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Geography Southwest Newsbites December 2025

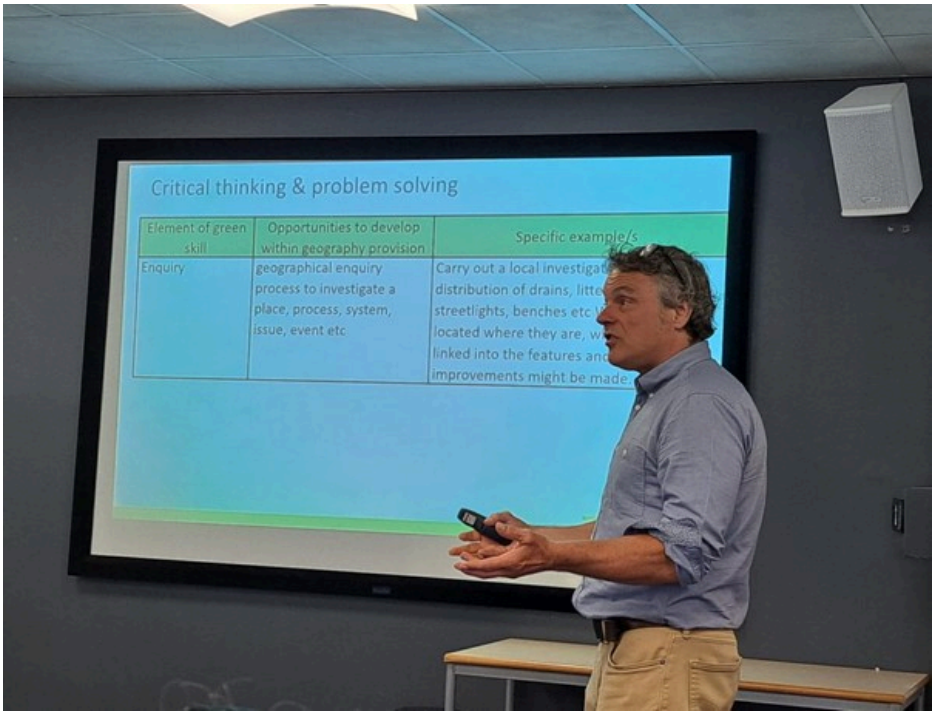


Welcome to the December 2025 Newsbites. Our Forthcoming Events section below features CPD courses and events in January, which can often get overlooked in the Christmas school paperwork.

Looking for inspiration for the end of term? Have you got your copy of Discover the World's Big Christmas Quiz ? You need to sign up for the free quiz which will then be sent to you.

Rayburn Tours named Best School Tour Operator (Large) at the 2025 **School Travel Awards**, one of the most respected accolades in the UK's educational visits sector.

Conference programme announced: The outline programme for the 2026 South West Geography Conference on **Monday 22 June** at the University of West of England (UWE), Bristol is here. Bookings will open at the beginning of April 2026.



Geography in the News



Storm Bram leaves a trail of destruction

Storm Bram, the second named UK storm of the 2025/2026 season on Tuesday 8th and Wednesday 9th December, brought wind gusts over 60 mph and heavy rain across the west country. 120 mm fell on Dartmoor bringing 70% of the average December rainfall in just 24 hours. High waves overtopped coastal defences in Cornwall and Devon. Traffic was disrupted by flooded roads, railway services were delayed or cancelled and the M4 Severn Bridge had lane closures, leading to long delays. Many areas had localised flooding although flood defences prevented serious problems on rivers like the Exe.

Paignton sea defences to be upgraded

Work will begin in 2026 on the long awaited multimillion-pound project to upgrade sea defences at **Paignton, Devon**. Around 350 homes and businesses are at risk from coastal flooding when waves caused by easterly storms overtop the existing defences. Storm Emma in 2018 combined with the cold winds of the "Beast from the East" to cause significant flooding along the low lying land behind the sea defences. The work from Paignton Beach to Preston sands should take around 18 months to complete.

£50 million investment in Cornwall's mining industry announced.

The Government has announced investment of up to £50 million in Lithium and Tungsten mining in Cornwall in its **Critical Minerals Strategy**. The aim is to produce at least 10% of the UK's mineral needs in the country. Cornwall has Europe's biggest lithium deposit and Devon has one of the world's largest tungsten deposits, minerals needed for computers, electric cars and mobile devices. **Cornish Lithium uses a repurposed quarry near St Austell** to produce lithium hydroxide monohydrate for lithium-ion batteries. Expansion of the mining could lead to more jobs in the industry.

New geography resources

Travel the Earth in 100 seconds. The new 2 minute **YouTube video from National Geographic** shows the influence of human activities and land use change on our planet, together with some thought-provoking statistics. It will provide a valuable introductory discussion point for looking at geography issues at KS3 or GCSE.

Have you seen the RGS teaching resources? The RGS website hosts a range of free educational resources including **Discovering the Arctic**, **The rise of Chinese Cars in the UK** and the 2025 Pacific storm **Typhoon Ragasa**. School members can access these and a wider range of resources on the **RGS website.**

Teaching drainage basin management and flooding? The Environment Agency has a detailed report on **managing flood water and reservoirs on the Somerset levels** including upgrades to West Moor, Curry Moor, and Southlake Moor Reservoirs..

Looking for an overview of current geography issues and new resources? See **Emma Espley's Free Educational roundup of news** which appears weekly/fortnightly**.**

Forthcoming events for geography teachers

Secret Maps exhibition at the British Library, London
The British Library exhibition **Secret Maps** is on until 18 January, and reveals maps that the public were never supposed to see, such as places long forgotten or erased from official histories and maps that were purposefully deceptive, designed to protect treasures, mask strategic locations, or reshape the way we see the world.

Royal Geographical Society (RGS) events:

Stretch and challenge in geography - Wednesday 21 January, 5.00pm-6.30pm, online

Embedding water and carbon cycles across A Level geography - Wednesday 28 January, 4.00pm-5.30pm, online. This course will look at ways to embed water and carbon cycles into a range of A level topics.

Getting started with ArcGIS - Thursday 15 January, in-person (London) and **Going further with ArcGIS** - Friday 16 January, in-person (London).

Geographical Association (GA) events:
Sequencing GIS into your secondary geography curriculum. Four online sessions from 1700 to 1800 on Mondays 5, 12 ,19, and 26 January.

Teaching GCSE Geography: Building complex knowledge. Six online sessions from 1600-1645 on Mondays 12,19, 26 January and 2, 9 and 23 February with examples on rivers and coasts, weather and climate, place, urban change and global development.

GlosGeog next free lecture will be an online event at 1400 on Thursday 29 January. The speaker is Dr Billy Clayton, from UWE, who will talk about Changing Places – Banksy and BLM: Cultural change in Bristol.
Teachers and pupils are invited to attend. You can register by contacting **Emma Espley at emma.espley@googlemail.com**

Look out for our January Newsletter in 2026.
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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