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# Geography Southwest Newsbites May 2026



Welcome to the May 2026 Newsbites. There is still time to book a place at the free **2026 Geography Southwest Conference** on **Monday 22 June** at the University of West of England (UWE), Bristol starting at 10.30. (registration from 9.30). Places are limited so do book soon. The programme is **here**.

If you are planning your fieldwork trips for 2026/2027, do read **Bethan's guest blog** with its practical advice from teachers on planning out of school field trips both home and abroad.

Do you use **Digimaps for Schools** to help build geographical skills? Did you know they have a compass and a grid reference marker or that you can overlay grid lines and capture geographic coordinates for any location? They provide map keys plus world and continent maps for you to print and use in lessons. They have a library of **learning resources**, **teacher guides**, and **youtube videos** of activities and ideas.

The Geographical Association's **National Festival of Fieldwork** returns for its fifth year in June 2026 to encourage outdoor learning and real-world investigation. The GA website has a wide range of ideas, resources and case studies to assist with planning activities, in the school grounds, local area or further afield. Participation is free for all schools.

**OpenKit** is looking for a number of geography teachers and departments to take part in a short pilot phase over the coming months for **Rubrical**, an AI tool funded by the Department for Education. Rubrical is built specifically for GCSE and A-Level Geography and supports marking and feedback, rubric generation, lesson planning, and class-level analytics. Feedback from participants will directly shape how Rubrical develops into a tool that can be used in actual geography departments. There is no cost, no obligation beyond your feedback, and no expectation to continue afterwards. If you would like to learn more, please **email Ibrahim** at ibrahim@openkit.co.uk by Monday 8 June.



## Geography in the News



### New King's National Nature Reserve in mid Cornwall

The Mid Cornwall Moors became the 14th site in the King's Series of National Nature Reserves (NNRs). The reserve provides protection to over 1,100 hectares of heath, moorland, wetland and woodland in central Cornwall, bounded by St Austell to the south, Bodmin to the east, and St Columb Major to the north and includes rare habitats and species and historic sites. Amongst the aims is to improve access to nature, create opportunities for learning and recreation, and help support the local economy through sustainable farming. The reserve combines land managed for nature and heritage by Natural England, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Cornwall Heritage Trust, the

Gaia Trust and Imerys. *Image Credit:* *Carn Moor | Cornwall Wildlife Trust*



**Celebrating 50 Years of Skern – Introducing Skern Adventure! -** Read Daisy's article on the website about 50 years of fieldwork and adventure activities at Skern in North Devon.

**Hot half term weather boosts tourism in the West Country.** As temperatures reached 31C (88F) in parts of the South West over the weekend many opted to head to the coast. This provided a much needed boost to local tourism industries following a quiet Easter and cold weather earlier on in May. However, increased costs particularly VAT has hit profit margins overall, and the cost of living crisis means that visitor numbers are currently down on 2025.

**Work begins on Poole flood defences**

A £29 million scheme to protect nearly 600 properties from storm waves in Poole will start construction in June. The project will provide protection for the last section of exposed waterfront in the town centre between Poole Bridge and Hunger Hill. It is designed to adapt to climate change with artificial sea walls that can be raised to keep pace with rising sea levels.

Further details, air photo and map can be found **here**.

**Guardian article reviews issues with coastal defences at places at risk such as Slapton Sands.**

An article in the Guardian on 23 May 2026 looked at the problems with coastal defences and climate change, with references to Slapton and the East Coast of England.



## New geography resources

**New global map helps protect the world's lakes.**

The UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology has useful resources on their website. The new global map of world lakes is an interactive platform known as **Global Lakes Explorer** aims to help scientists, policymakers, educators, and the public to explore where nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen are entering lakes and how this pollution may change in the future. Students can explore specific lakes and catchments or search for patterns and sources of pollution such as phosphorous. Also on their website is a case study on how to clean up **water pollution in the Maldives**

**New research on risks to undersea cables serving small island states.**

The National Oceanography Centre (NOC) has useful resources on their website. New research led by the the NOC has revealed that the greatest risks to subsea telecommunications cables serving small island nations are often concentrated close to island coastlines, where natural hazards and human activity overlap. You can read a summary here and also find a link to the full article.

### Exploring the concept of Third Place

Looking for a human geography topic that encourages debate around space, social cohesion and urban change?
Discover the World's free Third Place Theory poster introduces students to the idea of social spaces beyond home and school. It is designed to complement their popular **Happy Nordics resource**, which recently won the **2026 Highly Commended GA Publishers Secondary Award.** It explores how social spaces help shape connected, resilient communities.



## Forthcoming events for geography teachers

**Flooglebinder** are continuing to launch their innovative travel programmes for students, including their new DofE programme, designed to get students outdoors, building confidence, resilience and independence. Another new experience is their night away residential in Cambridge during

the week commencing July 12. This has proved popular with only Tuesday 13th and Friday 16th still available. Do **message Flooglebinder** if you want to secure places. andraea@flooglebinder.co.uk

**UCL Schools Conference Embedding Climate Change Nature and Sustainability across the Curriculum** - Friday 19 June. Places are still available for this conference aimed at both secondary and primary teachers.

**RGS Advanced ArcGIS course- Tuesday 7 July** The next RGS GIS is in London. See the RGS website for further courses.

**GA CPD course - From resource to curriculum: making Oak geography work in your secondary classroom.**
Online. An overview of Oak's free secondary geography curriculum including use of GIS and fieldwork, and flexible adaptation for different schools and pupil needs.

Places are also still available for the **RGS Fieldwork skills for GCSE and A level physical geography.**
90 minute webinar on Wednesday 24 June, 1700, online run jointly with the FSC. A follow up webinar on Monday 6 July, 1700, online will focus on **fieldwork skills and opportunities in the local area** for GCSE and A level enquiries.



**Look out for our final Newsletter of this academic year, to be published in June.** If you have not already signed up to receive this newsletter direct to you by email, please click on the **Sign-Up box** and complete the short form below.

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