

## The Treasure Punt #24

Our hero, Captain Blackbird of The Bountiful, adrift in the doldrums, lounged back on his bunk and keyed into his new Apple I-Phone 4S. Since discovering the power of the internet, and social networks in particular, as veritable treasure hunting troves, Blackbird spent all of his spare time alone on the phone, nabbed in a recent skirmish with the dark pirates of The Kleptomaniac.

“My-my,” Blackbird marvelled, after googling the phrase ‘hidden treasure,’ and uncovering over twenty-three million and four-hundred thousand unfamiliar sites.

“One-Eyed Dick!” he shouted down to the galley, “Get yer’self in here speedily, me hearty.”

The Bountiful’s full-time galley-hand and part-time pseudo-psychologist, known fondly to his shipmates as OED, and for whom his captain has recently gained new found respect arising from OED’s modern treasure hunting methods, responded with gusto, appearing immediately at Blackbird’s side.

“Aye-aye, captain, at ‘yer service,” he said.

“Blighted bilious blackberry burgers!” Blackbird blurted in a manner akin to his ninth cousin Captain Haddock. “How’d ‘yer get her so quickly?”

“Astral travelling,” OED answered, “Tis faster than the speed of sight.”

“Bloody bunkum, and shut ‘yer gob with such snivelling new-age tripe, OED. There’s important, old-fashioned work to be done,” said Blackbird, showing apposite leadership wisdom.

“Now just lookie here,” the captain continued, showing One-Eyed Dick the 4S’s illuminated touch-screen, into which OED squinted with his good, left eye.

“It’s a much bigger world out there than even I thought, and as ‘yer know, I’ve walked back and forth a plank or two in my life,” mused Blackbird. “It’ll take some time, but don’t ‘yer think these sites, so strangely unfamiliar, are worth exploring?”

“Darn me holy socks and definitely!” OED decided on the spot.

“Oarsmen!” Blackbird shouted down to the bottom deck. “Set sail, I mean row, row, row ‘yer boat, and merrily, me mateys!”

The many oarsmen moaned and groaned, but soon The Bountiful, under labour, released a regular gentle wake from astern.

“Rupie,” said Blackbird, now in a very good mood, alerting coxswain Rupert Redbeard. “Don’t worry about direction. We can go any way we like, and we’re bound to criss-cross the millions of these not so anymore hidden treasures.”

“Yer’d think he’d wonder why he’d never heard of them,” Rupert whispered under his breath to first-mate Long John Platinum, LJP, standing at the helm. Rupert and LJP were both staunchly traditionalist pirates, and sceptical of the power of the worldwide web, save for spotting nakedly nubile nymphs, understandable for manly sea-weary warriors.

Meridian followed meridian, and latitudes dissected longitudes, as the geographic degrees, minutes and seconds flowed under the bows of the boat. It was tremendously exciting for our pirates, hopeful at such seemingly easy pickings, and without even the need for maps and other pirate accoutrement! This excitement mounted to a crescendo of energy as the first site was sighted.

“Ahoy! Treasure ahead!” exclaimed Blackbird, highly expectant of [www.goldengranulegateway.com](http://www.goldengranulegateway.com).

But soon after weighing anchor at the site, it was crystal clear to The Bountiful boys that all that glittered was not gold.

“One-Eyed Dick, ‘yer dirty dog, are ‘yer dippy?” confronted the captain.

“A summer swallow doesn’t land on a winter’s tree because there’s one bad apple,” OED countered, confounding his captain with purposeful mixed metaphor. “Look, here comes another site!” he distracted.

So Blackbird set the oarsmen rowing once more, and after the shortest stint in living memory, The Bountiful arrived at [www.pearlsaplentiful.com](http://www.pearlsaplentiful.com).

“I’d gnash these with me teeth, if I had any,” remarked Rupert Redbeard, always keen to spot a fraud, and throwing a sample pregnant oyster at LJP, who in one bite shattered Blackbird’s illusion.

“More false than the twelve toenails at the end of Rosy Riproaring’s filthy feet,” our good captain sneered, as One-Eyed Dick shrivelled under his boss’s wary gaze.

But OED was nothing if not resolute in attempting to find the remaining twenty-three million, three-hundred and ninety-nine thousand, nine-hundred and ninety-eight remaining treasure troves.

For the next twenty-four hour shift the not at all merry oarsmen of The Bountiful rowed east, west, north and south, visiting the following sites, and hundreds more, to boot: [www.rubyredroasters.com](http://www.rubyredroasters.com); [www.emeraldsgreenandgrisly.com](http://www.emeraldsgreenandgrisly.com); [www.treasureticklers.com](http://www.treasureticklers.com); [www.dastardlydiamonddeeds.com](http://www.dastardlydiamonddeeds.com); [www.gemsgoodasgone.com](http://www.gemsgoodasgone.com); [www.ripenreadyforthetaking.com](http://www.ripenreadyforthetaking.com); [www.cheapiebonanzas.com](http://www.cheapiebonanzas.com); and [www.sailorsspunnsuckered.com](http://www.sailorsspunnsuckered.com).

When [www.necklancesneatnnasty.com](http://www.necklancesneatnnasty.com), [www.boobybraceletbooty.com](http://www.boobybraceletbooty.com) and [www.jewelsbejiggered.com](http://www.jewelsbejiggered.com) has been visited to exactly the same unprofitable end, pirates Siphon, Steve, Seve, Severino, and all the other simple s-men sailors manning the oars, threatened mutiny on The Bountiful.

“That’s it, Blackbird! Just one more row and ‘yer take me oars,” snarled enormously muscular Slung-Gob Sparepants, throwing down his paddles, jumping up and pushing two iron oarlocks into Blackbird’s ears, deep into his vacuous cranial cavity, and lifting the captain to eyesight level, before dropping him, a series of actions that aroused great applause from the crew.

“Okay, okay, I get it,” Blackbird demurred after LJP had removed the offending apparatus from his leader’s ear canals. “Rupert Redbeard, set sail for Simons Town,” the captain announced, to great commendation. “We’re going back to Plan A.”

**Treasure Hunting Tip:** Whilst the internet has promoted breath-taking profusion in the quantity of candidates registered on job portals, social network sites and the like, genuine quality is rare and commensurately hard to find. Air hostesses apply for positions as architects and engineers, and Mac-jobbers for the roles of CEO and MD. The internet, the very thing that many analysts claim will transform the recruitment industry, indeed perhaps even promote its redundancy, has ironically had the opposite effect. Whilst the worldwide web and social networking enable high velocity to the treasure, they provide no guarantee of its authenticity. Good head-hunters are here to stay.

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