

# Exploring the Forest of Marston Vale through Geocaching



The Forest of Marston Vale is one of 12 Community Forests across England, and covers the 61 square miles between Bedford and Milton Keynes. The Marston Vale Trust (Registered charity no. 1069229) is responsible for using trees and woodlands to repair a landscape damaged by the brickmaking industry, by planting trees, creating and managing new habitats for wildlife and running the Forest Centre in the Millennium Country Park. All profits go towards the vision of 30% tree cover by 2031.

## What is Geocaching?

Geocaching is a treasure hunt for the digital generation. It's a fun outdoor activity involving the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) devices to hide and seek containers called geocaches or 'caches', anywhere in the world.

A typical cache is a small waterproof container containing a logbook in which the geocacher enters the date it was found and signs it with their established code name. Larger plastic storage containers or ammunition boxes can also contain items for trading, usually toys or trinkets of little financial value. Once a cache is found and the log book signed, it should be returned to its original location.

## Getting started

- You'll need a GPS device (your smart phone probably has one.)
- Locations of caches can be downloaded from [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) or you can find them using a free geocaching app for Android or iPhone.
- Choose a cache and enter the co-ordinates into your GPS.
- Use your GPS to locate the treasure.
- Sign the log book, replace the cache.
- Move onto the next one and go explore the Marston Vale.



# Geocaching in the Forest of Marston Vale

## Exploring our woodlands

The Marston Vale Trust has created over 660 hectares of new Community Woodland and open space (that's nearly 2½ square miles) across more than a dozen sites in the Forest. All of these can be visited at any time, free of charge. The woodlands are designed for people's enjoyment, wildlife habitats, landscape improvement and future timber production. Surfaced and grass paths are available in all new woodlands giving year round access on foot or in the saddle to great walks, rides, picnics and tranquillity as well as the chance to discover hidden treasures at the following sites:

**The Grange** - Part of Bedford River Valley Park and located near Willington. The site is a mixture of woodlands, lakes, reedbeds and grassland and offers a selection of short and long distance circular routes to suit different levels of mobility. The Grange Estate is a 20 minute cycle ride from Priory Country Park in Bedford and lies adjacent to Danish Camp Visitor Centre.

**Conquest Wood** - Located near the centre of Houghton Conquest and planted with 14,000 trees & shrubs, the site has a compact feel, looking out towards Wilstead across an open, intensively farmed landscape. The well wooded slopes of the Greensand Ridge dominate the scene to the south and east.

**Shocott Spring** - Located between Shortstown and Cotton End (hence Shocott!) and was planted between 2005-2011 with 90,000 trees and shrubs within a flat and open landscape. There are great views across the Marston Vale to the Greensand Ridge, and the imposing Cardington airship sheds.

**Millennium Country Park** - A fabulous mix of woodland, grassland, meadow, lakes and wetland habitats criss-crossed by 17 kilometres of traffic free, surfaced cycle paths, grass footpaths and bridleways. There are plenty of interesting features for you to discover!

**Granary Wood** - A 3 hectare site situated near Lidlington with plenty of access routes and only a short walk from the Millennium Country Park via public rights of way.



### Let us keep you informed

For further information about the Forest of Marston Vale, our activities, and the facilities of the Forest Centre please visit [www.marstonvale.org](http://www.marstonvale.org)

Receive news about the Forest including what's on (either by post or email) by signing up via our website or by calling the Forest Centre on 01234 767037.

