

The Pinboard a fishing trip to Wiltshire

I just got back from Wilts where at 8.10 this morning I uncovered a red wooden box, locked with a key, containing a very happy little open-mouthed ceramic fish (and a couple of impressive centipedes!). A beautiful location, glorious weather, and I'm glad I went so early as the A303 west was stationary from about 10am!

Martin Dennett, Paul Harkin and I solved this by spotting that the gate images in the top left of our hunts were subtly different.

It turns out there were four different gate photos on our sheets, sent out randomly, or rather four different configurations of rust (the 'red' bit!) depicting an S, a T, the number 96, and the number 39, leading to the OS square ST9639. This square contains a village with the name Codford - which was sufficiently fishy for us to feel good about trekking west to search. However, I spotted that the only other village name in the square was Sherrington - which contains the precise fish we were looking for (much head-bashing and cries of 'Doh!' at this point). Pinned to the photo is a transparent/pink-banded square: overlay this on square ST9639 and not only does the + pinpoint the exact location of the gate - the pink bands neatly obliterate the S and ton of Sherrington, leaving... Brilliant!

I got to the gate and had to check the photo to make sure it was the right one - much smaller than I imagined and in a far more open landscape (and yes, that is water just visible!). Also there was no rust (!) and the left gatepost was invisible - totally obliterated by overgrown nettles, brambles and cleaver. You never have a flame-thrower on you when you need one, do you? I converted my trowel into a machete and managed to clear a space, acquiring many stings and scratches in the process. Luckily the box wasn't too deeply buried but I had to be very careful as it was in pretty poor shape (it's been in the ground a year apparently).

I think I shared the little fishy fellow's expression when I unwrapped him from his cloth. I took a few photos and a well-timed dog-walker took some more (she was fascinated by the whole story and is probably regaling her family or the whole village as I write this!).

Nicely done, Matt and Nick - and of course this little victory is sure to spur us on further with our work on the hunt proper

Clive Weatherley
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