph cartoon strip. So two Murphies and a coffin, and after subtracting two Murphies and Alex, the answer must be "Eddie Coffin", the narrator of "The Thought Gang."

7 Arse. "Under the Frog" (hence sub-batrachian) was Tibor Fischer's debut novel. The title is taken from a Hungarian expression, "a béka segge alatt" used to describe any situation when things can't seem to get any worse: "under a frog's arse, down a coalmine". (Fischer's parents were Hungarian.)

8 Kyle. iSpy is a song by American rapper Kyle. Fortis et Fidus is the motto of the MacLachlan clan and Kyle MacLachlan started in Twin Peaks which involved both members of Thought Gang.

9 Sumerian. The text spells out "Abram" in Sumerian Cuneiform. Abram (better known in the bible as Abraham) was born in the Sumerian city of Ur. The novel "The Collector Collector" by Fischer is narrated by a 5000 year old Sumerian pot. (For a bonus point, there was also a man called Abram Fischer who was once Nelson Mandela's lawyer.)

The answers spell TWIN PEAKS. Created by David Lynch, score by Angelo Badalamenti, starring Kyle MacLachlan.

9.2 PICTURES

First row:

Tim Hunter (ATH link), one of the directors of Twin Peaks.

The pictures in the equation are:

A one-armed bandit

New Zealand with Lyttleton, a suburb of Christchurch, marked in red

plus Hubert Humphrey

minus Humphrey Lyttleton

That leaves "Hubert". In "The Thought Gang", Eddie Coffin teams up with a literal one-armed bandit named Hubert to rob banks.

Second row:

1 from the Monty Python sketch about the expedition to the Twin Peaks of Kilimanjaro.

2 from the International Exhibition 1876, where "the largest and most celebrated vine in the world" was exhibited. It was located in Santa Barbara, so it's this page's reference to Ruth Rendell, who wrote also as Barbara Vine.

3 Treasure location photograph

9.3 CODES

Below the codes:

- The long number is the ISBN of "The Philosophy of Play". Indicates Playfair.
- Bridge at Wintertime by Tibor Boromisza. Tibor connection.
- Fischer Hill Red by Whitewater Wines. Fischer connection as well as Hill Cipher.

Using TWINPEAKS as the keyword, Playfair decryption of the first line of cipher text gives AUTHOR WITH PRECEDING INITIAL.

Then, decoding the 2nd string using TFISCHER gives NO Z FOURXFOUR BOOK AND AUTHOR'S INITIALS.

Third string using Hill Cipher and a 4x4 matrix based on THETHOUGHTGANGTF, and an alphabet with no Z, decodes to **SHARP RIGHT INTO WOOD, CONTINUE TO BANK.**

10. Page 8 - Alistair MacLean

This page focussed on the works of Alistair MacLean.

10.1 QUESTIONS

- 1 H (given). The letters ATH are all that is given for question 1 on pages 3, 5 and 8.
- 2 Bear Island. Hambergfjellet, Miseryfjellet, Alfredfjellet and Antarticfjellet are all mountains on Bear Island, Norway. "Bear Island" is also a MacLean novel.
- 3 Obliquely / Obscured. Answers to reversed clues in the crossword. Both are correct.
- 4 Toll. "The Nine Tailors" by (friend of ATH) Dorothy Sayers is about nine bells (and set on land). "When Eight Bells Toll" by Alistair MacLean is set at sea.
- 5 Ulysses. The James Joyce novel "Ulysses" was set over the course of a single day in Dublin. The HMS Ulysses sailed the Mediterranean from it's commissioning in 1943 to its decommissioning in 1963. MacLean's debut novel was entitled "HMS Ulysses".
- 6 (The) Last Frontier. A novel by MacLean based on the Hungarian revolution and also the state nickname of Alaska.
- 7 Ice Station Zebra. Matthew Reilly wrote the novel "Ice Station". Add a variegated equid and you have Ice Station Zebra by Alistair MacLean (who also uses the pen name Ian Stuart). One of the festive links on the ATH page (chanukah.htm) goes to a picture of a zebra.
- 8 (The) Satan Bug. In this MacLean novel, a villain threatens to spread a virus that will wipe out all life on Earth, but the real aim is to get the city of London evacuated so thieves can rob the uninhabited city.
- 9 Captain Mallory (Gregory Peck) in The Guns of NaVArONE (chemical elements from their atomic numbers). The film was based on the novel of the same name by Alistair MacLean.

The acrostic formed from the answers is (H)BOTULISM. "The Satan Bug" by MacLean features a toxin very similar to botulism.

10.2 PICTURES

Above the codes:

- The Red Bull Assassin Bug. Reference to "The Satan Bug" by MacLean.
- "Puppet on a Chain" (MacLean novel)
- TE Lawrence (of Arabia). MacLean wrote a biography of him.

Below the codes:

- Jamaica Inn, Cornwall. The inn was owned by Alistair MacLean for a period of time. He bought it for £27,500 in 1964, but only actually stayed there for three days! In 1973, disappointed at the lack of return on his investment, he sold it.
- MacLean Hunting Tartan. (Hunt link)
- Treasure location photograph

10.3 CODES

Below the codes:

- Poster for 1936 film Captain Calamity. A reference to Stuart Hill, an English pensioner dubbed "Captain Calamity" in 2001 after he needed to be rescued from multiple misadventures while sailing. Therefore a link to the Hill Cipher.
- The vessel TS Playfair. So the Playfair cipher is used.
- The 3rd picture is Vigenere, inventor of the Vigenere cipher.
- The co-ordinates are MacLean Hill, Canada. MacLean and Hill Cipher together!

Deciphering the first string using HBOTULISM gives VIGENERE FOILER OF DIABOLICAL BANK ROB(X)BERY.

Diabolical bank robbery refers to "The Satan Bug". The robbery was foiled by Pierre Cavell. Deciphering the second string via Vigenere with the paraphrase PIERRECAVELL gives THREEEXTHREE HIS LAST BOOK.

MacLean's last book is "Santorini". Converting this to a numerical 3x3 matrix decodes to **FROM TRUNCATED TREE WIDDERSHINS FOR THIRTY YARDS.**
(Widdershins means anticlockwise.)

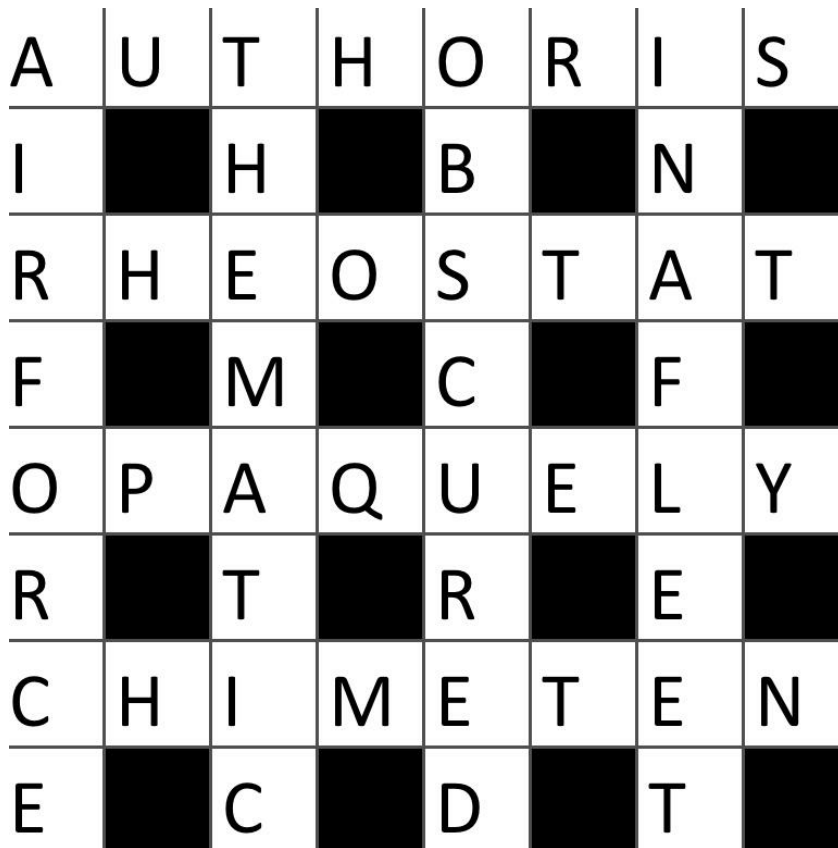
The three coded text strings in the bottom left-hand corner are decoded using the three ciphers Playfair, Vigenere, Hill respectively (and corroborated by the fonts used). Using the keyword Fear (from the MacLean novel "Fear is the Key"):

Playfair = IS THAT SO?

Vigenere = GOOD IDEA;

Hill = BRAVO A RED HERRING!

10.4 CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

- 1 author is
- 5 rheostat (reference to Wheatstone Bridge)
- 6 opaquely
- 7 chime ten (one more than the nine tailors)

Down

- 1 air force ("Air Force One is Down" is a MacLean novel)
- 2 thematic
- 3 obscured
- 4 in a fleet

This then ties in with the Ruth Rendell novel "1 Across 2 Down". Taking these in turn gives us "AUTHOR IS THEMATIC". It is the Rendell link for this page.

11. Page 9 - John Steinbeck

This page focussed on the works of John Steinbeck.

11.1 QUESTIONS

1 "(The) Moon is Down". 15:24 is the time of the moonrise on Christmas Day in the UK. A reference to the novel by Steinbeck.

2 "(The) Red Pony". £25 is a pony, and in the red. A red My Little Pony is the first of the row of pictures below.

3 Hawley, Ethan Allen. The protagonist of "The Winter of Our Discontent", a 1961 novel by Steinbeck

4 "Of Mice and Men". Steinbeck novel that takes its title from the Robert Burns poem "To a Mouse".

*The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promised joy.*

5 "(The) Grapes of Wrath" by Steinbeck. The title was inspired by the Bible passage in Revelation 14:19 King James Version (KJV) "And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God."

The reference to truth marching relates to the lyrics of the first verse of "Glory Glory Hallelujah", which also mentions the grapes of wrath.

*Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword
His truth is marching on.*

6 (King) Arthur. "The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights" by Steinbeck was published in 1976, 8 years after his death.

7 Nobel prizes. Linus Pauling and Marie Curie have won two Nobel prizes. The other two double-winners are Frederick Sanger and John Bardeen. Steinbeck was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1962.

The acrostic formed from the answers is MRHOGAN from the Steinbeck novel "How Mr Hogan Robbed a Bank".

11.2 PICTURES

In the top right hand corner is a stein of Becks beer: Stein-beck.

Below the questions

- 1) "The Red Pony" - Steinbeck novel
- 2) Magnesium burning. Reference to the novel "Burning Bright".
- 3) "Cup of Gold" - Steinbeck novel
- 4) Pearl White - links to Steinbeck novel "The Pearl"
- 5) Lady Jane Grey - reigned for 9 days.
- 6) Pippin from Lord of the Rings". 5 and 6 combined (plus the number 4) links to Steinbeck novel "The Short Reign of Pippin IV: A Fabrication".

The text in English is from a poem called "The Land of Nod" by RL Stevenson. The title of Steinbeck's "East of Eden" is taken from the verse in Genesis 4:16: "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the Land of Nod, on the east of Eden".

The Russian text translates as "Red Herring Magazine", and can therefore be ignored!

Below the codes

First row:

- 1) Tarzan of the Apes by Edgar Rice Burroughs
- 2) Dancer in Green by Edgar Degas
- 3) Ragtime by Edgar Lawrence Doctorow
- 4) Sculpture by Martin Beck

These relate to the 3 Edgar Awards and 1 Martin Beck Award won, not by Steinbeck, but by Ruth Rendell. This is therefore the Rendell reference for this page.

Guitar chord of C major, followed by piano chord of B major.

Second row:

- 1) Treasure location photograph
- 2) Draughts board with the message "WHITE PLAYS FIRST AND UP CHESS ACHEZSD" on the white squares.

11.3 CODES

Below the codes:

- The 2nd of 4 swimmers in the Australian women's 4 x 100 medley was Judy Playfair. Reference to Playfair cipher.
- 100 E77 Street NY is to be the address of Lenox Hill Hospital, where Steinbeck was admitted with a mystery illness. Reference to Hill Cipher.

Playfair decryption of 1st string: AUTHOR'S FIRST TWO WIVES CONCATENATED.

Steinbeck's first two wives were Carol Henning and Gwyn Conger. Playfair decryption of 2nd string using CAROLGWYN gives MISTER HOGAN STORY FIVEXFIVE NO Z.

Using Hill Cipher with keyword matrix HOWMISTERHOGANROBBEDABANK and alphabet with no Z, this decodes to **LOOK FOR A TREE WITH VERY MANY TRUNKS.**

At the bottom right is a picture of Vigenere next to coded text.

12. Page 10 – Ruth Rendell

This page did not focus on any one author as such but there are a few clues on the page that link it to Ruth Rendell, whose former house is located near to the treasure site.

12.1 QUESTIONS

1 (I)

2 Brexit. French Europe Minister Nathalie Loiseau did not name her cat "Brexit", despite claiming that she had, due to its contrary behaviour with respect to going out in the morning.

3 Spider. Violin, Banana and Camel are all types of spider.

4 nm. The big number is the number of nanometres in a nautical mile, and either unit could be represented by nm.

5 (E)

6 Pizza. Or Pi(zz)a. A pizza could be described as a short hot cylinder. A mathematical "joke" that appears in several places on the internet.

7 Orestes, son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, and brother of Iphigenia.

8 Francesca da Rimini, who inspired an opera by Rachmaninoff for which Modest Tchaikovsky wrote the libretto, and also "The Circle of the Lustful", a painting by William Blake. The endless orgy refers to Dante's Inferno where Francesca and her lover are "trapped in an eternal whirlwind, doomed to be forever swept through the air just as they allowed themselves to be swept away by their passions."

The acrostic spells IBSNEPOF.

12.2 PICTURES

Below the questions is a chessboard with the cryptic message

Above the codes is John Thaw playing Inspector Morse.

To the right of this is a treasure location photograph.

12.3 CODES

Below the questions

The picture is Emma Stone in "Zombieland", with an arrow pointing to her boots. To the right is Silje Vige representing Norway at Eurovision 1993, and a Néré fruit.

Vige + Néré = Vigenere cipher

Vigenere cipher of the red text with keyword STONEBOOTS decodes to CAESAR SHIFT ACROSTIC. A -1 Caesar shift of the acrostic IBSNEPOF gives HARM DONE, which is a Ruth Rendell mystery novel in the Inspector Wexford series. This is one of several Ruth Rendell references for this page.

Inside the envelopes

- a painting by Annabel Playfair
- a Terracotta neck-amphora (jar) with lid and knob attributed to Exekias. "The Vault" by Rendell features a large amphora.

Playfair of first line of ciphertext with keyword HARMDONE gives MAIN PUNISHMENT FIVEXFIVE NO Z DECRYPT IS AIDDE

KISSING THE GUNNER'S DAUGHTER was the slang name given to what was once the main punishment in the Royal Navy and is also the name of another Ruth Rendell novel (and is a perfect 25 characters). Unfortunately we couldn't get it to decode.

Below the envelopes

"Huloo hehmo slo ef huo Foyr" is a cryptogram of "THREE TITLES ARE IN THE NEWS".

"Huer er ath an algo!" means "They are all the same" in Luxembourgish. It also contains the word "ATH" (Hunt link).

13. Page 11 - JK Rowling

This page focussed on the works of JK Rowling, particularly the Harry Potter books.

13.1 QUESTIONS

- 1 Nearly Headless Nick. He doesn't quite qualify for the Headless Hunt as his head is still attached by half an inch of skin.
- 2 Ernie Prang. Replacing the Latin "nox" with its translation "night", the Knight Bus is a triple-decker bus in "HP and the Prisoner of Azkaban".
- 3 Cresswell, Dirk. "One of Dirk's most notable traits was his fluency in Gobbledegook. After graduating, he went to work at the Ministry and eventually became Head of the Goblin Liaison Office."
- 4 Ron. Severe Tropical Cyclone Ron battered the South Pacific in January 1998. There was also an Eastenders character called Big Ron. Ron also fits the Harry Potter theme on this page.
- 5 Owl Postal Service. Snowy is a species of owl, and flowery contains the letters of owl!
- 6 Potter, Beatrix. She was prevented from submitting a paper about mushrooms to the Linnean Society because she was a woman (two X chromosomes) and has a thematic surname.
- 7 Hogwarts - Sus scrofa is the pig species and the papillomavirus can cause warts.
- 8 "And The People Who Owned Them". At the age of 11, Rowling wrote a novel (unpublished) about seven cursed diamonds and the people who owned them.
- 9 (G)
- 10 Und der Stein der Weisen. The German translates to "What were the last five German words in the film with different titles in the United States and the United Kingdom?" This refers to the first Harry Potter film which included "Philosopher's Stone" in UK, "Sorcerer's Stone" in USA and "Stein der Weisen" in Germany.
- 11 Sagittarius. Another Harry Potter reference. Parvati Patil is a twin, hence Gemini. Bane is a centaur so therefore Sagittarius.

The acrostic formed by the answers is NECROPHAGUS.

13.2 PICTURES ETC

To the right of the questions

A goblet of fire - reference to the Harry Potter book.

Below the questions

"Circle inscribed with equilateral triangle with altitude" is the Deathly Hallows symbol.

"I expect PANS1/2!" = Expecto Patronum (a spell from Harry Potter)

Expecto is Latin for "I expect". PANS1 and PANS2 are both names of a mouse-ear cress protein patronum.

Below the codes

First row:

Various characters in Harry Potter:

- 1) Guy Fawkes - Fawkes is the name of a Phoenix
- 2) French Frigate Hermione - Hermione Granger
- 3) Constellation Draco - Draco Malfoy
- 4) Princess Hedwig of Denmark - Hedwig is an owl
- 5) Henri L'estranger - Bellatrix Lestranger

Second row:

- 1) Extract from "The Tay Bridge Disaster" by William McGonagall. The Professor of Transfiguration in the Harry Potter books is Minerva McGonagall.
- 2) Portobello mushrooms. A reference to "Portobello" by Ruth Rendell. The Rendell reference for this page.
- 3) Terry Butcher. Reference to Terry the Boot.

13.3 CODES

Below the codes:

- 1) Harry Potter and the Cursed Child - A PLAY
- 2) Pensacola Interstate FAIR
- 1+2 = PLAYFAIR
- 3) A STOAT, with an arrow pointing to its HEAD. (A stoat is also known as a weasel, so also an indirect reference to the Weasley family from Harry Potter.)
- 4) Quinta da Pacheca 40 Year Old Tawny PORT. (Tawny owls feature in Harry Potter.)
- 5) KEY to a Ford Anglia, the car owned by the Weasleys.

3+4+5 = STOATSHEAD HILL PORTKEY

Stoatshead Hill was a steep hill located outside the village of Ottery St Catchpole. It was one of two hundred sites throughout Britain selected to house Portkeys that would transport people to the Quidditch World Cup in 1994.

The question mark therefore stands for "hill" - denoting use of the Hill Cipher.

NECROPHAGUS as the keyword decodes 1st string to QUIDDITCH BALL FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER. Using keyword BLUDGERSNITCH, second ciphertext decodes to NO Z HILL FIRST NAME OF VAULT OWNER

Hill Cipher using matrix keyword BELLATRIX and alphabet with no Z decodes to **ONE CHAIN BACK FROM KEYHOLE INSIDE TREE CXCIXLVII** (One chain is about 20 metres).

CXCIXLVII can be interpreted a number of ways. For example CXCIX LVII would be 199 57, whereas CXCI XLVII would be 191 47.

14. Page 12 - Émile Gaboriau

This page focussed on the works of Émile Gaboriau, particularly the Monsieur Lecoq novels.

14.1 PICTURES ETC

First row

- Logo of Le Coq Sportif. M Lecoq features in six Gaboriau novels.
- Francisco José de Caldas, Columbian polymath and patriot. Caldas is a false identity of Lecoq.
- Anagram of M Verduret, another false identity.
- French for "miserable bungler". In "A Study in Scarlet", Holmes disparages Lecoq as "a miserable bungler".
- All apply to Lecoq.

Second row

- Anagram of the name of the character Fanferlot.
- A squirrel, which in French is Ecureuil - this is the nickname of Fanferlot.
- Pierre Joseph Dubois, a French WW1 general. In "File No 113", Joseph Dubois metamorphoses into Fanferlot.
- So everything in this row is related to Fanferlot.

Third row

- Anagram of the surname of Raoul de Lagors.
- Logo of Wilson sports equipment company. The true identity of Raoul Wilson is Raoul de Lagors.
- James Spencer. His true identity is also de Lagors.
- Everything in this row relates to Raoul de Lagors.

The French text is from the poem "La Chasse" by Pierre-Jean de Béranger: "Save at least the right to hunt, for the honour [of the Breton country]". A volume of works by Beranger is used to decipher a code in a Lecoq story. Lecoq is also a Breton. Also, La Chasse means The Hunt.([Hunt link](#))

Below the codes

First row:

- 1) Virgin and child. Basilica of Our Lady of Orcival, Auvergne, France. "Mystery of Orcival" is a Gaboriau M. Lecoq novel.
- 2) Thomas Alexandre Dumas Slavery Memorial, Paris. "Slaves of Paris", another Lecoq novel.
- 3) The image relates to making a toothpick vanish. Lecoq novel "A Disappearance" by Gaboriau.
- 4) Treasure location photograph.
- 5) "Thirteen Steps Down", a Ruth Rendell novel. This page's Ruth Rendell link.

Second row:

- 1) City of Le Blanc, France.
- 2) "Le rouge et Noir" by Stendhal.
- 3) A novel by Voltaire, presumably "The White and the Black" ("Le blanc et le noir").

That just leaves the red! Or le rouge, which therefore relates to "The Lerouge Case" by Gaboriau. Another Lecoq novel.

The red dot to the right of the Voltaire book is a tiny picture that looks like a black square on a red background, with the upper right-hand quarter of the square coloured white. This confirms that the presumption about the identity of the Voltaire novel was correct.

There are six M. Lecoq novels and we have links to all of them on this page:

- L’Affaire Lerouge (1866) – The Lerouge Case
- Le Crime d’Orcival (1867) – The Mystery of Orcival, Crime at Orcival
- Le Dossier No. 113 (1867) – File No. 113, Dossier No. 113, The Blackmailers
- Les Esclaves des Paris (1868) – The Slaves of Paris
- Monsieur Lecoq (1869)
- “Une Disparition” in Le Petite Vieux des Batingoles (1876) – “A Disappearance” in The Little Old Man of Batignoles

14.2 CODES

Below the coded text:

The two 6-digit codes point, in Streetmap, to Cock Hill, near Glossop.

The wine bottle is Rooster Hill Chardonnay. Both indicate Lecoq, and point to the Hill Cipher.

The Scrabble tile indicates that A=1 for the decryption.

The 3x3 matrix references numbers in the story "File No 113":

File# = 113

Bank on RdP = address in Rue de Provence = 87

APB's = Bertomy's address = 39

Year of old tricks = '93

Picture of the old lady = 2

Criminal code article regarding 24 hours = 93

Dressmaker's address = 81

Marriage date = 15

Chapter called "The Catastrophe" = 22

Converting these to modulo 26 gives the matrix:

9 / 9 / 13

15 / 2 / 15

3 / 15 / 22

Decryption of the text string then gives **ON WAY BACK, PASS BENCH TO BIKE IF THIRSTY.**

15. Treasure clues

Over the course of the previous 12 pages there are a number of clues that point towards the treasure location.

Ruth Rendell links

On each page there is one clue that is connected to Ruth Rendell rather than that page's themed author. This suggests that Ruth Rendell is the most important author as far as this ATH is concerned and suggests the treasure may be buried close to a location associated with her. These clues are as follows:

- P2. A photographic link to the novel 'The Crocodile Bird'
- P3. A photographic link to the novel 'The Rottweiler'
- P4. A photographic link to the novel 'The Fallen Curtain'
- P5. An aerial map of Wexford in Ireland linking to 'Inspector Wexford'
- P7. A poster of a vine in Santa Barbara linking to 'Barbara Vine'
- P8. A crossword saying "AUTHOR IS THEMATIC" linking to the novel 'One Across Two Down'
- P9. Photographic link to awards won by Rendell (3 Edgars and a Martin Beck)
- P10. A photo of an amphora, a reference to the novel 'The Vault' as well as 'Harm Done' and 'Kissing The Gunners Daughter' being used for the Code decryptions.
- P11. A photographic link to the novel 'Portobello'
- P12. A photographic link to the novel 'Thirteen Steps Down'

Encrypted Treasure Instructions

On each page there are a series of codes which when decoded reveal the treasure instructions. These are to be read in page order (apart from page 10) and are as follows:

- P2. TAKE SIGNED FOOTPATH WEST
- P3. FOLLOW PATH TO RIGHT BY FENCE CROSS ROAD
- P4. HEAD DOWN TO L(ef). NOTE RUNGED TREE AND BENCH TO R(ight)
- P5. AFTER A BOGGY FURLONG (200m) NOTICE NO NUTS OR SPOONS (fishing terms)
- P6. TAKE MAIN PATH UP WNW A HUNDRED RODS (500m) TO CLEARING WITH A POST
- P7. SHARP RIGHT INTO WOOD CONTINUE TO BANK
- P8. FROM TRUNCATED TREE WIDDERSHINS (anti-clockwise) FOR THIRTY YARDS
- P9. LOOK FOR A TREE WITH VERY MANY TRUNKS
- P11. ONE CHAIN BACK FROM KEYHOLE INSIDE TREE CXCIXLVII (19957)
- P12. ON WAY BACK PASS BENCH TO BIKE IF THIRSTY

Photos near to the treasure site

Also on each page is a photograph taken (presumably by the setter) near to the treasure site. Once again, these are to be read in page order (apart from page 10) and are as follows:

P10: A stone lion located outside 82 Sedley Rise, Loughton. This is just around the corner from 45 Millsmead Way which is the house which contains Ruth Rendell's blue plaque. This is (presumably) alluded to by the treasure instruction on P10.

P2. A photo of the footpath the leads from Sedley Rise to Baldwins Hill (Hill cipher link?!), alluded to by the instructions on P2 and P3.

P3. The runged tree alluded to by the instruction on P4.

P4. Two trees as you head down and left to a boggy path, alluded to by the instructions on P4 and P5.

P5. A fishing pond, alluded to by the instruction on P5.

P6. A clearing with a post, alluded to by the instruction on P6.

P7. The entrance into woodland, alluded to by the instruction on P7.

P8. The truncated tree, alluded to by the instruction on P8.

P9. The multi-trunk tree with a 'keyhole', alluded to by the instructions on P9 and P11.

P11. An identification tag on a tree, alluded to by the instruction on P11.

P12. A bike outside The Foresters Arms on Baldwins Hill, alluded to by the instruction on P12.

EXIF data

Clicking on each of the photos on the main PDF document leads to a larger version of each photo on a new webpage with a distinct URL. These are as follows:

P2: <https://pablosath.com/moral.htm>

P3: <https://pablosath.com/reuse.htm>

P4: <https://pablosath.com/miner.htm>

P5: <https://pablosath.com/treat.htm>

P6: <https://pablosath.com/yeast.htm>

P7: <https://pablosath.com/foxes.htm>

P8: <https://pablosath.com/comma.htm>

P9: <https://pablosath.com/aisle.htm>

P10: <https://pablosath.com/sword.htm>

P11: <https://pablosath.com/t1ake.htm>

P12: <https://pablosath.com/aw9ay.htm>

The photos on pages 2 and 3 also have an additional piece of text as follows:

P2. Hex, I find, is readable.

P3. Now we complexify.

When compared to the text next to the treasure site photos on PDF document ("Hind is readable" on P2 and "Now we comply" on P3), we can see that the letters EXIF have been removed from the text on the PDF when compared to the next on . This tells us that we need extract the EXIF data from the source code of each page.

Page 2:

1/60 s f4

2019:12:20 09:15:59

Albania

41 27 4 52 5

Page 3:

1/60 s f4

2019:12:20 09:15:11

Shanghai Rapid Transit

12.1 3.3 6.1 10.5 2.4 8.2 7.1

Page 5:

1/80 s f5.6

2019:12:20 09:14:19

Morocco

Q5 9 32 17 52 13 31

Page 7:

1/60 s f5.6

2019:12:20 09:13:11

Bulgaria

X.4 I.2 I.5 XII.6 1.XIV X.14

Page 11:

1/400 s f4

2019:12:20 08:41:26

Pitcairn

Do3 Ta4 Mo3 HH3

Page 12:

1/200 s f9

2019:12:20 03:50:13

South Georgia

Ord3,4 Obj5 Ord5 Abe5,1 Sem1,6 Ord1,2 Unb6

The EXIF data for pages 4, 6, 8, 9 and 11 is just G&S after the date & time.

16. The Treasure Adventure

Having determined the treasure was likely to be near to a site associated with Ruth Rendell, the team spotted the stone lion on Google Streetview close to Ruth Rendell's blue plaque, and from there we were confident we had enough information to find the treasure.

With just two days to spare, the intrepid adventurers parked up outside Treetops (45 Millsmead Way) and wisely changed into their wellies before taking a quick snap of Ruth's blue plaque:



From there, they walked round the corner onto Sedley Rise and spotted a familiar looking stone lion outside number 82:





Next they took the signed footpath West as indicated by the instructions:

Having followed the path round to the right by the fence, they crossed the road and headed downhill. They took the time to note the runged tree to the left and bench to the right:



As the path continued downhill it became very boggy as they passed some familiar trees:



After a furlong (or 200m if you prefer) they reached Baldwin's Pond. Having not brought their fishing equipment, they didn't have to worry about falling foul of the ban on nuts, spoons or



indeed live vertebrate bait:

From here, as instructed, they took the main path WNW for 100 rods (or 500m in layman's terms) and after traipsing through a quagmire, they eventually reached a clearing with a post:



Next they took a sharp right into the woods and passed some more familiar looking trees:



After yet more mud, before too long they came to the banks of 'The Lost Pond' and soon spotted the truncated tree as promised:



Next they travelled widdershins (or anti-clockwise to you and I) for 30 yards until they spotted a tree with very very many trunks:

One of the young adventurers had no trouble finding the "keyhole":



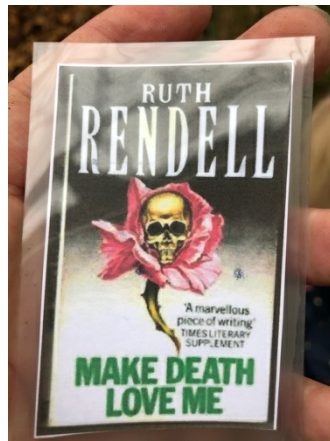
One chain (aka 20m) back from there they spotted tree 19957 (CXCIXLVII):



They looked inside, and sure enough, there was the treasure!



Ticket number 17 was successfully retrieved. Not the team's worst performance...



Though not everyone was impressed!



An eventful journey back followed including finding an impressive 17 year old geocache, having both young adventurers fall in the mud and ask to be carried and finally taking a quick look at the bike by the Foresters Arms:



They decided it probably wasn't roadworthy so opted to drive the car back home instead.

