

Welcome to the September 2025 Geograph Newsletter. Let's start with some recent seasonal uploads from North Uist, London, North Wales and West Sussex.



With thanks to (clockwise from top left) Mat Fascione, Claire Pegrum, Jonathan Wilkins, Peter Evans.

From the Chair – David Martin

The most recent Board meeting saw completion of several significant activities including approval of the 2024 Annual Report and Accounts, new strategic plan and annual review of Geograph's policies.

Some of this may seem far removed from the "simple" fun to be had from taking photographs and putting them on the web, but our ability to sustain the Geograph project, develop the website, grow the image archive and meet our charitable objectives are all dependent on the proper running of the Company and Charity. I'm really grateful to the trustees who have given much time and thought to these tasks.

Geograph Strategic Plan

The renewed Geograph strategic plan for the period 2025-2030 has been discussed and refined over several Board meetings and will be presented to members during the autumn.

As one of the first actions arising from the plan is to consult with our users – whether members or not – we are currently preparing a user survey, likely to be repeated in subsequent years. There will be slightly different versions of the survey for those registered on the site and the far greater number who use the site to view images without ever going on to register or contribute their own photographs. **I would encourage you to spend a few minutes responding when the invitation comes so that your interests are clearly reflected in our decision-making.** If you are registered on Geograph you should receive a direct invitation to complete the relevant survey version.

Editor's note – see 'Webinar' below.

Education

Since the last newsletter I'm pleased to report that we have progressed the educational projects with both the University of Bradford and University College London. We have been working out a process for the Department of Archaeology at Bradford to use Geograph as a platform for their "Curious Travellers" citizen science photography project which is expected to begin with a pilot project at Fountains Abbey: do watch the forums for any potential opportunity to be directly involved in this. In the meantime, we have devised three potential dissertation projects exploring the use of AI technologies that have inherent research value and could also improve Geograph image classification in various ways. These will be among those offered to MSc students at the Department of Geomatics at UCL in the coming academic year.

Geograph Calendar 2026

Finally, you will hopefully have seen that orders are now open for the 2026 calendar – **application deadline is 28th September.** I would like to record our thanks to Alan Murray-Rust for again making this possible. Why not get ahead with your Christmas present list and generate some funds for Geograph at the same time!



cc-by-sa/2.0 - Main Street, Callander by Oast House Archive - geograph.org.uk/p/6229376

Thanks to Oast House Archive

Treasurer's Report – Richard Rogerson

At the recent Board meeting I shared a spreadsheet showing income and expenditure for 2025 – this is summarised below.

	August 2025	2025 Year to date
Income - Donations, inc. gift aid	£1665	£34532
- Profit from calendars	-	-
- Advertising	£46	£264
- Interest	£127	£993
Expenditure - Website Operation	£2030	£16152
- Administration	£65	£520
- Financial	£13	£150
Net Income	(£269)	£18967

As I have noted in previous newsletters, whilst the above shows an apparently very healthy position, this is primarily due to our 20th Anniversary Appeal which brought in several generous one-off donations.

I am very pleased to report that the 2024 accounts have now been independently examined and approved by the Board at our September Meeting. Micro-entity accounts have been filed with Companies House and the full Annual Report and Accounts have been submitted to The Charities Commission, thus fulfilling our obligations for 2024.

From the Board Meeting, 1st September 2025

Annual Meeting 2026

There have been no offers yet from members to suggest a date, venue or host the 2026 AGM. A decision needs to be made by November. Here is the article from the July newsletter.

Next Year's Annual Meeting was discussed in the light of the successful 2025 meet in Bradford. We are inviting suggestions for both venue and date within a range of early June to early July 2026. If members wish to suggest direct to the board, please use the contact information at the end of the newsletter. This may be a useful avenue if anyone would like to help organize the event and would appreciate help and guidance. Nottingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Norwich and Scotland have all been mentioned informally.

Webinar: Strategic Plan 2025-2030

As mentioned above by David, the trustees have been developing a strategic plan to help guide the development of the Geograph Project over the coming years. To help communicate this work to the wider membership, we plan to hold a short webinar where we will talk through the details of the plan. There will also be an opportunity to 'meet the trustees' and for members to provide feedback and/or ask questions. **The Zoom webinar will be held at 19:00 on 20th October 2025 and be around 90 minutes in duration.** Further details and joining instructions will be issued nearer the time.

AI and Geograph: A New Frontier – Barry Hunter

While we've been managing a significant increase in AI crawlers attempting to download data—which can occasionally impact site performance, I'm also focused on how this technology can benefit Geograph. We appreciate your patience as I work to handle these challenges.

A major project I'm working on is a new search engine that lets you find photos based on their visual qualities – a feature that goes beyond traditional keyword or location searches. This is close to 'launch' and prototypes are linked from the forum.

Looking ahead, there are more possibilities for AI, such as improving metadata by suggesting tags for new and existing submissions or even helping with titles and descriptions. I understand this isn't for everyone, and any AI-assisted feature would be completely optional.

The way people search for information online is changing, from "Googling it" to "asking ChatGPT". To ensure Geograph images can be part of these conversations, we need to develop a responsible way for AI chatbots to access our collection. While some AI crawlers are a nuisance, we also need to thoughtfully engage with the technology to ensure our images remain discoverable in this new landscape.

There is still lots of exploration of the best way to implement these tools. A key challenge is training the AI to suggest tags that are specific to Geograph's unique collection, not just generic labels. We have ongoing discussions about this on the forum, where we're also seeking assistance to gather the data needed for training.

Mobile App

I'm also exploring a revamped mobile app to make it easier to submit images from your phone. If you're interested in mobile submissions and have ideas for features, you'd like to see, please get in touch! To bring things full circle, I may even use an AI coding assistant to help build it.

SCIMPY – Julian Paren

Background and Achievements of SCIMPY

'SCIMPY' stands for SCanned IMage Photograph of Yesteryear

In April 2020 I came up with the idea of SCIMPY as an activity during lockdown. The idea was to create a competition to get older images into the Geograph collection to enhance its future value. For me, "older" meant pre-digital and before the birth of Geograph in March 2005. I based it on YOMP which accepts images submitted to Geograph in the previous month to be later chosen by their author for the monthly competition.

It was accepted that this was a niche market, particularly as a scanning device was needed to rephotograph transparencies and prints. It also involved locating the image to current Geograph standards - requiring far more time than creating the scan. The competition has encouraged images to be shown on Geograph for the first time and encouraged rescans of old images to provide image sizes larger than the one-time 640 pixel wide standard. The forum attracts more views than I had ever expected.

Some remarkable "dated" images have emerged from this competition. Truly, times have changed. The monthly judges generally favour curiosity value over pure photographic technique, but the competition also reveals the quality inherent in film and print. However, the number of contributors has been less than a dozen.

SCIMPY Rules from August 2025

A number of the contributors had already submitted scanned images to Geograph in the many years before SCIMPY started. Their stock of unscanned images has dwindled while their older Geograph images lie buried in the eight million. After an exchange of views on the SCIMPY Discussion Forum the rules are now changed to capture the many good, scanned images contributed to Geograph in the past.

Any scanned image from transparency or film that was taken before 31 December 2010 can be entered for the monthly SCIMPY competition by its original contributor. Four entries a month are allowed. SCIMPY is competitive with images posted by the 14th of each month, judged by the previous month's winner. Once entered for SCIMPY, an image cannot be chosen again for a subsequent month.

The full rules appear at the invitation each month to submit to SCIMPY.

The future

I invite you all to look at your submissions to Geograph from the pre-digital era with a view to what you would like to be available to a wider audience. The encouragement is there to enhance the image by rescanning, or further digital manipulation, but this is optional. Please, as before the change in rules,

continue to scan old images if they would be new to Geograph. If location is the problem for new submissions, I have been overwhelmed by suggestions using "Speculative Upload" - Geographers are very helpful people!

SCIMPY has provided me with an extra dimension within Geograph. With the rules now less onerous, I look forward to seeing some more people join the fun.



Thanks to Julian Paren

Winners' Gallery

<https://www.geograph.org.uk/discuss/index.php?&action=vthread&forum=6&topic=32266>

Here is a selection of a few of the monthly prize winners with the year the images were taken.



<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/6735082>

Ronald Searle 1954



cc-by-sa/2.0 - The State Funeral of Sir... by David Purchase - geograph.org.uk/p/7648301

<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/7648301>

David Purchase 1965



cc-by-sa/2.0 - The New Quarry in Devon, 1970, by Roger D Kidd - geograph.org.uk/p/7734409

<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/7734409>

Roger Kidd 1970



cc-by-sa/2.0 - Ski touring on Cairn... by Jim Barton - geograph.org.uk/p/7379193

<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/7379193>

Jim Barton 1980



2:0 - The Net Loft, Mullion Cove by Philip Halling - geograph.org.uk/p/7997441

<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/7997441>

Philip Halling 1980



cc-by-sa/2.0 - Quenching coker at South Barrow by Alan Murray-Rust - geograph.org.uk/p/7748639

<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/7748639>

Alan Murray-Rust 2004

Editor's Final Note – Jonathan Billinger

I'd like to again thank the contributors to this Newsletter and would welcome seasonal or relatable content for the next one in November. Specifically, if you'd like to do a brief article for the Newsletter along the lines of Julian's this month or Kenny's from July, please contact me directly via the links below. Have a safe and fruitful autumn!

Contact Us

We always value comments and suggestions, whether on the "Trustees" section of the Forum at

<https://www.geograph.org.uk/discuss/index.php?&action=vtopic&forum=22> 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.