

Geograph

at

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¹ [Whitechapel Roofs and Towers](#) © Copyright Roger Jones ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

² [Rossendale Way on the Northern flanks of Hades Hill](#) © Copyright Chris Heaton ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

Geograph at 20 (in 40 photos)

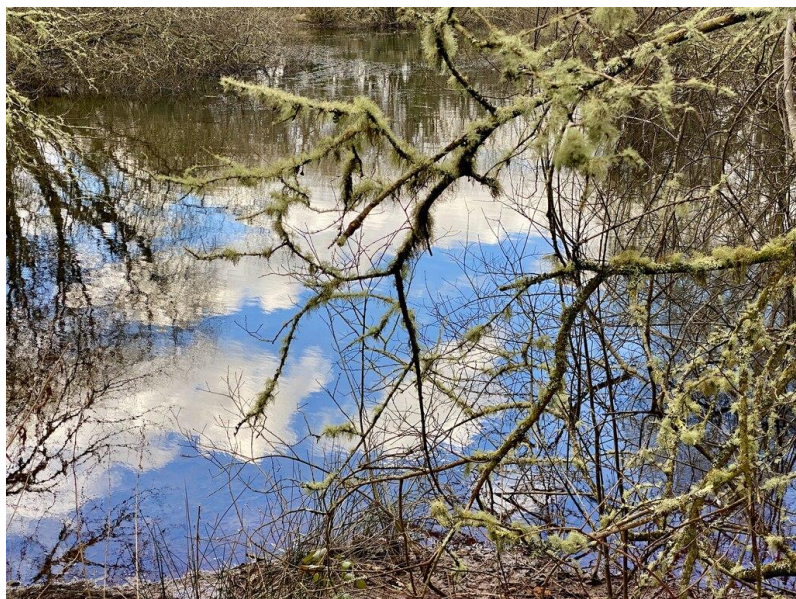
A personal perspective.

Geograph <https://www.geograph.org.uk/> is well and truly 20! The Geograph Project is a photographic archive of Britain and Ireland which opened on 12 March 2005. In the following 20 years, around 8 million images had been submitted by around 14,000 contributors. Geograph is many things, including a photography project and a geographical game, but it is first and foremost an open educational archive. A basic aim has always been to photograph features that would be visible on an Ordnance Survey map.

40 contributors responded to an invitation to add the shared description “Geograph 20th Anniversary” to their photographs taken on or around the 20th anniversary on 12 March 2025, submitting 153 images (you can see the full set at <https://www.geograph.org.uk/snippet/24828>). I promised to showcase those photos and here – at the very end of the year – is the result: I hope you enjoy it. The following selection is necessarily illustrative rather than representative but serves to highlight many aspects of Geograph and to celebrate what has been achieved so far. It was not feasible to include all 153 images, but I have managed to choose one from each of the 40 contributors – all credit to them! Rather than let the acknowledgements dominate the story, you’ll find the copyright note and links to the images on Geograph at the bottom of each page.

This could be thought of as a picture book, an informal catalogue or even a prospectus. Hopefully it will introduce you to aspects of Geograph that you didn’t previously know, encourage you to explore new places and submit further images of your own – or even inspire you to use the photo archive in new ways for education, research or leisure.

David Martin <https://www.geograph.org.uk/profile/13502>



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Geographical coverage

A key feature of Geograph is its extensive geographical coverage. The project was setup as a game, with personalized coverage mapping and points awarded for the first few photographs and first in 5 years within each 1x1 km grid square in the Ordnance Survey and Irish Grids. This has provided an incentive for contributors to thoroughly cover the landscape. At the time of writing (December 2025) 283,356 grid squares have been photographed, representing over 85% of the total available, with the Republic of Ireland being the least-well covered. That's an average over 24 images for each square km of landscape. These anniversary images similarly display wide geographical coverage – sadly with none from the Republic of Ireland.

The title page photos represent the most urban and one of the most remote of those submitted: Whitechapel in the City of London and Hades Hill on the summit of the Pennines near Rossendale in Lancashire.



Map: The distribution of 153 photographs submitted using the “Geograph 20th Anniversary” shared description. There are multiple images at some of the highlighted locations, where several have been taken close together. Background map © OpenStreetMap contributors.

Starting from the north, a night-time image of Glasgow Airport terminal, Scotland. The photo shows night-time activity at a major transport hub. Most Geograph images are daylight photos, but there are many interesting night-time views in the collection.



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Ponies at a gate near Galbally, Northern Ireland. Images of this kind clearly demonstrate the land use at the location – as well as being attractive in their own right!

A very Welsh scene is provided by this view overlooking Borth-y-Gest in Gwynedd, Wales. This is one of the images which represents a photographer going back to a location they had photographed 20 years earlier.



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What could be more English than a village green? Geograph images span the full range of settlements from central London through suburbs of all varieties to villages and hamlets. Here is The Forty at Cholsey in Oxfordshire. Again, this is a site revisited by the photographer.

⁴ [Glasgow Airport at night](#) © Copyright Thomas Nugent ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

⁵ [Friendly ponies, Galbally](#) © Copyright Kenneth Allen ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

⁶ [Twenty years on!](#) © Copyright David Medcalf ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

⁷ [The Forty Cholsey](#) © Copyright Bill Nicholls ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

Not visible on streetview

People discovering Geograph for the first time sometimes ask “Why bother, when everything is on streetview?” To the best of my judgement, 85 of the 183 anniversary photos offer perspectives that cannot found on the leading streetview image site – most obviously photos taken of countryside, moorland, paths and close-up detail. The anniversary date in March meant these were under-represented relative to their prevalence in the entire archive. Geograph’s open licensing model was chosen to ensure that the collection will always remain freely shareable. It’s also worth noting that unlike commercial streetview imagery, care has been taken with the framing, composition and description of the Geograph images.



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A familiar landscape feature, the network of trig points is now obsolete. It was constructed by Ordnance Survey, Britain’s national mapping agency, to enable retriangulation of Great Britain, starting in 1936. Here we see the trig point at Largo Law in Fife.

Although Geograph is primarily about recording the landscape, that doesn’t preclude interesting angles! Here we see Exeter’s city wall reflected in a shop window, nicely capturing the hard surfaces and juxtaposition of ancient and modern within the urban landscape.



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As with so many of the images in Geograph, here we have a well-framed view of an interesting geographical feature. Cannon Hall Country Park near Barnsley is an artificial landscape, with the series of falls and lakes being a Georgian modification of the original stream and valley.

⁸ [Largo Law Trig Pillar](#) © Copyright Scott Cormie ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

⁹ [Exeter city wall reflected in the window of the Fatface shop](#) © Copyright David Smith ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

¹⁰ [Waterfall at the Cascade, Cannon Hall Country Park](#) © Copyright Dave Pickersgill ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

Change over time

As Geograph has matured, there has been an inevitable shift from obtaining the first images of each location to adding different angles, seasons and details, as well as recording change. (It's not part of this anniversary selection, but there has also been growth in the submission of pre-digital photos, subsequently scanned.) For the 20th anniversary images, many photographers chose to revisit the scenes of early images, capturing places that had previously been photographed and occasionally observing changes as they were happening.

This image shows new housebuilding in Middlesex Road, Kingston upon Hull – one of the processes producing the most obvious and extensive change in the landscape and often documented through Geograph images.



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By contrast, nature is reclaiming this Second World War pillbox, now in the sea near Kingston on the Moray Coast. The photographer has been revisiting and documenting its collapse on Geograph for many years.

Another, but very different, seaside view. This photo from Torquay in Devon shows the new building on the site of the former Palm Court Hotel, destroyed by fire in 2010 – an event itself captured by the same photographer and linked from this image on Geograph.



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¹¹ [Middlesex Road, Kingston upon Hull](#) © Copyright Bernard Sharp ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

¹² [Now you see it](#) © Copyright Anne Burgess ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

¹³ [Abbey Sands, Torquay](#) © Copyright Derek Harper ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

Some photographers revisited the sites of their own earlier photographs, capturing the evolution of everyday scenes, here we see Thornley Street, Tameside.



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Another revisitation of one of the photographer's first Geograph shots, albeit less than 20 years ago. This is another type of historical marker: the Millennium bench at Plaitford in Wiltshire, one of many erected around the country in the year 2000 - making it a few years older than Geograph!

Here another photographer compares a contemporary scene with one of their own images taken 9 years earlier, noting changes to the street scene: Riverside Café at Bewdley in Worcestershire.



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¹⁴ [Thornley Street](#) @ Copyright Gerald England ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

¹⁵ [Millennium bench, Pound Lane](#) @ Copyright David Martin ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

¹⁶ [Riverside Cafe in March 2025, 2 & 3 Severnside North, Bewdley, Worcs](#) @ Copyright P L Chadwick ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

Down the street

Many Geograph photos record ordinary scenes in ordinary places. The project aims to document the entire landscape which of course includes stunning landscapes and historic sites. However, there is a sense in which the “ordinary” places may tell future generations more about our experience of daily life in the early Twenty First Century than places that have been carefully curated or will (hopefully) endure unchanged. We have the privilege of looking in on a range of street scenes, all taken on 12 March 2025.



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An “everyday” image well-chosen as a 20th anniversary submission – Lounge Twenty in Wesley Street, Castleford, Wakefield.

It seems likely that the Family Dry Cleaners on Hermitage Road, Haringey is more visually interesting when the shutters are down than when they are up – but it’s a timely reminder that everyday scenes don’t have to be dull.



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All three of these photos were taken on the same day, but it is here in Mold, Flintshire that most seems to be happening: a very active street market.

¹⁷ [Twenty, March 2025, Wesley Street, Castleford](#) © Copyright Christine Johnstone ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

¹⁸ [Family Dry Cleaners on Hermitage Road, Haringey](#) © Copyright David Howard ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

¹⁹ [Mold Street Market - 12 March 2025](#) © Copyright Mike Searle ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

Britain has many Railway Terraces. This one is in Rugby, Warwickshire. Nineteenth-Century terraced housing has partially been replaced by modern flats, but the Methodist Chapel is still a place of worship.



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A somewhat more modern street: here we see inter-war housing in East Meads, Guildford, Surrey. Unsurprisingly, housing stock features largely in the Geograph photo collection, as it forms such a major element of the built environment.

A widely-found suburban street scene: housing from the turn of the (previous) century, demand for parking exceeding capacity, wheelie bins that don't fit in the gardens, a white van... here in East Grinstead, West Sussex



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Mixed housing stock here on a village edge that doesn't appear to have been affected so much by the age of the automobile – although comparison with historic mapping shows that the road has been widened. The outskirts of East Oakley in Hampshire.

²⁰ [Railway Terrace, Rugby](#) © Copyright Stephen McKay ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

²¹ [Houses in East Meads](#) © Copyright Basher Eyre ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

²² [Blue skies on Green Hedges Avenue](#) © Copyright Barry Hunter ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

²³ [Start of Pardown](#) © Copyright Mr Ignavy ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

Education, education, education

Geograph's charitable objective is "To advance the education of the public in geography and heritage by collecting, organising, publishing and preserving photographs and associated information for every square kilometre of Great Britain, Ireland, and the Isle of Man and making them available primarily by electronic means free or at minimum charge to the public, with particular facilities for use by schools". The images are extensively used in the [Digimap for Schools](#) service. As the archive has grown past 8 million images, we are seeing increased interest in research which uses data about the entire collection, in addition to the original concept of using individual images to illustrate geographical concepts.

The children at Cherubs Kindergarten in Horsforth, Leeds, may not be learning much geography yet, but who knows what use they might make of Geograph in the future!? The building was formerly a Baptist Chapel, the congregation now having moved across the road.



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Here's a scene familiar to children the length and breadth of Britain and Ireland: a school bus! Seen here at Malpas in Newport, Gwent – if not actually the school bus, perhaps it was standing ready for a school trip?

I believe this is the only anniversary photograph in which the moon is visible, taken late in afternoon on the University of York campus at Heslington. Many university students and researchers have made use of Geograph images in their dissertations and research projects.



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²⁴ [Cherubs Kindergarten \(formerly Cragg Hill Baptist Church\), Horsforth, Leeds](#) @ Copyright Rich Tea ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

²⁵ [White coach, Pillmawr Road, Malpas. Newport](#) © Copyright Jaggery ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

²⁶ [Alcuin Way](#) © Copyright DS Pugh ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

Days out

As might be expected given the extensive travel undertaken by Geograph contributors, the collection includes many images of gardens, cafes, tea shops and sites of historical interest. Geograph has a huge catalogue of these types of site – although due to the season grand houses, castles and cathedrals are rather absent from the anniversary selection.

These buildings at Whitefriars, Coventry are the remains of a Carmelite Friary.

The friars would no doubt have been amazed to learn that their sacred house would one day stand in the shadow of Coventry's inner ring road.



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After all those photos, it's time to pause for a nice cup of tea. Here, we see the Clock Tower Tearoom at Sewerby Hall and Gardens, near Bridlington on the coast of the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Spring definitely seems to have arrived at Radway Bridge Garden Centre near Lugwardine in Herefordshire: seen here under a blue March sky, warming the new shoots of Geograph's 20th anniversary year.



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²⁷ [Whitefriars, Coventry](#) © Copyright A J Paxton ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

²⁸ [Clock Tower Tearoom, Sewerby Hall and Gardens](#) © Copyright JThomas ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

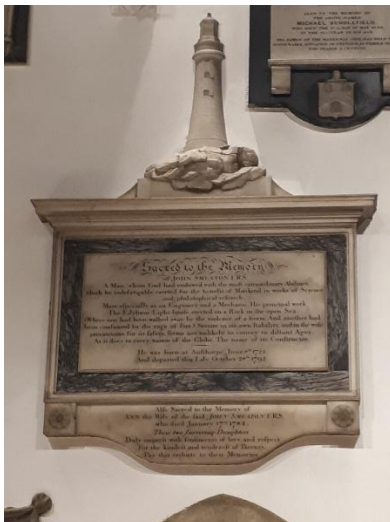
²⁹ [Radway Bridge Garden Centre](#) © Copyright Jonathan Billinger ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

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Geograph includes hundreds of thousands of images of churches, with some contributors making detailed surveys. Here we see Castle Frome Church in Herefordshire under another blue sky: the classic country church photo.

Geograph is not principally an archive of indoor images, but there are many details of notable buildings. Below we see the Smeaton Memorial (“the father of civil engineering”), surmounted by a lighthouse, in the church of St Mary, Whitkirk, Leeds.



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Another memorial, this time an outdoor urban one: the memorial to the Fourteenth Army, serving in India and Burma under Field Marshal Sir William “Uncle Bill” Slim in 1942-45. It sits in the centre of Bristol. The adjacent bench simply says “For your tomorrow”.



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There are over 50,000 Geograph images of war memorials. Above we see the war memorial at Horley in Surrey.

³⁰ [Castle Frome Church](#) © Copyright Philip Halling ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

³¹ [Horley War Memorial](#) © Copyright Richard Rogerson ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

³² [St Mary, Whitkirk: Smeaton memorial](#) © Copyright Stephen Craven ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

³³ [Monument to the 'Forgotten Army'](#) © Copyright Neil Owen ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

Over bridges, under bridges

Transport infrastructure connects, divides and shapes the landscape and provides one of the most visually dominant layers in topographic mapping. It is no surprise therefore that bridges, railways, tramways, roads, paths canals and rivers are all extensively captured by Geograph contributors.



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Bridges form visually interesting focal points in the landscape, often of historical significance. Here we see Montagu Street Bridge over the River Witham in Lincoln. It is a cast iron suspension bridge, opened in 1878.

This wide view shows the Manuelhaugh and Avon Viaduct near to Whitecross, Falkirk, Scotland. It carries the Edinburgh-Glasgow railway line. The photographer, Mike Richardson, sadly died in October 2025.



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A closer view of another Scottish railway viaduct is this of the Kelvin Viaduct in Glasgow, built for the Glasgow, Dumbarton and Helensburgh Railway and still in use. Beneath is a rather different transport route: the Kelvin Walkway and cycle path.

³⁴ [Montagu Street Bridge](#) © Copyright Richard Croft ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

³⁵ [Manuelhaugh and Avon Viaduct](#) © Copyright M J Richardson ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

³⁶ [The Kelvin Walkway](#) © Copyright Richard Sutcliffe ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

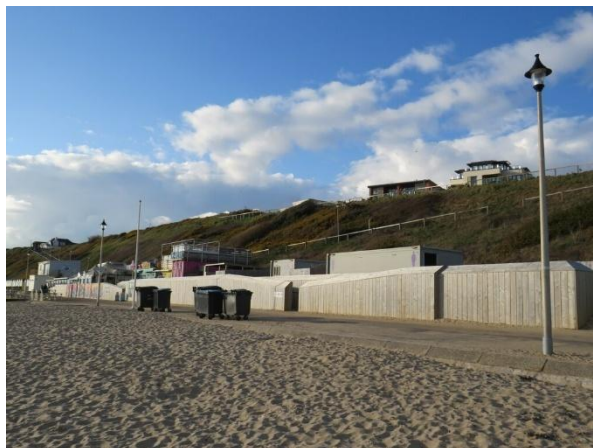
Back to nature

Geograph provides many contributors with the perfect excuse to get out into the natural environment. Over time, the project has built up a fascinating record of species, changing seasons and efforts to manage natural processes.

Inevitably, the March anniversary date led to spring flowers being included in the photo selection. Here we see the daffodils at the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens near Romsey in Hampshire.



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This may not look a very wild landscape, but the coast is the scene of constant battles with sea and weather. These low sandy cliffs at Southbourne in Dorset are prone to landslips and the beach requires nourishment to counteract erosion. It is also a popular tourist destination: geography in action!

The Geograph archive includes many excellent wildlife photos. There are plenty of herons, although they are more often seen standing poised at the water's edge. This one appears to be checking what might be found at Sutton Ecology Centre, near Carshalton in the London Borough of Sutton.



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³⁷ [Daffodils in Sir Harold Hillier Gardens](#) © Copyright Bill Boaden ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

³⁸ [SoBo Beach, Southbourne, near Bournemouth](#) © Copyright Malc McDonald ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

³⁹ [Wildlife Information Board](#) © Copyright Peter Trimming ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

All images submitted to Geograph are published under this [Creative Commons licence](#). Every photo featured in this document is a standard Geograph download and none have been cropped or edited, which speaks volumes to the current high standard of submissions.

You can find out more about the photographers from their contributor profile pages, which are linked from every image on Geograph.

Geograph generally doesn't accept photos of people, but there are a few images that record company meetings and other gatherings of contributors over the years.

We finish our anniversary tour with "Three Geographers by the road to Roskill".



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