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Geography Southwest Newsbites May 2025



Welcome to the May 2025 Newsbites featuring news stories, summer term CPD and new teaching resources.

There is still time to book a place at 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 with inspiring lectures and engaging workshops. Catch up with colleagues, share experiences and browse the exhibition stands. **Register here.** 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'

See the **full programme here**.

Do look at our **guest blog** and **past guest blogs.** Follow the link to older posts to see guest blogs back to 2021 which are still relevant today.



Geography in the News

Economic concerns over fewer tourists visiting Cornwall. A fall in the number of tourists visiting Cornwall in 2024 has led to concerns about the economy. Cornwall's attractive scenery, beautiful beaches, historic heritage, visitor attractions and the UNESCO Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape sites are important tourist locations. Tourism is a major industry supporting 35000 people in the county. Over 18 million visitors a year contribute 15% of Cornwall’s economy. Several factors may account for the drop, including increased prices, less people having holidays due to the rising cost of living, more confidence in booking holidays abroad following Covid and the variable weather in 2024. It is hoped that TV series showcasing the Cornish landscape including the BBC’s series *Poldark* and *Beyond Paradise* will help bring more visitors. The forthcoming movie *Salt Path,* featuring South West Coast path will be released May 2025 with its scenes of dramatic coastal scenery and attractive seaside towns.

Plymouth gains from cruise tourism.
In early Summer 2025, nearly 3000 passengers are expected to visit Plymouth when several large **cruise ships** arrive at the Ocean City. Plymouth's cruise business development manager Glen Gardner from Destination Plymouth said the cruise ships provided opportunities for local businesses and shops. The city's team of volunteer cruise ambassadors will help meet the tourists, along with Plymouth town crier, and the Plymouth Maritime Corps of Drums. Shore excursions will make the most of Plymouth's attractions including walking tours of the historic Barbican and Hoe and visits to Plymouth Gin Distillery. Boat trips using local operators and coach tours will enable visitors to see the Tamar and Dartmoor National Park.



Connecting the Culm gets grant to attract green finance.
The Connecting the Culm project has been awarded £73,000 grant by DEFRA's Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF) to help attract private **green finance for nature-based solutions** in the Culm Valley catchment. The funding will be used to develop projects to become "investment-ready," meaning that they are fully documented for potential investors. These will hopefully include pension funds, ethical investment and individual entrepreneurs. This is part of an ongoing

programme to achieve biodiversity net gains through investing in natural capital.



New flood alleviation scheme for Oxford.
Image credit: Environment Agency

Detailed plans have been revealed for a new 5 km flood alleviation scheme to reduce flood risk in Oxford and the surrounding area. A **new flood relief channel** will be built from the Botley Road to the Oxford bypass near Kennington along the route of the Hinksey Stream. Existing flood meadows will be linked to a deeper, wider channel, creating 20 hectares of new wetland ecosystem. The scheme will protect the railway, roads and housing in South Oxford area, currently at risk when the River Thames exceeds bankfull.

New geography resources



Planning fieldwork in the Torbay area? The whole of Torbay was designated a **Geopark** in 2007 by UNESCO because of the unique geology and natural environment. It is one of only two 'urban' geoparks in the UK, covering 62 square of land and 41 square km of sea. The **education resources** part of the website includes ideas for visits and links to various sites and attractions of interest to geographers. Image credit: View across Torbay by Robin Drayton-wikipedia commons

Looking for real-time data on water quality and river flow for your teaching or to inspire NEAs? Check out the **Smart biosphere** and other useful resources on the UNESCO North Devon Biosphere reserve website.

Looking for examples of river restoration? Have you herd about ghost rivers? New technology has enabled scientists to study paleochannels sometimes called ghost rivers. They are former natural courses of rivers lost through centuries of drainage work and channelling. Devon Wildlife Trust are working to restore 60 hectares of flood plain at **Farrantshayes Farm, East Devon** to its natural course to improve natural drainage, enhance grazing and provide new habitats for wildlife, using remote sensing to identify paleochannels.

Teaching climate change? The Geographical Association has a range of online resources and books. **Climate Change –**

Mitigation and Adaptation is a set of resources aimed at KS3 and GCSE. Note that some GA resources are only available to members.

Teaching natural hazards at GCSE or A Level? – Underwater Volcanoes
Many of the earth's most dangerous volcanoes are underwater. The National Oceanography Centre (NOC) is studying the Eastern Mediterranean volcano at Santorini**.** Only a tiny part of the volcano is visible. The greater part is beneath the sea with many signs of new activity being discovered through the research.

Forthcoming events for geography teachers

RGS CPD events:
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.

Gentrification and complexity on **Wednesday 2 July** is an in-person field-based workshop aimed at A level teachers. Run in collaboration with the Bartlett Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis (CASA) at University College London and based at UCL Stratford campus, this practical course will include visits to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and sites in Hackney. There will be opportunities to use data showing changes over the last 150 years.

Digimap for Schools - with Ordnance Survey (all of these events are free)

- Digimap for Schools KS2 and KS3 geography: Online, Tuesday 17 June

Digimap for Schools: a quick guide to fieldwork: Online, Wednesday 25 June

Digimaps for Schools: a quick guide to overlays: Online, Monday 29 September

Using Digimap for Schools for GIS: In person, London, Tuesday 14 October

RGS free student events in June/July

What do geographers actually do? Wednesday 18 June, 3.30pm-4.30pm

Choosing Geography at University: Tuesday 22 July, 10.00am-11.30am

Image credit (below): Amy Swiggs, PhD Researcher with the Centre for Polar Observation and Modelling (CPOM) at Northumbria University, Newcastle, studying arctic ice.



Geographical Association CPD courses.

Teaching GCSE geography: Building complex knowledge. (Online) began on Mon 19 May and continues into June.

Being an effective secondary geography lead (Online day course. Monday 30/06/2025

Look out for our next Newsletter in June 2025.

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John Davidson 22/05/25
Co-Director and Newsbites editor, Geography Southwest

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Geography Southwest
Snows Cottage, Wrangway, Wellington, TA21 9QG
john@geographysouthwest.co.uk

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