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Geography Southwest Newsbites April 2025



Welcome to the April 2025 Newsbites. Read about news stories, new resources and summer term courses and CPD. Bookings are now open for our free South West Geography Conference 2025 on **Monday 16 June** at the University of West of England. Join us for this annual FREE ENTRY CPD event featuring a range of inspiring lectures and engaging workshops. Catch up with colleagues, share experiences and browse the exhibition stands. **Register here** as soon as possible as places are limited. Please spread the word and support this regional Bristol-based conference. Any queries, please contact **Simon Ross** (rosstrout@aol.com).
The programme of lectures and workshops features:

• Jon Cannell (GA) *'Green Skills'*
• Dr Tim Scott (University of Plymouth) *'Atolls and climate change'*
• Professor Lisa Mol (University of Bristol) *'Heritage destruction: geographical perspectives'*
• Dr Rachael Squire (Royal Holloway University of London) *'I can see the sea'*
• Karen Corfield (DtW Education) *'The new era of tectonic activity in Iceland'*
• Rachel Shepherd-Jones (AQA)
• Amy Case (Flooglebinder) *'Seeing places anew: perception, experience and re-framing geographical understanding'*
• Robyn Landy (FSC) *'Practical ideas to increase fieldwork provision at KS3'*
• Eleanor Pinches (Royal Meteorological Society) *'Climate change misconceptions: unravelling fact from fiction'*
• Andy Owen (Author and assessment consultant *'Spaces for everyone'*
• Martin Williams (Belmont Estate) *'Re-wilding and re-wiggling nature and ourselves at the Belmont Estate'*
• Katie Hall (Schools Manager, ESRI UK) *'Teach with GIS and the National Festival of Fieldwork'*
• Peter Vujakovic and Emma Espley *'Students as landscape detectives"*
The full programme can be seen **here**:

Do look at latest **guest blog from Daisy Skanes**, describing the work of the fieldwork tutor, and giving some advice for fieldwork studies and the NEA.



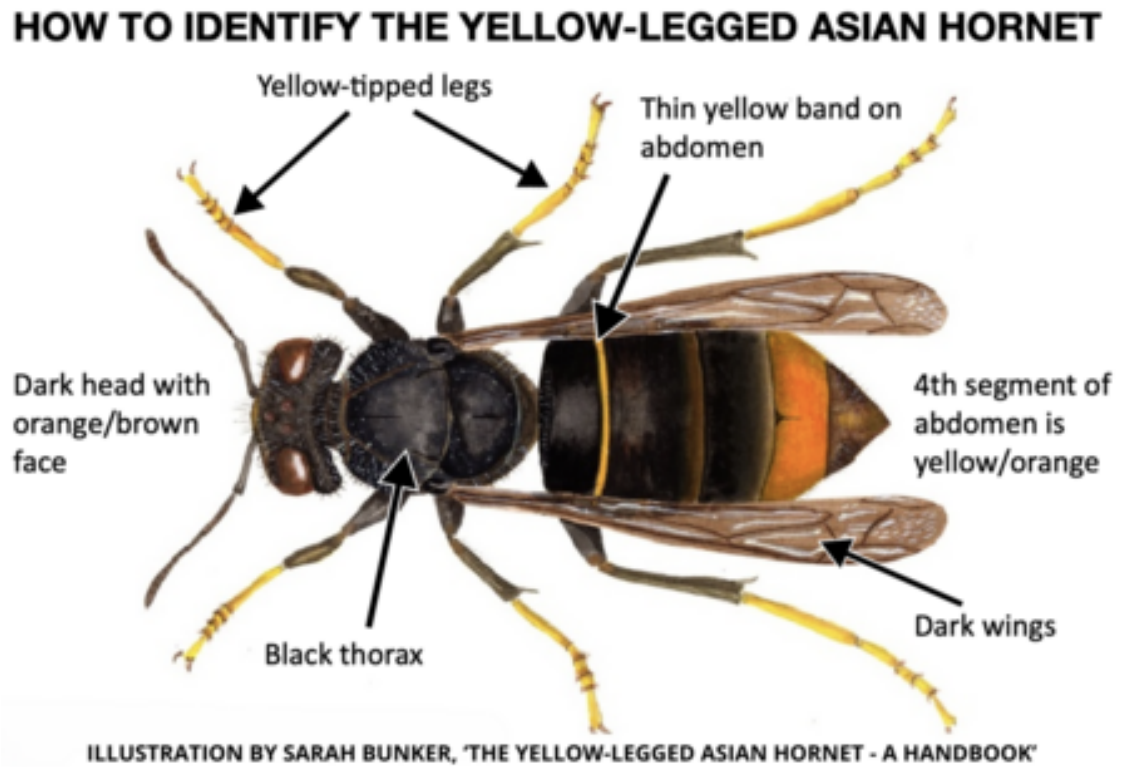
Geography in the News

Pine Martins rewilding success - *Image credit: Devon Wildlife Trust*

Pine Martins are native UK species but have been absent from southern England for over one hundred years as a result of hunting and habitat loss. Small numbers are being released on Dartmoor and Exmoor as part of a controlled re-introduction project. Pine Martins are an integral part of our woodland ecosystems predating on small mammals including voles and grey squirrels as well as eating wild fruits The first 15 released on Dartmoor in 2024 are monitored with trackers to learn more their lives and will hopefully reproduce successfully in 2025. Pine Martens will be released on Exmoor in summer 2025. Pine Martins are elusive and seldom seen but have a unique bib of yellow-orange fur on their chests which enable experts to identify individuals from camera trap images.
Devon Wildlife Trust have produced **4 classroom resource packs** to help inform students about Pine Martens. More information can be found in this **BBC story.**

Plymouth dockyard and economy receives major new investment.
£23 million port upgrades at Plymouth are nearing completion. Under work being completed by Babcock International Group plc, Plymouth's Millbay docks will have a new boarding bridge and a fully refurbished terminal for

Brittany Ferries passengers as well as improvements to the quayside. Independent research by the business advisory firm Oxford Economics shows jobs, investment in the supply chain, and tax contributions help the local economy of the South West by adding £1.3 million to the economy. Over 12,000 staff are directly employed by Babcock most of them in Plymouth. Babcock has also signed a **£750 million contract to deliver future submarine capability at Devonport.**



Alien species Asian Hornets threaten ecosystems

Image credit: Sarah Bunker - The Yellow-legged Asian Hornet - A Handbook, and Worcester Wildlife Trust

Asian Hornets are deadly to honeybees. One hornet can eat 50 honeybees in a day and can destroy the colony in a hive very quickly. Asian hornets also breed quickly. They reached Europe from South East Asia in a container ship and measures to control their numbers in France have been largely unsuccessful. They are now appearing in the Channel Islands, and South West and Southern England, reaching the UK by hitching a ride on small boats and ferries, on lorries, in luggage and even on clothing. Recent sightings have been reported from Plymouth and the Southampton area. Teachers, school children and the general public are encouraged to report any sightings of the Asian hornet with a photograph **here** and not to

kill them. When a sighting is reported the Asian hornet can be tracked back to its nest using a tracking device and the nest destroyed. The Asian Hornet has a viscous sting and is aggressive. It is slightly smaller than a British Hornet, with distinctive yellow legs, and a bright band across its bottom. More details can be found from **Worcester Wildlife Trust**.

Flea treatment risks to aquatic ecosystems

Chemicals used in some pet flea treatments applied to the back of a pet's neck or through a dog bath are being recorded in rivers and coastal estuaries. Two chemicals no longer approved for outdoor agriculture are still used in these products. Fipronil and imidacloprid are highly toxic pesticides. Imidacloprid is in the group of pesticides known as neonicotinoids. The British Veterinary Association has advised that flea treatment throughout the year may not be needed and that vets should discuss with pet owners other methods of controlling fleas. Research has also shown that the chemicals are frequently found on the hands of dog owners remaining on their skin for up to 28 days. People are accidentally polluting rivers by using these products. More details see **here**.



Prolonged spring dry weather increases wildfire risks.

The warm sunny days of March and early April 2025 were appreciated by many but led to an increased risk of wildfires on heaths and moors. An accumulation of dry undergrowth and dead plant material and strong dry easterly winds led to

wildfires occurring on **Bodmin Moor**, Dartmoor, and the Dorset Heaths in March and April. Wildlife particularly at risk includes invertebrates, reptiles, ground nesting birds, and amphibians such as frogs, toads and newts. Reports from fire crews indicated that most fires were the result of human negligence including picnic barbeques and discarded cigarettes and matches. Unfortunately, some may have been started maliciously. For more information, see **here**.

New geography resources



Discover the Happy Nordics.
The latest **classroom resource** for KS3 to 5 from Discover the World Education focusses on the five Nordic Countries. This Human geography resource takes a closer look at Iceland, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden discussing how human development is measured, including the Human Development Index, the Gini Index, the World Happiness Report, and population pyramids and looks at how equality is promoted within these societies. The poster, presentation, country fact files and teacher notes can be downloaded for free from the website.

Teaching hydrology? The **Dunball Sluice upgrade** to help manage water on the Somerset levels has just been completed.

Teaching natural hazards at GCSE or A Level? Myanmar earthquake

The RGS have published a **resource on the Myanmar earthquake** for KS4 and 5. It looks at the causes, immediate effects, responses and aid. This is one of a series of resources on natural hazards on the RGS website.

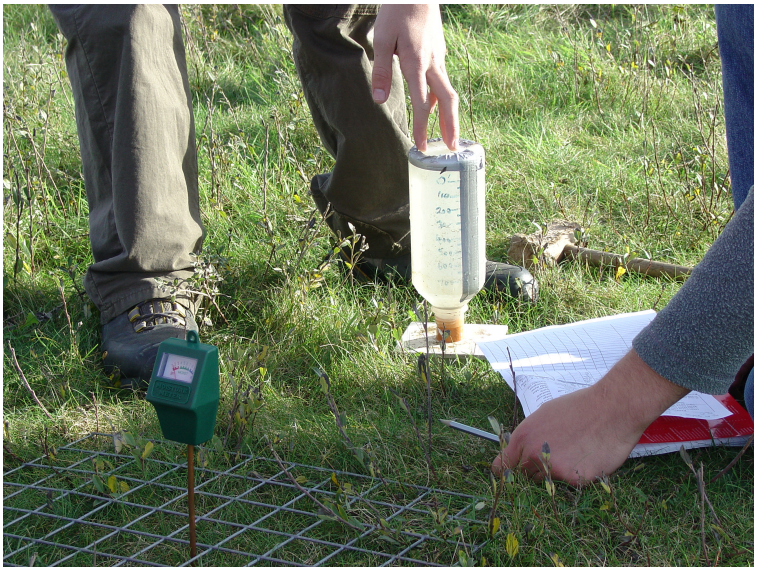
Forthcoming events for geography teachers

RGS CPD events: RGS summer term events include the events here and further ArcGIS training events with ESRI throughout the summer term.

The online **NEA grade booster workshop** on Thursday 1 May 5 pm to 6.30 pm will give you ideas and strategies to help your students reach high grades.

Teaching climate change to Year 9 students? The free online course **Teaching the human geographies of climate change** on Tuesday 6 May 2025, 4.30pm-5.30pm will introduce a scheme of work, ideas and materials co-developed between the University of Cambridge and two schools in Peterborough and Stevenage.

Planning summer term fieldwork? The free RGS online course **People and place fieldwork skills and opportunities** in your local area on Tuesday 10 June 2025, 5.00pm-6.30pm will provide you with ideas, skills and a toolkit for local fieldwork.



Geographical Association CPD courses. **Building fieldwork confidence as an ECT: London** is an in-person day course on Wednesday 14 May 2025 at Beckenham Place Park, London. The course is repeated on Friday 23 May 2025 at **Sutton Park, Birmingham**

Improving geography fieldwork provision and outcomes, is an online course on 29 April aimed at those planning fieldwork and progression from Years 7 to 11.

Quality secondary geography for non-specialists is from 24/04/2025 - 12/06/2025.

Sequencing GIS into your secondary geography curriculum, 02/06/2025 - 23/06/2025

Being an effective secondary geography lead, Monday 30/06/2025
https://portal.geography.org.uk/event/view/E000166

The National Oceanography Centre, NOC in Southampton have an open day for all ages with a wide selection of events on Sunday 8 June. See **here** for more details.

Look out for our next Newsletter in May 2025.
If you have not already signed up to receive this newsletter directly by email, please click on the **Sign Up box** and complete the short form below.

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