



Grid Square

The Newsletter of the Geograph community

#35 January 2026

Geograph Britain and Ireland - www.geograph.org.uk



<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/7954995>

Some industrial heritage to start this **first edition of 2026**, now with a trendy rebrand 'Grid Square'. I've kept the numbering for those who like that sort of thing.

Andy Stephenson's roofscape was the PotY winner for Week 1 2025.

[Link to Discussion Topic](#)

At the end of this letter I have presented the last PotY winner for 2025.

By the time we get to the March edition of **The Grid Square** there should be a winner of the yearly competition for 2025 to announce.

This month's edition has several extra contributions, all of which are truly unmissable, so pour your favourite drink for what's left of January and read on...

From the Chair – David Martin

Happy New Year and welcome to our new look newsletter, now named Grid Square.

I'd like to begin with a huge thank you if you were one of the more than 1,000 users who responded to our recent User Survey, which closed on 12 January. Your answers will help us to better meet your needs and preferences at the start of our 21st year. We'll be presenting a summary of the findings in due course. You may also be interested in [Geograph at 20](#), a compilation of photos tagged with our 20th anniversary shared description.

This spring we are taking two important actions relating to online safety and the operation of Geograph Project Limited, the first of which will be visible to all users in the coming month. Working through the implications of the Online Safety Act (2024), the Trustees have identified various revisions needed to Geograph's Terms of Service (currently called Terms of Use). There is no substantive change to what we expect of you or what you can expect of us, but we have revised sections including how to contact us, how we handle complaints, moderation of user generated content and what types of content are unacceptable. We have also simplified and updated the text. During February we will update the Terms and associated text around the website. All users will be logged out and required to accept the new Terms when they first log back in. We'll be announcing the exact date on the site and in a forum announcement nearer the time. This approach ensures that all active users see the new Terms, even if for any reason they don't receive or read Geograph emails.

The second action will only affect inactive company members. Since 2010, Geograph has operated as both a company and a charity. Company members are eligible to participate and vote at company meetings, such as our upcoming AGM in Nottingham on 3 June (see below). There is a growing number of early members who have not used the website or responded to our communications for several years. It is important that we keep the membership list under review, both as good practice and to ensure that we can achieve a voting quorum in future. We will therefore be contacting inactive members and inviting them to confirm whether they wish to continue as members at the same time as accepting the new Terms. We plan to remove from the membership list any who do not respond to this invitation, in accordance with our Articles of Association 12(4). Initially we will contact those who have not been active since 2018. If you are an active user, you will not be affected in any way, but the Trustees feel it is important to let everyone know what is happening. If you are reading this as a contributor with more than 100 images who is not yet a Company member and would like to become one, you can apply via the link provided in your personal profile.

Our 2026 summer meet-up and AGM will be held at the Nottingham Mechanics Institute on 3 June - see the announcement [here](#). As usual it will be possible to vote online, but we hope to see many of you in person: a full programme will be published to the website in due course.

In March we will be saying farewell – with a very big “thank you” – to Christine Johnstone who will step down after nearly 12 years as one of Geograph's Trustees, including as Chair: do see her note in this newsletter. We are still seeking new Trustees and Additional Content Moderators. If you'd like to know more about these roles – without any obligation – please drop me a line [here](#).

I'd also like to commend to you Cosmo Davis Gimeno's Geograph video project, which was first submitted to the Board and has been directly discussed with myself. See Cosmo's article below.

Wishing you much enjoyment safely taking, uploading and viewing photographs in 2026.

David

Treasurer's Report – Richard Rogerson

Income and expenditure for last month and for 2025 to date is summarised below.

	December 2025	2025 Year to date
Income - Donations, inc. gift aid	£2370	£42260
- Profit from calendars	£0	£873
- Advertising	£16	£428
- Interest	£189	£1758
Expenditure - Website Operation	£2097	£24380
- Administration	£65	£780
- Financial	£13	£198
Net Income	£400	£19962

In a nutshell, reserves are healthy thanks to the success of the 20th anniversary appeal, but regular monthly income is less than monthly expenditure by at least £200/month and may be a little more. This is not an issue in terms of the day-to-day operation of Geograph at the moment but is clearly not sustainable in the long term.

Advertising income has been hard to predict this year but has experienced a significant downturn over the last two months.

I have prepared and submitted a Gift Aid claim for about £1750 to HMRC for July-December 2025.

Richard

Website Performance – Barry Hunter

We are very much aware that the site still suffers from intermittent slowness and performance issues. This is primarily driven by an influx of AI bots; with so much competition between companies and nations to build the 'next big model,' the pressure on our servers is immense. We are constantly working to mitigate this rogue traffic, but unfortunately, it remains an uphill battle with no 'quick fixes.' Please bear with us while we explore more long-term solutions.

On the flip side, we are continuing to experiment with how AI technology can help Geograph. To be clear, we aren't talking about using Generative AI to create low-quality 'fluff.' Instead, we are looking at how AI can help us classify and sort our vast, growing collection more effectively. We are, of course, doing this in a way that doesn't impact the site's availability. If we must deal with the 'crud' these bots bring, we might as well make the technology work for us!

Barry

Company Secretary – Mark Anderson

Since the last newsletter, I have filed our Confirmation Statement with Companies House and we have welcomed one new company member.

The archive of Geograph images at archive.org continues to grow and has now passed image ID 8,000,000.

Mark

Retiring Trustee – Christine Johnstone

Why join Geograph's board?

As I prepare to retire from the Geograph Board, I want to share my thoughts on why it has been such an enjoyable experience.

The Board is a constructive and inclusive team which it is fun to be part of. As one of about ten Directors / Trustees, you get to share time with some interesting Geographers with a wide range of interests. You can use and share your own knowledge and experience.

As other Board members do the same, you certainly will discover more about specialist areas that are unfamiliar to you. There is a real sense of achievement when you help Geograph set and achieve all its goals.

If this sounds appealing, then consider joining the team!

Christine

Special Report – Cosmo Davis Gimeno

My name is Cosmo. I am 26 and about to begin a Master's in Natural History Documentary at the National Film and Television School. I am writing in this edition of the *Geograph* newsletter to introduce myself and a documentary project I hope to make about Geograph and its community.

When I first discovered Geograph, I was immediately fascinated by its gamification of mapping, and by how this simple framework motivates people to go outside, explore, and mark their presence by taking a photograph. From one perspective, I am interested in retrospectively charting the ebbs and flows of the Geograph "game" from its beginnings to the present day. I am particularly drawn to stories of rivalry, friendship, dedication, and adventure.

Through reading blog posts, exploring photo collections, and speaking with trustees, I have begun to understand how Geograph has evolved, and how its purpose and meaning may have shifted for contributors over time. I am starting to see the sub-communities that have formed, as well as the personal motivations that drive individuals to photograph places and build their own maps. At its heart, this project seeks to understand how—and why—the act of mapping inspires people in different ways to go outside and record their adventures.

To tell this story, I would love to speak with individual contributors or groups who have stories to share about Geograph and their relationship with it. This would involve interviews and, potentially, revisiting grid squares you have previously captured. I am based in London but would be very happy to travel anywhere in the country.

My Geograph name is Cosmo Davis Gimeno, and I am currently building up my profile where I will post links to my previous work; details about the project I have in mind, and the practicalities of making it.

Cosmo

Geo-Cycling – Stephen Craven

Geo-Cycling: combining exercise, education, photography and fundraising

It was in 2005 that I first bought a digital camera. About the same time, I joined a local cycling group and found myself riding out into the countryside more than I had for several years.

So, when I discovered Geograph the following year, it fitted into my other hobbies very well. The difference that Geograph made over the next few years was not only taking more photographs than before but also researching the geography and history of the places I visit in order to write interesting and informative descriptions to my Geograph submissions.

There are certainly other contributors who share the same range of interests. The improved quality of smartphone photography in recent years has removed the need to carry a bulky camera when cycling.

It is not every year that I have a cycling holiday (most of my riding is utility cycling around Leeds, and a few day rides in the region). But over the years I have explored a few parts of the National Cycle Network. When I planned last year to ride the Trans Pennine Trail, it seemed appropriate to make it a sponsored event for the charity that I currently work for (Leeds North and West Foodbank). Family, church members and Facebook contacts together raised over £1200.

Many of the 400+ photos I took on my Galaxy A36 phone are now on Geograph (look for my shared description of the Trans Pennine Trail – there is another of the same title by a different contributor).

I have also put a selection of them into a photo book using the Blurb self-publishing website. Copies of the book are available from the link below - £5.99 for a PDF download of which £3 will go to Geograph, or £39.99 for a hardback copy from which the project will get £7.

<https://www.blurb.co.uk/b/12733298-trans-pennine-trail-2025>

Stephen

Contributors' Article January 2026

My twenty Years in Geograph – Anne Burgess

I'm one of several early contributors whose attention was drawn to Geograph via u.m.r.a. – uk.media.radio.archers – on Usenet. I'd always been keen on landscape photography, and I had even begun using grid squares to classify and file a large slide collection. Photographic clubs don't seem to be interested in straightforward landscapes, so Geograph seemed like a perfect answer to what to do with them.

Having scanned and uploaded a selection of existing slides, of which



<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/2775>

was my very first submission (unrepeatable because the trees have grown up and now obscure the view), I began to take shots specifically for Geograph. I'll spare you the first specially taken image because if I had taken one that poor any time recently it wouldn't have made it to the editing stage, let alone submission.

By spring 2006 it became apparent to me that scanning prints or slides wasn't really a good idea. My brother had been nagging me for some time to get a digital camera, and nagging usually has the opposite effect on me from what the nagger wishes. However, Geograph was the 'killer app', and I duly acquired a Canon EOS 350D in June 2006. The first image I submitted using the DSLR is



<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/185538>

I now mostly use a Canon SX740HS, which usually deigns to record the camera location in EXIF if it's on speaking terms with my mobile.

Taking images for Geograph soon became a motive for getting me out walking and cycling as well as driving. I began to get to know my local area far better, and to get more out of visiting other areas. I have become much more interested in various subjects, some of which I have been able to turn into galleries and later into articles, for example

<https://www.geograph.org.uk/article/Native-Butterflies-of-Britain-and-Ireland>

<https://www.geograph.org.uk/article/Thomas-Telfords-Parliamentary-Kirks>
<https://www.geograph.org.uk/article/Recumbent-Stone-Circles>

I also enjoy compiling Geo-Trips, and I'm responsible for all but a handful of the Geo-Trips in my home myriad, NJ. My favourites include

Looking for the Devil's Study <https://www.geograph.org.uk/geotrips/172>

The Steplar Road <https://www.geograph.org.uk/geotrips/1682>

The cliffs between Pennan and New Aberdour

<https://www.geograph.org.uk/geotrips/1562>

The Cairngorms in Winter <https://www.geograph.org.uk/geotrips/2034>

One of the most enjoyable developments in Geograph has been the annual get-togethers. I've been at all but two of these – one because it clashed with a three-line-whip family occasion, and one because I simply could not find anywhere to stay. They have taken me to many cities where I would probably never have gone otherwise, and without exception they have been full of splendid buildings and fascinating history. And of course there's always the excellent and congenial company; I have made so many friends through these events.

I've been very fortunate to have the support of many tolerant friends. When I'm on geology field trips, no-one bats an eyelid when I disappear briefly; they just shrug and say to one another, "There must be a gridline somewhere over there". Several of my neighbours and other walking companions are quite content to be taken the long way round a hill, or tramp across the heather or along a cliff edge, or just to wait while I make my way to that elusive square and back. I'm especially grateful to one in particular who has willingly been roped in to accompany me, read the map, alert me to squares I haven't been in, and to get sidetracked by the same sort of potentially interesting features as easily distract me from the task in hand. Thank you, GKB!

In early December I achieved my target for 2025; I gained my 10,000th personal point.



<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/8205843>

Here's to the next 10,000!

Picking 3 more from 52,605 images is close to impossible, but these are memorable to me for various reasons:



<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/4016934>

Diapensia lapponica because it involved a climb of almost 800m. to the only place in Britain and Ireland where it grows. I know that's small beer to real hillwalkers and mountaineers, but it was a major achievement for me.



<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/1889048>

Tore Burn because it shows some of the typical features of the part of the world where I am privileged to live – the sea, cliffs (only just in view!), glacial landforms and the spectacular gold of the whins in flower.



<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/6339983>

Forest at Findlayseat because it is a shot of a glider, taken by me from another glider, close to my home airfield.

Anne

Editor's Final Note – Jonathan Billinger

As this is a new year, I'd like to wish all Geographers the very best of health and happiness. Enjoy getting out to all those exciting new Grid Squares in 2026 (and consolidating the old ones!).

As mentioned at the top of the edition, this seasonal photo was chosen
PotY Week 52, 2025 winner.

Taken by Anthony O'Neil on 30th December. [Link to Discussion Topic](#)



cc-by-sa/2.0 - At Westminster Cathedral (2) by Anthony O'Neil - geograph.org.uk/p/8225063

<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/8225063>

Contact Us

We always value comments and suggestions, whether on the "Trustees" section of the Forum [here](#) or direct to us by email: trustees@geograph.org.uk



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The directors of the company and trustees of the charity are: Mark Anderson (Company Secretary), Sebastian Ballard, Jonathan Billinger, Stephen Craven, Bill Harrison, Barry Hunter (Treasury team), Christine Johnstone, David Martin (Chair), Peter McDermott, Richard Rogerson (Treasury team), and Ruth Sharville.