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Geography Southwest Newsbites January 2026



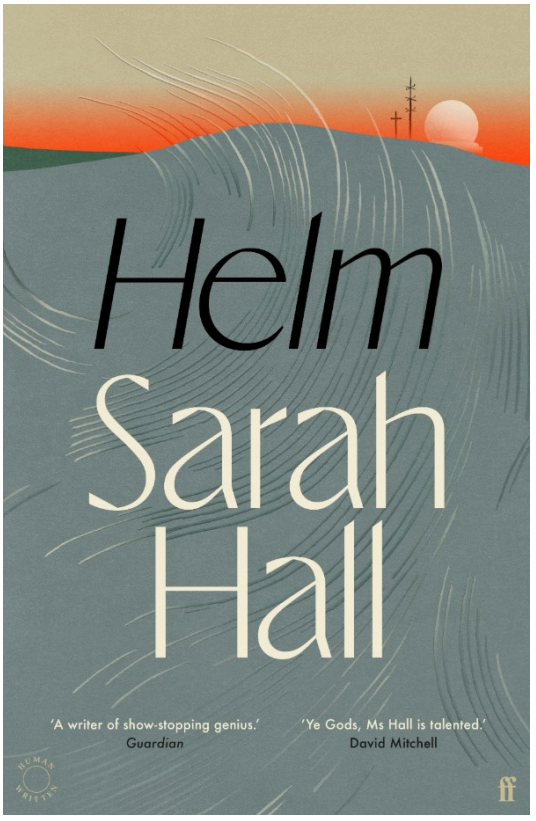
Welcome to the first Newsbites of 2026 at the end of a month dominated by weather events. Alongside the news items we feature topical new resources and forthcoming CPD events.

June Conference programme details.

The programme for the 2026 **Geography South West Conference** on **Monday 22 June** at the University of West of England (UWE), Bristol is now published.

This year will also see the launch of the **Geography South East** conference at Royal Holloway Bedford University on Monday 29 June so do pass this on to any colleagues you know in the London area. Bookings will open at the beginning of April 2026.

Do read out latest **guest blog** by Sarah Hall with her views on nature writing along with ideas from her latest novel *Helm*, inspired by the only named wind in the British Isles.



Geography in the News



First real test of the new sea wall at Dawlish

Storm Ingrid on Friday and Saturday 23 and 24 January brought widespread flooding across the South West. Its strong South Easterly winds brought waves over 5 metres high which coincided with high tide. The railway between Exeter and Newton Abbot was closed for 2 days due to the risk of waves washing away parts of the wall and ballast, but fortunately the new sea wall at Dawlish prevented major problems along this section. The railway from Par to Newquay was closed by flooding at Roche and many roads were blocked by fallen trees. The 160-year-old pier at Teignmouth was a casualty of the storm with a major section disappearing into the sea. Coastal Damage was reported at Torcross, Falmouth and Penzance. Over 100 mm of rain fell in 24 hours leading to 130 flood alerts and flood warnings being issued across the south west.

Storm Ingrid arrived while parts of Cornwall and the Scilly Isles were still repairing damage following Storm Goretti on 8 January. A major impact from Goretti was the large number of fallen trees, including many on St Michaels Mount and on National Trust estates.



Storm Chandra causes extensive flooding and coastal damage.

Storm Chandra swept in on 26 and 27 January while work to clear up Storm Ingrid just gettting underway. Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset received up to 100 mm rain in 24 hours, leading to extensive flooding. Train services to Barnstaple and Okehampton were suspended and services on the West Country to Bristol and London lines were disrupted in the Culm Valley and Somerset. Major roads were shut due to surface water, and many properties affected. The Rivers Otter and Axe reached their highest levels ever recorded with flooding in Ottery St Mary and Tipton St Johns. The River Frome at Dorchester had a danger to life alert. A hole in the Victorian Railway Sea Wall near Teignmouth is causing concern.
Read the **Met Office report on Storm Chandra** which includes statistics. The **Met Office annual stocktake report 2025** shows how weather records and extreme events are becoming more common in the UK. There are extensive reports on Storm Chandra online, and the BBC has a detailed summary with images **here**.
The image above shows the Exeter to Exmouth main road closed by floodwater from the River Clyst at Topsham.



£21 million coastal defence works planned for Sidmouth delayed until 2027

The Jurassic coast at Sidmouth suffers from storm damage to the beach, sea front and cliffs at East Cliff during storms,

especially from the South East. Planned work to upgrade the coastal defences have been published but work will not start until 2027. Final plans are not yet been published but are likely to include additional breakwaters with a possible third offshore breakwater, a large groyne to protect East Cliff and artificial beach nourishment.

Falmouth Docks £150 million redevelopment scheme brings wildlife concerns

Major redevelopment of Falmouth Docks aimed at enhancing the local economy and securing jobs is planned to take place soon. However, there are concerns about the possible effects of dredging, sediment plumes and sediment in the estuary, sediment disposal on land and mitigation of noise impacts on marine wildlife throughout construction and the fishing industry. Cornwall Wildlife Trust are asking for a full appraisal of the potential impacts of this development on local fishing grounds.

New geography resources

Teaching about the importance of COP 30?
There are online resources for KS3, GCSE and A level:-
A short introduction video
Summary of outcomes

COP30 resources enabling the setting up of a COP30 style conference in your school:

Exploring the Facts – a summary of relevant climate change issues.

Consider doing the Royal Meteorological Society Climate Literacy Survey with your students to help inform future resources and CPD. The survey takes around 7-8 minutes to complete.

Free CPD resources in association with the **Curriculum and Assessment Review final report** are on the **GA website here**

Teaching about River Floods at KS3? See the **Introduction to Flooding resource developed by the GA and the Environment Agency** with a Powerpoint, Video, Teachers Notes and a worksheet which would also be useful as a revision summary at GCSE.

Teaching about the Arctic and its frozen oceans?
Encounter Edu has developed full enquiry-based schemes of work for Primary, KS3 and GCSE geography that incorporate the scientists' experiences and research from the Catlin Arctic Survey. Topics covered include Biodiversity, Climate change, Ecology, Ecosystems, Environment, Extreme environments, Humans and the environment, Oceans and there are booklets and posters.
There are links to other resources on Oceans from Encounter Edu including **Oceans and Climate**.
These resources are part of a range of online resources available on the GA website.

Teaching about coastlines? The **Dorset Coast Forum Conference 2025 presentations** are on thier website. THey include a review of timber groynes and presentations on coastal communities.

Forthcoming events for geography teachers

Starting teaching with fieldwork confidence. These GA courses from the GA and Field Studies Council aimed at teachers who have recently joined the profession will take place at various locations in 2026. The first one will be at Preston Montford Field Studies Centre near Shrewsbury on

Wednesday 4 March, followed by a similar course in Greenwich Park on Wednesday 20 May.

Forthcoming RGS online webinars on careers with Geography. Two free webinars are being run by the RGS, with advance booking.
What do geographers actually do? Thursday 12 February, 15.30

Choose Geography: Careers in Global Governance. Tuesday 10 March 2026, 15.30

RGS Lectures online (booking required)
Monday 9 February, 18.30. The material geography of AI - Professor John Naughton

Monday 16 February, 18.30. Is agriculture the greatest threat to biodiversity? - Dr James Borrell

OCR GCSE CPD on weather and climate, Enhance your Teaching: Teaching Climate Change GCSE Geography A and B J383, J384 (Webinar) Online 11 Feb 1600

Discover the World Education is offering a 5-day Iceland trip in October for the price of 4. For this and other fieldtrips, see their website.

Look out for our February Newsletter after half term.
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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