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Geography Southwest Newsbites March 2025



Welcome to the March 2025 Newsbites with news stories, new resources and details of forthcoming events. Our free **South West Geography Conference 2025** is on **Monday 16 June**. Bookings open at the beginning of April and can be made **here.** Do join us at the University of West of England for this convivial and relevant event with lectures and workshops for KS3, GCSE and A level teaching. Details of the programme can be seen **here**.

Do look at our guest blogs. The February **guest blog** by Eleanor Pinches features a topical case study of Storm Bert

and how climate change is a factor in river floods. The April guest blog will be published soon and will feature fieldwork.



Geography in the News

South West Exeter's new Matford housing development nears completion

Extensive housing developments are nearing completion on former farmland in South West Exeter. 2500 houses are being built at **Matford** and Alphington either side of the A38 on the rural/urban fringe of the city. Additionally, area of 21.5 hectares is being developed for new employment at nearby Peamore. £55 million of funding was secured to develop infrastructure including road improvements, a new pedestrian bridge, and cycle routes. The Ridge Top public park has been set up as a Sustainable Alternative Natural Green Space. (SANGS). Cavanna Homes, Vistry, Bovis and Barratt Homes are building the high energy efficiency houses in phases. The Matford Brook stream has a new channel which incorporates a sustainable urban drainage system. Work will start shortly on a new GP surgery and community hub.

Plans to build offshore wind farm near Jurassic Coast

Portland Port and the renewable energy firm Source Galileo are developing the **Portwind** project which envisages 2 GW of

electricity being produced by 132 offshore wind turbines, enough to power over 3 million homes. Plans are advancing to identify the best site, roughly 22 km away from the coast. Read more details here.



New flights expand Exeter's regional airport role

Exeter Airport now has new destinations as part of ambitious plans to expand the regional network. From the end of March, a daily KLM flight from Exeter to Amsterdam connects these cities for the first time by air and provides onward connections to KLMs extensive route network. The 90-minute flight is expected to attract both business passengers and tourists. Later this year, Logan Air is adding to its local network by introducing a daily flight from Exeter to Manchester. With airlines including Ryan Air and TUI, Exeter has regular flights to Scotland, Ireland, Newcastle and the Channel Islands, and destinations in Spain, Greece, Turkey and the Canary Islands.



New Western Forest to cover Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Bristol, and Somerset

In 2024, the West of England became the first region to publish a Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The recently announced **Western Forest** will connect the River Avon catchment to the Cotswolds and Mendip Hills National Landscapes. 2500 hectares of woodland will be planted with 20 million trees. This will provide benefits for the environment and the community without affecting food production and support the Government's net zero ambitions and help with nature recovery. The Western Forest is intended to provide a blueprint for other major nature recovery schemes elsewhere in the country and will show how trees can be integrated into the farming landscape.

New geography resources



Planning urban fieldwork in UK cities? The Geographical Association (GA) has added further titles to their Guide to Fieldwork series, most of which are available in both pdf and printed formats. The latest title **A Guide to Fieldwork in Central London** focusses on three fieldwork walks, London Bridge to Bankside, Waterloo to Blackfriars and a circuit of Kings Cross. There are also opportunities for physical geography.

Looking for up-to-date GCSE/A level case studies? The latest **monthly news blog** from Rayburn Tours covers the January 2025 Tibet Earthquake, Denmark's carbon tax on agriculture, the UK Government major projects aimed to boost growth and the location of the 1831 volcanic eruption which caused a volcanic winter.



Advising students about choosing GCSE, A Level or a University degree in Geography? The Royal Geographical Society (RGS) have a selection of relevant resources under the heading **Choose Geography** on their website to inspire students and show the relevance of the subject.

Teaching natural hazards at A Level? The RGS Resources for Schools features case studies and activities on **US Developments in Hazardous Areas** and the **2025 Californian Wildfires**.

Forthcoming events for geography teachers

Connecting the Culm forum #7 - Managing water for nature and people. Are you interested in teaching management of a river catchment and issues about flood resilience? Places are still available at the Connecting the Culm free Forum on Thursday 3 April 2025, 7–9pm at Cullompton Community Centre. **Register here**

Visiting the Jurassic Coast? The **Dorset Coast Forum exhibition** on the Great Gale of 1824 and its impacts on southern England which will be at the Wild Chesil Centre, Portland. The exhibition *Myth and Reality, Smuggling in the 18th Century* at the **West Bay Centre**, Chapel on the Beach, West Bay, DT6 4EN near Bridport until 30 June 2025 looking at when smuggling was widespread along the South Coast.

RGS CPD events:
The RGS provide **CPD events** throughout the summer term including further ArcGIS training events with ESRI.

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.



The GA has three courses to support teachers with the provision of fieldwork. **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 planningf fieldwork and progression from Years 7 to 11.

The GA Conference and more CPD courses.
The **GA Conference in Oxford** is in April and details are on the GA website.

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

Look out for our next Newsletter in April 2025.
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