



Geocaching in the Forest of Marston Vale

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.

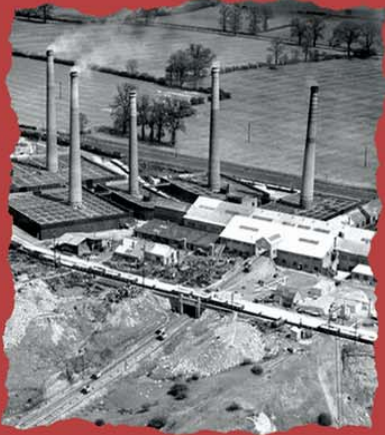
A typical cache is a small waterproof container containing a logbook in which the geocacher enters the date it was found and signs it with their established code name. Larger plastic storage containers or ammunition boxes can also contain items for trading, usually toys or trinkets of little financial 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 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.



Exploring Brickmaking in the Marston Vale



The Marston Vale was one of the main brickmaking areas in England because of its abundance of Oxford Clay that formed 150 million years ago under a warm sea. The brickmaking industry left scars across the Marston Vale in the form of pits, some of which were reused for landfill sites, for example at Stewartby and Brogborough. At the height of the industry's production there were 162 brick chimneys in the Vale and in the 1970s Bedfordshire produced 20% of England's bricks. In February 2008 brickmaking operations at Stewartby ceased owing to problems meeting UK sulphur emission regulations but the remaining Hoffman kilns and 4 chimneys were given Grade 2 listed status.

Folly Wood is set on the steep scarp slope of the Greensand Ridge south of Lidlington and has important wildlife and geological features which have been preserved within large open areas of grassland. From the summit of the hill there are spectacular panoramic views across the whole of the Marston Vale and beyond. From here it is possible to see how the Forest of Marston Vale is slowly developing from the legacy of the brickmaking industry.

The Millennium Country Park covers 225 hectares of woodland, grassland, meadow, lakes and wetland habitats, criss-crossed by 17 kilometres of traffic free access paths. The Park originates from a clay pit, excavated in the 1930s that was partly restored to agricultural land, the remainder being allowed to fill with water to create Stewartby Lake. The Millennium Country Park which includes Stewartby Lake was created in the 1990s as part of the creation of the Forest of Marston Vale. The Park still retains many features from the brickmaking legacy including callow mounds which is the spoil from clay extraction and now a valuable habitat.



Rectory Wood is 70 hectares of new Community Woodland created on the slopes of the Clay Ridge on the eastern edge of Cranfield. The varied landform of Rectory Wood provides hill top vantage points, offering long views across the southern Marston Vale and Brogborough Landfill Site which was a former clay pit. Adjacent to Rectory Wood is Marston Thrift - an ancient, beautiful woodland that is open to the public.

Let us keep you informed

For further information about the Forest of Marston Vale, activities of the Marston Vale Trust and the facilities of the Forest Centre please visit 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
01234 767037

