

- We found some reflectors, but what are they for?....
- <u>"Geocaching is for Everybody"</u>



Cover: GCAIGN8: Wallington Heath. Photo courtesy of Jonathan Howells **Above**: Ashwood Dale, Peak District. Photo courtesy of TheRolphsUk. Haley Rolph



The **Geocaching Association of Great Britain** is the leading UK Geocaching body, recognised by and acting on behalf of geocachers. The Association was established in 2003 to provide a national organisation that represented geocaching, and to serve as a UK point of contact for geocachers, landowners, the media and others with an interest in geocaching. Find us online at www.gagb.org.uk.

Contributions to Seeker are welcome; please contact editor@gagb.org.uk. The Association is unable, at the present time, to pay for submissions. Copyright in all such contributions will revert to the author on publication of the subsequent issue. Pictures are published on a single-use, non-exclusive UK editorial rights basis, under which copyright remains with the photographer. For individual articles, the author is also the photographer unless otherwise stated.

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Meet the Committee



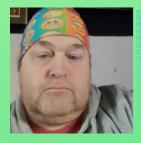
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Haley Rolph
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Claire Harris MxHarris Reps & Friends

Chair's Message

Chris Carpenter Saza36 Chair



Welcome to 2023. As COVID numbers decline and things start to get back to normal we find ourselves hit by financial and other challenges, but I hope you are all keeping well.

The new committee members are settling into the roles and finding their feet. It's great to have a full team again despite a lack of people coming forward initially.

We start 2023 somewhat short of GAGB Regional Reps, due to some leaving and others becoming committee members. If you are willing to support the GAGB by becoming a Rep for your region, please let us know.

The website has been updated to reflect the new committee and details of our SWAG weekend and GAGB roving events has been added. The site contains a full event calendar that is updated daily from GC.com that is searchable by event type and region.

Member numbers continue to grow, and we are assisting several Duke of Edinburgh students who have chosen Geocaching as their physical activity.

2023 marks the 20th year of the GAGB and we are currently planning a few things to help us celebrate – stay tuned as our plans come together and are released on social media and the website.

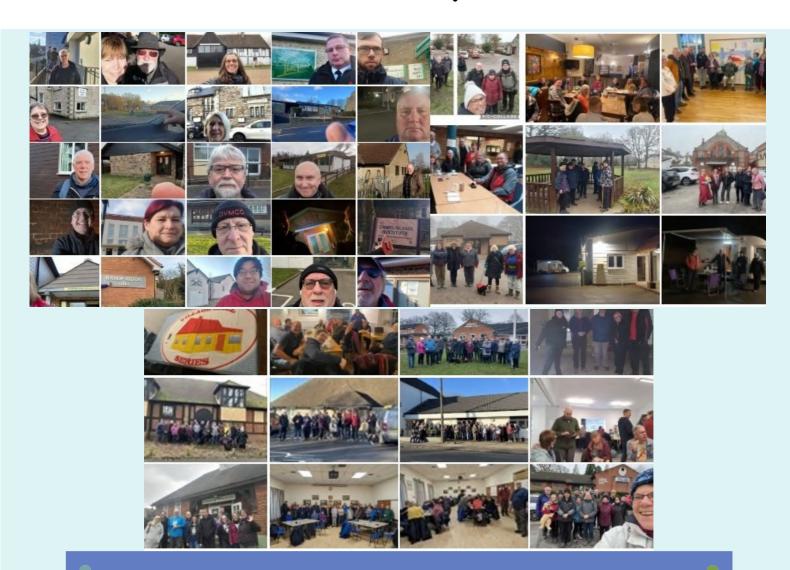


NEWS ROUND-UP

IN CASE YOUMISSED IT ...



Another successful year was had!



The Village Hall Series is a geocaching series with caches placed at or near village hall or a community centre.

<u>NEWS ROUND-UP</u>

IN CASE YOUMISSED IT ...



As a result of this years event, lots of new Village Hall caches published!

Village Hall Series #315 - West Parley https://coord.info/GCA3KNP

Village Hall Series 1361 - Mission Rooms https://coord.info/GCA2HP4

Village Hall Series 1362 - Hildenborough https://coord.info/GCA2HQ2

Village Hall Series 1364 - Woldingham https://coord.info/GCA2HTC

Village Hall Series 1365 - Caterham Centenary Hall https://coord.info/GCA2J32

Village Hall Series 1366 - Tatsfield https://coord.info/GCA2HTR

Village Hall Series 1368 - Oxted Community Hall https://coord.info/GCA2HV5

Village Hall Series 1369 - Kingswells https://coord.info/GCA2JF1

Village Hall Series 1372 - St Matthews, Worthing https://coord.info/GCA2VB1

Village Hall Series 1374 Leigh on sea https://coord.info/GCA2TDT

Village Hall Series 1380 - Sowood https://coord.info/GCA3PCG

Village Hall Series 1386 - Melincrythan https://coord.info/GCA476Y

Village Hall Series 1387- Balliol Hall, West Huntspill https://coord.info/GCA3GKM

Village Hall Series 1388 - Ystradgynlais https://coord.info/GCA478M

Village Hall Series 1389 Assembly Rooms Coney Hall https://coord.info/GCA3KXT

Village Hall Series 1394 - Thixendale https://coord.info/GCA3VCN

Village Hall Series 1395 - Port Seton https://coord.info/GCA44Z4

Village Hall Series 1400 - Kingstone https://coord.info/GCA41GG

Village Hall Series 1410 - Cound Guildhall https://coord.info/GCA46YG

Village Hall Series 1411 - Berrington https://coord.info/GCA46ZB

Village Hall Series 1412 - Pitchford https://coord.info/GCA4701

Village Hall Series 1413 - Cound Moor https://coord.info/GCA470V

Village Hall Series 1414 - Ashbury https://coord.info/GCA46X7

Village Hall Series 1415 - Mendham & Withersdale https://coord.info/GCA47MD

Village Hall Series 1416 - Ludham Church Rooms https://coord.info/GCA490X

Village Hall Series 1417 - Rockbeare https://coord.info/GCA48PX



GAGB at 20 A short history of the GAGB

The GAGB turns 20 in 2023. In this piece, we reflect on the past two decades, exploring the origins the GAGB, and charting its growth and achievements so far. We also highlight various facts and statistics which you hope you will find interesting.



Evolution of the GAGB logo

The Geocaching Association of Great Britain was established by seven founder members:

Moss Trooper, Tim & June, Richard and Beth, El10t, Postie, The Wombles, and Jeremy P.

These geocachers set out the aims and structure of the Association and invited UK geocachers to join. The earliest mentions of the GAGB date back to May 2003 on the Groundspeak Forums, with a "temporary" website going live the following month. By this point, the GAGB had been officially recognised by Groundspeak/Geocaching.com. In the early months, a "caretaker committee" oversaw the day-to-day running of the organisation, during which the aims continued to be debated. Elections were then held in September 2003 for the first elected GAGB committee.

So, why was the GAGB needed? Three key reasons were to support the growth and enjoyment of the hobby, encourage good practice, and provide a central point of contact. Speaking to Seeker in October 2019, Founder Member Dave Edwards (The Wombles) recalls "We were concerned that geocaching would get banned or a bad reputation. GAGB was invented to channel enquiries to people who could positively inform and respond. We kick-started landowner permissions to help cachers and to maximise our chance of greater land areas to hide caches".

Going into 2004, the constitution and geocache guidelines were in the process of being finalised, and the GAGB landowner agreement database (GLAD) was growing at pace. By the end of that year, several major agreements had been secured,



Evolution of the GAGB website

including with the National Trust, Forestry Commission, wildlife trusts, and county councils. Twenty years on, GLAD remains the definitive and largest landowner agreement database in the UK, with circa 200 agreements, many of which were negotiated by the GAGB.

Throughout the rest of the noughties, the GAGB continued to grow and establish a strong reputation as a body recognised by geocachers and able to act on their behalf when necessary. The website became a go-to destination (for landowner agreements, geocache guidelines, the code of conduct, and a very active members' forum), whilst an increasing number of enquiries were being received from the general public and media.



GAGB CITO event

In 2010, GAGB-branded products, including mugs, car stickers, flags and t-shirts, went on sale (thanks to GeoTees), with the black nickel GAGB round geocoin and GAGB geocache label following these. The following year, an e-magazine, Seeker, was launched, which is clearly still going strong today with more subscribers than ever – in fact, you are currently reading a milestone issue, number 50. You can read more about Seeker's history in Issue 44.

The GAGB turned 10 in 2013, and to commemorate this a special 'GAGB10' tag was released. In addition, the decision was made to promote a CITO weekend, with GAGB10 CITO events being held across the country in June. This has become an annual tradition, running as the 'GAGB Annual Weekend' every September from 2014 until 2018, and 'GAGB CITO Week' from 2019 onwards. To date, around 90 GAGB-branded CITOs have been organised over the years.



GAGB Ten graphic

In the two years that followed, a revamped website went live, the first ever 'SWAG Weekend' was held in December 2014, and the GAGB launched its National Park geocoin series with Loch Lomond & The Trossachs. A new coin has typically been released annually since then. It was made available for sale on a brand new GAGB online shop. The shop has grown significantly and now stocks a range of geocoins, tags, containers, clothing and more!

Up to this point, the GAGB regularly had a stall at Mega events, where geocachers and members could go to ask questions and log the elusive, now-archived Cuckoo Cache (GC4C35), which was often there thanks to The Wombles! In 2016, the GAGB began to organise its own roving events in different parts of the country to increase its visibility, provide cachers with an opportunity to learn about the organisation, and offer fun activities such as makers' madness workshops.

From this stemmed a greater focus on outreach and introducing members of the public to the game, with active involvement in organising or supporting initiatives to promote the hobby.



GAGB stall at an outreach event

In more recent years, a monthly email newsletter was launched, Mega events began to receive GAGB sponsorship, members were invited to become GAGB Friends, a new GAGB website launched with an array of helpful resources, and the first ever regional representatives were appointed. A major milestone was reached in January 2023 - 4,000 active members!

The GAGB is always looking to grow and do more to support geocaching in the UK, so the sky's the limit! We would like to end by thanking the 67 individuals who have served on the committee over the years, everyone who has helped out as a GAGB rep or friend, and all our members and supporters.

Who knows what the next 20 years will bring? Here's to the future!



The geocache box is large enough, but there's nothing in it! Or your kids open the box all eager, and all they find is a used train ticket. Or the only swaps are faded lumps of plastic from a happy meal, and a bent 2p coin.

Sound familiar...?

Who's to blame for the poor state of the SWAG in many of our geocaches? Not the CO – we often see that the geocache was launched with fantastic prizes, but by the time we get to the geocache it's just a stick and a dodgy-looking lollipop!

Let's all gather up some cool stuff we don't really use and distribute some good SWAG around the country this Easter!

It's all about removing the tat and putting in stuff we would like to find. The usual rules apply – don't leave money, food, or perishables. Family-friendly, please. Ensure the lid is on properly when you are done!



How do I Find Geocaches that can take SWAG?

Using most geocaching apps or the website you can filter your search based on geocache size. Look for geocaches that are 'regular' or 'large' for the best chance of fitting stuff inside. You can often fit smaller items inside 'small' geocaches as well. Feel encouraged to take away anything that's just plain rubbish. We're pretty sure that geocache owners will appreciate the efforts you go to, but do check whether any of the items in the geocache need to stay in the geocache before you do any major purging. For example, letterbox geocaches need to have their stamp – don't mistake it for SWAG!





Spread the Word

If you find a geocache that really needs better SWAG, please use our hashtag and post something on social media – it'll build interest and awareness ahead of Easter weekend. Like 'Here's a geocache that is really in need of #GAGBSWAG weekend', or 'started #GAGBSWAG weekend early' or similar. Together we can do something here.





Signature Items

Some geocachers leave behind little signature items wherever they geocache. Feel free to take them or leave them – they are not intended to litter a geocache forever, they are just a cute connection with the geocacher. Don't throw them away – treasure them, or take them to an event.

Featured series GCA3Z4V Nocturnal Activities



THIS IS A NIGHT CACHE SERIES WHICH CAN ONLY BE COMPLETED AT NIGHT AND IN THE DARK AS IT WILL NOT BE VISIBLE IN THE DAY as well as defeating the whole object of it being a NIGHT CACHE SERIES!

This is a new series which has been very popular since it was published, it has had many visitors with very positive feedback given in the finders logs.

This is a series of 7 caches with a nocturnal animal theme and found only during the dark hours by locating some very visible reflectors, these reflectors are very well disguised during the day by being extremely small and so unlikely to accidently be discovered.

This series has been placed within the forest but along nice tracks which have also proven to be accessible to users of electric wheelchairs as seen by recent log posted on Facebook.

Following your GPS device to the given location where you will require a GOOD TORCH and a keen eye, Once you are at the given location you will then need to use your keen eye to start your search for the 3 WHITE reflectors in the shape of a TRIANGLE which will be somewhere nearby and on a tree.

Once you have found your marked tree you will have found your cache and your log to sign.





"Geocaching is for everybody"

<u>Tom Balloti</u> aka "CrazyTomllk"

I'm Tom, also known in the caching community as "CrazyTomUK", I'm relatively new to this wonderful world known as Geocaching.

As you probably noticed I'm in a wheelchair. I have suffered from a muscle wasting condition called Spinal Muscular Atrophy since birth but have never let it stop me.

Anyway this isn't about that.

It's about this awesome pastime that we all know and love and

how I manage my way around it.



So I never cache alone. I can't. I just wouldn't get out and about with out my team. Usually consisting of my Dad, my brother Joe and my friend Alison. They are affectionately known as my geocaching Minions. We make a superb team with me as the technology guy. Doing the research before venturing out, planning the route and then navigating while out and about. Every group of cachers has that person. You know the one. They scroll tirelessly through the old logs and pictures trying to get an extra clue while other search the bushes and leaf fall, tracking down those trickier caches. That's me.







"Geocaching is for everybody"

<u>Tom Balloti</u> <u>aka "CrazyTomllk"</u>

Then there are my minions, always poised and ready to leap into that bush or scamper up that tree to claim the prize that we all so longingly want. The coveted yellow smiley face that only comes with a confirmed find.

In a way I get the best of both worlds. I get to claim the find without the stinging nettles, the thorns and all those creepy crawlies. I hate spiders. Lol.

Due to my disability I can't physically get into those bushes and cross those streams to get to the caches so with the different roles we all play, I must say we are a pretty good team, and with 900+ finds and counting, I'm sure you can agree, that's not too shabby.



Not only do I love finding the caches but I am more than happy giving back to this game. I currently have over 80 hides. These are a mixture of Ad labs, multistage caches, a virtual, a mystery cache but mostly traditional caches. I always try my best to think of fun and exciting cache to place in and around the forested area near to where I live.

When thinking of ideas for new caches I believe that if I would enjoy finding it then other people will too. I am very thankful to the caching community as, thus far, I have had many positive feedback from my caches.



Obviously with my electric wheelchair I can't get to all caches. That's why a bit of research is needed before heading out. I can not actually pick up the caches or sign the logs but that is where my brilliant team comes into play.



Isn't this pastime just the best though right? The places I have been and the things I have seen are simply amazing. Beautiful scenery, stunning architecture. It's all here, just waiting for us to find. Most of these places are right under our noses but we never actually look. It's must definitely a hobby for all. The young, the old, able bodied people or people in wheelchairs. We're not disabled... we are differently abled and can still join in just as much as anyone else.

We found some reflectors...

(Brandon Harling Drove)

It was starting to get dark and we had almost finished our planned caches to find, but we are now searching in torchlight (thankfully always have one each packed)

While Dylan was signing the log sheet for the final cache this evening, out of the corner of his eye he spotted a few random reflectors on the trees close to where we were, we knew that no Nightcaches were here ,but we checked the app again (just to be sure) and as we thought,

NO nightcaches here!

Before Dylan had finished signing the log, I (Haley) was now several reflective markers deep into the forest.



Photo courtesy of TheRolphsUk



Photo courtesy of TheRolphsUk

We got back to the main track heading towards the car and that was then when Dylan again spotted some more reflectors leading into the woods on the opposite side of the track to where we had just been at.

It was now around 21:30 hrs and being the keen nightcache owners that we are, there was no way we couldn't check this out...

T.his is where the real adventure began..



We found some reflectors...



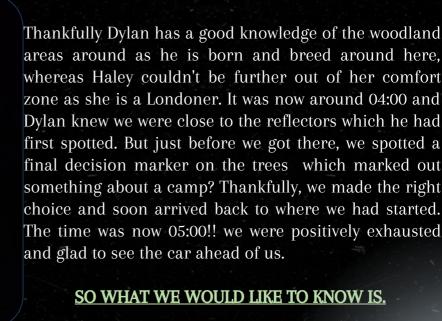
We followed every reflector and what terrain didn't we go through? We went through woodland areas, we went on hands and knees through a young pine tree plantation, over grown areas of brambles and nettles which were waist high, over fallen trees, down old bomb holes, through beech woodlands, around a large fenced off compound, through freshly felled areas where we lost the trail for a short time.

Now realising that we were around 3 miles from our starting location and it now being about 01:30 am, we had to push on.

We headed into more dense woodland area where the reflectors were picked up again and so we followed in and along some more tracks Needless to say, by now were getting rather tired but we kept going!



Photo courtesy of TheRolphsUk



We found some reflectors...





THE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS TRAIL



The trail was roughly 5 miles long., most of the trail kept off main tracks. it was very well marked out with thousands of reflectors placed on trees at about 6ft high.



With a few left right decision arrows along the way plus a down then up and down again into a large pit by the railway line. Finishing with two trees marked either side of each other with reflectors and a tree between them marked with an X. Looks like it may have been placed around or before 2012 due to the felling and replanting of trees along the route as some of the route has vanished where clear felling has been done roughly around this time.





Reflectors are small pieces of reflective tape stapled on trees. A well marked out night trail even now and a really truly epic adventure through the forest.

We have researched, contacted local reviewers, messaged potential geocachers who might have done this trail, and also Cache owners who might have set this out, Nothing! nobody has any idea, this has never been submitted for review and so we are baffled, someone has spent HOURS AND HOURS setting this trail, yet nobody knows anything...



DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS? DID YOU SET THIS?

ANY INFO YOU MIGHT HAVE TO HELP US WOULD BE GREAT.

Message us @TheRolphsUk on the geocaching app





BEST PLACES TO GO GEOCACHING IN THE UK AS A FAMILY







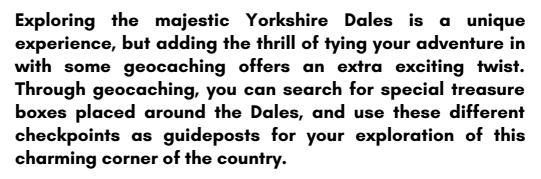
For newcomers to the fascinating world of geocaching, this recreational outdoor activity can be a great way to enjoy a new kind of adventure. It's the perfect way to bring the entire family together, with people of all ages able to join in on the fun. Any time you spend outdoors together can offer so many benefits, particularly to children's development. But allowing an activity like geocaching to inspire your adventure could help to broaden your horizons, and may even spark a new passion amongst your family unit

To set off on your own geocaching-inspired journey, all you need is a GPS system (modern smartphones tend to work best) and an idea of where you want to explore. And therein lies the first potential problem – the UK has too many great locations to choose from!

If you're looking to get involved in geocaching, you may be wondering about the best places to do it. Fortunately, whether you're looking for a local walk or a long-distance adventure, wherever you are in the country, you're bound to be close to a geocaching trail. In this post, we'll shine a light on three of the best places to get started, to hopefully inspire your next adventure.



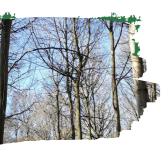
YORKSHIRE DALES



You'll need to use your navigational and problem-solving skills to determine coordinates and find them hidden in rocks, trees or bushes. Then make sure you leave a record of your visit before heading on to your next discovery. There are a number of different routes in this region along which you will find multiple caches to tick off. If you have the wherewithal, you're also invited to set up and hide your own caches in the Dales, but be sure to follow local rules and guidelines before getting started.

Not only do you get to explore the beautiful countryside, but geocaching also gives you an opportunity to connect with fellow adventurers online by logging your finds.









NORFOLK BROADS



The Norfolk Broads attract adventurers from all over the country and beyond. There are so many different ways to explore this beautiful area, be it by boat, bike or foot. If you prefer the latter, you will never be short of options when it comes to hiking routes.



Weavers' Way Thurne circular walk is one of the most popular options amongst the geocaching community. The route encapsulates all the beauty of the Broads and is suitable for people of all ages. If you want to challenge yourself, Weavers' Way encompasses 61 miles in all, with different routes along the way. Combine a few different tracks to truly immerse yourself in the very best of Norfolk's countryside.



It's worth noting that there are some particularly remote areas within the Norfolk Broads, where it can be difficult to find an internet connection. If you are planning on searching for caches in this part of the country, it may be worth doing some prior research and downloading your preferred routes to your device. This way you will be able to access directions whilst offline, giving you the best opportunity to find the many hidden caches across the Broads.

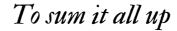


THE NEW FOREST



We're heading south to reach the final geocaching hotspot on our list, Hampshire's New Forest. This national park is a recommended destination for a family holiday of any description, but it's particularly popular amongst UK-based geocachers, whether you're new to the hobby or are an experienced explorer.

There are a vast number of caches hidden throughout the forest, with some easier to locate than others. The varied positions of the caches mean you will get to enjoy a range of different challenges along the way, and enjoy a showcase of the <u>New Forest's most charming vistas</u>.





Geocaching is the perfect staycation activity for families looking to explore more of the UK. It's not just in rural areas where you can try your hand at this popular pastime, either – you will also find cache trails in urban spots. So what are you waiting for? Let our list inspire you to get out there and explore the wonderful world of geocaching.

This article has kindly been created and submitted by Bethany Tomlyn. Digital relations creator at 6XDMedia.



The Seeker Interviews



IF NO-ONE HID ANY GEOCACHES, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN? I THINK WE ALL OUGHT TO BE THANKFUL TO POSHRULE (PAUL WILKINSON) FOR BEING THE LEADING UK GEOCACHE HIDER WITH NEARLY 4000 GEOCACHES HIDDEN AT THE TIME OF WRITING. HE WAS KIND ENOUGH TO AGREE TO THIS Q & A INTERVIEW.

Q. How did you find out about Geocaching?

A. Through another existing player, a friend, who asked if I fancied a walk to find a geocache.

Q. What was your first find?

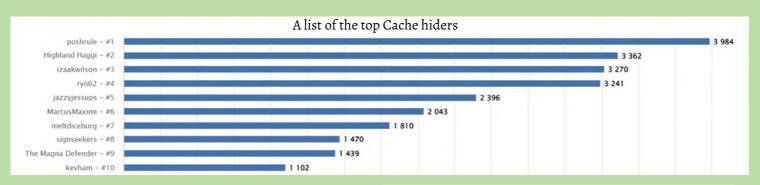
A. First find was a multi on the 7 of September 2009, Crown Lakes, GCRBY3. Probably good to find a multi first as it was a nice walk around the lakes and the tension was built to get to the final goal.

Q. What was your first GPSr?

A. A very basic eTrex yellow version with 5 buttons and manual inputting of co-ords.

Q. And what GPSr do you use now?

A. Garmin Montana 680, which has a nice big screen, and I don't need to put on my glasses to read the information.



Q. Apart from the Montana, what other kit do you take out with you for a day's caching?

A. Over the years my caching kit has evolved, but currently it is rather simple, Mr Stick, pen, spare pots, spare log sheets and my phone.

Q. Given your number of finds (over 52000 at time of writing), how far do you have to travel now to find a cache?

A. For a decent haul of caches, about 25 miles.

The Seeker Interviews



Paul Wilkinson, aka PoshRule shares with Seeker

Q. When you do go out, do you go for finding, or hiding, or both?

A. It would be either finding or hiding, unless there was a multi or puzzle I would need to identify the final while hiding.

Q. Were you intending to hide that many caches, or did it just happen?

A. Definitely didn't intend on hiding so many, it became a bit like a drug, once I'd started, difficult to stop, particularly as most locations I have hidden in were a blank canvas, very few other caches and generally a good footpath network or quiet country lanes.

Q. How often do you need to perform maintenance? I know you're happy for others to help A. I keep a folder for maintenance as and when they are reported in emails. As I have quite a few hides, I tend to group them into areas so I can tick off when I visit. Would be impossible to go out each time a cache is reported, missing caches are prioritised over damp logs. The help from the caching community is greatly appreciated. I now live in Downham Market, a glance at the geocaching map will see loads of series in the area. Over time caches in other areas will go as it's tricky to maintain although the caching community are a great help. I try and keep on top of Poshrule's Peloton near Peterborough as it's a well visited series and ideal for bike.

Q. Any estimates of what 4000+ caches have cost you over the course of time?

A. Absolutely no idea!

The Seeker Interviews



Paul Wilkinson, aka PoshRule shares with Seeker



Q. What kind of caches do you like to find?



Q. Any caches you're not keen on?

Q. How did you get your caching name? Having met you a few times, I know where it comes from, so how long have you been a Peterborough United FC fan?

A. Over time, my likes have changed. I went through a stage of caching at least 4 times if not more a week with the emphasis on finding as many as possible on each trip (number hunting) with trips abroad on power trails, now I prefer to cache with a group and it's more about the fun and chat than numbers. I don't really have a favourite, on a nice sunny day on the e-bike or a walk, all types are enjoyable. Fortunately, my partner in crime, Janechick, enjoys puzzle solving so that takes any stress out of solving. I do enjoy Lab caching where you can combine finds with interesting locations, and perhaps coffee and cake on the way round. I've been struggling to get out since late November, as I've had some mobility issues with sciatica, almost house-bound, but hope to be out again finding and hiding during early 2023.

A. Not keen on long winded multis, high terrain caches, or caching in the rain or cold.

A. I started watching Peterborough United (the posh) when work took me to a retail unit (Bejam) which was located next to the ground. I'm really a West Ham supporter but do follow Peterborough closely.

I'm sure we all wish Paul a speedy recovery, and hope he's out and about again soon.
Interview conducted by Stoke Bunnies (Chris Warren)

SEEKER NEEDS YOU



We rely on content sent in by our members to help produce Seeker, as it's your articles and photos that we publish. If you have anything you would like us to include in future issues please send these to editor@gagb.org.uk. If you would like to contribute but writing isn't your strength, please don't let this put you off, as we can edit anything that comes in!

Please send submissions for the next issue by 20th March 2023.

If your content is included, you will receive a 10% discount on a GAGB Shop order over £10 as a thank you.



Geocachers' Code of Conduct

Background Information

The 'Geocachers' Code' is a voluntary code describing how geocachers in general should behave. It's designed to introduce new players to the ethos of the geocaching community and to guide experienced players in questionable situations. The code is independent of the GAGB and the geocache listing sites.



THE GEOCACHERS CODE OF CONDUCT.

Safe - Legal - Ethical

When placing or seeking geocaches, I will....

Not endanger myself or others.

I will observe all rules and laws of the area I am in.

I will respect property rights and seek permissions where appropriate.

I will avoid causing public disruption or public alarm.

I will minimise my own and others impact on the environment.

I will be considerate of others, either fellow Geocachers or not.

I will protect the integrity of the game piece

The Geocachers' Code was developed in a public forum by over 35 geocachers. with CoyoteRed and Kai Team serving as editors.

MEMBER DISCOUNTS







All codes are available to GAGB members at: www.gagb.org.uk/member-discounts.php

5%

off