



Geograph Newsletter 16

Distributed January 2022

Editor's Introduction

I am looking at my intro to the last Newsletter, which I am sorry to say was nearly one year ago. There has been change and progress, as you will read, but we still have Covid 19 restrictions in

parts of the UK, and even where these restrictions have been lifted, Covid 19 remains with us. We hope that all our members and supporters have managed to stay safe and avoid the worst of the Pandemic.

Trustee Peter Facey retired from the Board at the Coventry AGM, after many years of service to the Board. Our thanks are due to him for his major contribution to the running of Geograph. The AGM itself was an enjoyable occasion, and enabled people to meet in person and make new acquaintances – something we had sorely missed over the past couple of years! Plans are already in hand for the 2022 event in Swindon.

So, without further delay, here's the news from the Board members, starting with important announcements about changes to the Board.

Christine

Caring for elderly parents has taken an increasing proportion of my time over the last year or two, and in autumn 2021 I realised that I did not have enough spare time to chair the Geograph board properly. I stood down in November 2021 and the role passed to David Martin, who I am sure will be an excellent Chair. I have enjoyed the challenges, comradeship and learning opportunities presented by chairing the board since May 2018 and look forward to continuing to contribute as an ordinary member of the board.

David

It has been a huge privilege to recently take on the role of chair of the Geograph Board and I'd like to extend huge thanks to Christine for all her service over the last three and a half years. *[I think we would all second this – Ed.]* I shall very much be seeking to follow in her footsteps as a fellow trustee and facilitator of the board. Every week I learn of yet another aspect of the Geograph community that I hadn't fully appreciated before, despite being a member since 2007! Writing this month, I also

have the honour of congratulating Barry who was named as winner of the Prime Minister's Points of Light Award on 12 January (<https://www.pointsoflight.gov.uk/geograph/>) reflecting 17 years' unique contribution to Geograph. Whenever you visit the Geograph website you are enjoying the fruit of Barry's labour.

Looking ahead to 2022, the Trustees are particularly wanting to focus on the financial base of the project and to refresh our educational strategy. To this end, we will be implementing the trial of advertising on the website that was approved at the 2021 AGM. This is an entirely new venture for Geograph, but one which has the potential to generate an additional revenue stream, broadly related to usage of the website. Our goal is to achieve this in a way that is least intrusive for logged-in members and to use contextual advertising to avoid placing cookies on users' computers. Nevertheless, many specific details will need to be worked out as part of the trial, and there is no way to really explore the practicalities other than to try it. Please be assured we will be seeking feedback from members in due course, to inform any decisions about the longer term.

Sebastian

When Christine got in touch last summer and discussed the possibility of my return as a trustee with a special focus on education it made me realise how close to my heart the project is. I was hooked from the moment I was first made aware of Geograph in 2007 whilst attending a course on ideas on how to teach about the Jurassic Coast.

My focus over the coming months is how we can make the best use of our collection of images to support schools. I believe that the first step is still in the curation of our own collection. The work that has been done by volunteers via the forum thread is a fantastic start and this has already contributed many hours of work. What we do with our images next is the difficult part. This needs to be a collaborative effort where everyone involved fully understands what we are working towards. As I write these words it makes me aware of what a daunting task this is but at the same time what an exciting and rewarding opportunity we have. You may think that with 7 million plus images we should have all bases covered for education. However, whilst many of the early images serve as an invaluable historic record many are not of sufficient quality to use in the classroom of today. I started teaching with an Over Head Projector (OHP) and printed photographs; today I have a 70" HD TV screen in my classroom. Our more recently submitted large images look fantastic and engage my students. There is still scope for many more! Keep an eye in the forum threads for more news.

Bill

I live in Aberdeen and work in higher education, and I have been a member of Geograph since 2007. The incentive of getting out to Geograph things has opened my eyes to the fascinating local history of this part of Scotland from recumbent stone circles to Victorian Free Churches. I was invited to join the Board of Trustees last year and I'm getting up to speed with all the work that the Board does behind the scenes to keep this unique and amazing project in the best of health. I look forward to contributing as a Board member to ensure that we are financially sustainable and help us achieve our next numerical target of eight million images.

Barry

Most recently, the big focus has been on updating the mapping system pretty much across the whole site. This is mainly because the system that provided Ordnance Survey maps is being turned off. But also it's an opportunity to harmonize all the mapping to one new common system, so as to make things more consistent and easier to maintain. It also means there are more choices available on the base map used, although not all combinations are available everywhere. Because of the large number of systems, all developed separately at different times, it's been a bit of a rough transition, but hopefully things will stabilize soon.

There are still also lots of small changes going on in the backend, with no functional change to the website itself, both to modernize the infrastructure, and also to trim the ongoing daily hosting costs.

Michael

In addition to the constant management of Geograph's finances and statutory obligations, recent tasks have been compiling the statutory accounts for 2021, completing a Gift Aid claim for HMR&C and managing the closure of Virgin Giving as our main donation platform.

The matter of Geograph images being sold on eBay was discussed at the meeting of Trustees held on 8th January. This is a long-standing issue which has recently come to a head due to a large number of Geograph images being listed on eBay. Some contributors feel aggrieved when one of their images is offered for sale in this way.

This seems to be based on a misunderstanding of the terms of the Creative Commons licence under which every image on Geograph has been uploaded.

In short, the licence says that anyone is free to:

- *Share — copy and redistribute the image in any medium or format*
- *Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the image for any purpose, even commercially.*

Providing that appropriate credit is given.

What the eBay sellers are doing is legal and within the terms of the Creative Commons Licence. They are providing a service to people who may not be able to print their own. They are donating a significant amount to Geograph funds.

Consequently, the Trustees have decided that no changes will be made to the present arrangements. No alternative licence will be offered. No tool will be developed to remove, in bulk, the larger version of photos from 'more sizes'.

However, the terms and implications of the Creative Commons Licence will be made more obvious to contributors in various places on the website – in particular the submission page and FAQs.

Mark

Now that the dust has settled after our move to the Cloud, I have turned my attention back to the archiving of images at the Internet Archive. I have updated the archive to include all images up to number 7 million and made a start on some of the higher numbers but had problems due to slow running of the archive site. I am pretty sure this is just a temporary blip so I hope to resume in the next month or so.

Stephen

It's been good in the last few months to see the project receiving more mentions in the media. We are also working on a promotional YouTube video that will feature endorsements from both contributors and users as well as showcasing a few of our best photos.

Ruth (Editor)

Geograph received some quality publicity recently on the BBC Scotland Website, thanks to the excellent efforts of Anne Burgess, along with Lewis Clarke, Fabian Musto and Richard Webb. This can be viewed at

www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-59374045

A consequence of this was that we had three more enquiries from the media, two of which resulted in further publicity, and one of which is awaiting further developments. Thanks are due to Phil Halling and David Howard for their help in this. Phil kindly agreed to take on an interview with Midlands-based radio station United Christian Broadcasters, and also joined David and myself to make a podcast for a site called the The Geomob Podcast. You can listen to our chat – select item 112 on this site: <https://thegeomob.com/podcast>

We also got some further publicity with the lovely news, mentioned above, of Barry's award. The link details for that are in David's contribution.

Opportunities to engage with the media are always welcome. Please get in touch if you have any ideas or contacts that we could follow up.

Contact us

Please do get in touch with us with any comments or suggestions. The address is **trustees@geograph.org.uk** or you can comment in the Forum.

Image credits

The Falkirk Wheel at Night

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