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Geography Southwest Newsbites January 2025



Welcome to the first Newsbites of 2025! We have news stories from the South West and details of several CPD and School events in January and February. Do also look at the new resources featured. Bookings for the South West Geography Conference 2025 on **Monday 16 June** at the University of West of England will open at the beginning of April. You can see updates and the outline programme on the website. **https://www.geographysouthwest.co.uk/conference/geog-sw-conference/sw-geography-conference-2025/**

Our latest guest blog by Anna Burns, Thames Area Director for the Environment Agency looks at the Jubilee Flood Alleviation Scheme on the River Thames a useful case study on flood management for GCSE or A level.

https://www.geographysouthwest.co.uk/home/jubilee-river-flood-alleviation-scheme/

You can also read past guest blogs on the website here.



Geography in the News

New flights and rail links to boost to Cornwall's transport links

New flights have been announced from Cornwall's Newquay airport to London Southend from April. The daily flights with Eastern Airways start from April 3, with fares from £59.99. The flight takes under an hour to reach Southend which has onward flights to Europe and good links to central London. Newquay airport already has regular flights to Stansted and Gatwick and also to Dublin, Alicante and Malaga.

The Mid-Cornwall Metro project is spending £56.8 million to upgrade the rail link from Newquay to Par creating an hourly service from summer 2025. In 2026, there will be more trains from St Austell to Truro and Falmouth. These improvements will increase connections around the County for journeys to work, study and tourism. https://midcornwallmetro.com/

Lego pieces appear on West Country beaches.

In 1997, a shipping container containing 4.8 million Lego pieces was one of 62 which fell from the container ship *Tokio Express* into the sea 20 miles off Cornwall when it was hit by a

freak wave. The container broke open and since then lego has been arriving on local beaches after storms. It is also a reminder about how easy it is for plastic to get into the marine ecosystem but also provides data on seabed currents. Beachcomber Tracey Williams runs the Lego Lost at Sea project, has written a book *Adrift: The Curious Tale of The Lego Lost at Sea* (2022) and won an archaeological award in 2023. Rare finds have included a Lego black octopus, dragons and sharks. **Read more here.**

More rock falls on the Jurassic Coast.
Another major rock fall occurred on the Jurassic Coast east of West Bay on 29 December 2024. Recent storms and erosion of the beaches and foot of cliffs have left them unstable and prone to rock falls and landslides. The South West Coast path has been closed above the site of the rock fall and local people and visitors have been told to stay away from the foot of the cliff and warned that new rock falls can occur without warning. **https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn4xpej37yeo**



New geography resources



Teaching about plate tectonics, volcanoes and earthquakes?
The latest geography video from **Timeforgeography** in their knowledge booster series is *The theory and discovery of plate tectonics*. This 8-minute video aimed at KS3, and GCSE covers definitions, types of plate boundaries and ridge push and slab pull, with excellent animations.
https://timeforgeography.co.uk/videos-list/plate-tectonics/plate-tectonics-theory/

Teaching Climate change?
Recent storms in the UK and wildfires in Los Angeles have raised questions about the role of climate change. The GA's Top Spec Geography book *The Climate Crisis* provides a view of the crisis for teachers including its origins, impacts, and some proposed solutions.
https://portal.geography.org.uk/shop/view/P9871783394266

The new GA eBook *Teaching climate change* provides lively and practical ways to teach this topic, including the various ethical and moral issues involved.
https://portal.geography.org.uk/shop/view/P9781899086327

Teaching about coasts, ecosystems and salt marshes? A scheme to **restore 4 hectares of salt marsh** at the head of the

Dart estuary is underway, funded by the Environment Agency, Duchy of Cornwall, South Hams District Council and South Devon National Landscape. The restored salt marsh will capture carbon, provide habitats for fish and birdlife and protect the shoreline from erosion. 85% of UK salt marsh has been lost over the centuries. Access will also be provided for visitors, and the area will be a model for other salt marsh restoration schemes in the south west.

Teaching about oceans and plastic pollution? The latest **National Oceanography Centre's Ocean News** reports on studies of microplastics using water samples collected by two yachts taking part in the Ocean Race around the world. Over 70% of the microplastics were microfibres from clothing, reaching the water from washing machines and from breaksdown of clothing waste and found throughout the world's oceans, including in remote areas. The highest concentrations were around South Africa and in the English Channel. The long-term effects of microplastics on ocean wildlife are not known.



Forthcoming events for geography teachers

Why should human geographers care about climate change? Glosgeog GA Branch online talk: Thursday 23 January. Liam Saddington will be repeating his very popular online presentation on **climate change** on Thursday 23 January at 2 pm to Glosgeog. If you wish to attend, contact **Emma Espley**.

RGS CPD events: https://www.rgs.org/schools/teacher-events
AI in the geography classroom: practical uses for teaching and learning: Online CPD webinar on Wed 29 January 2025 at 17.00.

Supporting geography candidates with university applications is a free online course on Tuesday 4 February 2025, 5.00pm-6.30pm.

Behaviour management in the geography classroom is a 2-hour online webinar on Wednesday 5 February at 1700 aimed at Early Career Teachers. It will include practical geography specific strategies to manage behaviour and create a positive learning environment.

Geography in practice: learning from nature - supporting Natural Flood Management (NFM) design while enhancing river form and function is a free online Wednesday 12 February 2025, 12.30pm-1.30pm of interest to A level students.

Geographical enquiry and approaches to data collection KS3-KS5 run by the RGS in association with the Field Studies Council provides an introduction to data collection and enquiry for Early Career Teachers. Wednesday 4 March, 1700.

Conference for new and aspiring heads of geography - Friday 14 March. Book **here**, for an in-person day event in London, focussing on leading a geography department and

covering topics such as preparing students for NEAs, fostering a departmental culture and supporting non-specialist teachers.

GA courses.
Teaching A level geography: encouraging synoptic knowledge. This **GA course** has six weekly 45-minute twilight sessions starting on Wednesday 15 January with each session focussing on a key specification theme.

GIS in the curriculum. The GAs online course Sequencing GIS into your Secondary Geography Curriculum runs for 4 weeks 20 January to 10 February 2025.

Details of the 2025 **GA Conference in Oxford** and booking form are on their website.

Look out for our next Newsletter in January 2025.
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