



Ian goes Geocaching

When working in Princeton, New Jersey, some 10 years ago – which I have to say is one of the most boring places on earth – I bought a hand-held GPS. The idea was to use it to navigate the rivers and canals of France, but I never understood how it worked. Modern technology is difficult for me – I leave it to my wife! So, I put it in a drawer and forgot about it!

However, a chance conversation got me hunting the house for this bit of equipment. Half-an-hour later and some new batteries, I managed to switch it on, but still not sure of how it worked, I handed it over to ‘the wife’. She, with GPS in one hand, the information booklet in the other, the computer on, and much tutting, as she found that factory defaults had altered to ‘marine’ – well I like boats – slowly we got it working.

So, why, I can hear you asking yourself, was I suddenly in need of a GPS? When it comes to new ideas and innovations I always seem to be late to the party, and it would appear since the year 2000 there has been a whole new craze sweeping the world……. Geocaching!

What do you mean, you’ve never heard about it. Well, when I first heard the word I thought it was some sort of meteorite that was about to enter the atmosphere and obliterate the earth. Happily it isn’t. It is a new form of treasure hunt.

There are over two million active geocaching gamers worldwide and five million cachés. There are hundreds of ‘cachés’ around Brittany. Check out the website, www.geocaching.com and you will be amazed what is just down the road! So what exactly is ‘a caché’? It is just what it sounds like, a place where something is hidden. The website gives you the GPS co-ordinates of the hiding place and off you go to find it. What is ‘it’, you might ask. Well a box, large or small, into which someone has put a notebook and paper so you can record your find, plus a few other items, you can take an item out, as long as you put another one in, there are tags that need to be moved from site to site, there are multi-cachés, there are events happening world-wide. For me, it just gives a new purpose for a walk, and an opportunity to discover new places. If you have children, it’s a great afternoon’s entertainment; little cost, gives them something to look for and they can bring a prize home. Perfect.

So, are you interested? If so, there is a GeoCache event happening on Thursday 16th January organised by the Rostrenen Tourist office with the aid of

the AIKB. Contact the AIKB office for more details and put your name down – you don't need a dedicated GPS system, a smart phone will do – and of course you will need a stout pair of shoes.

Well, me, well, armed with my new found knowledge and my bit of technical wizardry, I'm off... to find something, somewhere.....