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Geography Southwest Newsbites June 2026



Welcome to the last Newsbites of the academic year 2025-2026. Welcome also to teachers who are viewing this newsletter following the Geography Southeast conference. The **2026 Geography Southwest Conference** took place on Monday 22 June at the University of West of England (UWE), Bristol and a short report is on the website. Presentations from the conference will be added early in July. The SE Geography conference at RHUL on Monday 29 June was also very successful. A report on this will be posted on the website soon. If you are planning fieldwork for 2026/2027, do look at our latest guest blog on the website from Bethan Beddow, who shares **Teachers' top tips for planning a successful geography trip.**



Do consider visiting Paul Berry's latest places to walk. **Circular walk at Lizard Point**, **'The Beach that Burns' walk at Kilve in Somerset**, and **Explore Combe Martin walk** His articles on the website are illustrated with high quality images, his easy to follow maps and local history and geography details. *Image: Paul Berry*.



Geography in the News



West of England unveils £17bn growth investment proposal

The **West of England** set out an **ambitious £17 billion investment proposition** at the UK's flagship real estate and infrastructure conference in Leeds, making the case for a new wave of jobs, homes and infrastructure in what is already the country's fastest-growing regional economy. Five designated growth zones are expected to deliver 72,000 new jobs and drive 28% economic growth over the next decade and unlock land for tens of thousands of new homes. Key projects include the
Bristol Temple Quarter, Brabazon and the West Innovation Arc, Transformational transport infrastructure, and a £500 million Future Places Fund
enabling early acquisition of land across the region, helping unlock sites that might otherwise remain undeveloped.

Puzzled by the motorway 'ghost' junction on the M49 near the Prince of Wales bridge over the River Severn?

The £50m motorway junction near Bristol was largely completed seven years ago when National Highways (formerly Highways England) finished the majority of the work on the two-bridge junction which aims to improve road access to the industrial areas, warehouses and distribution centres between Avonmouth and Severn Beach. The project was held up over

disagreements about who was responsible for building the connecting access road. Now, construction work on the 160-metre link road is being carried out funded by £7m from the Department for Transport and is due to be completed by autumn 2026.

£50 million investment to help protect Somerset's farms and homes from flooding. The Government has announced a new £50 million government investment will help Somerset's homes, farms and businesses better withstand the growing threat of flooding. This investment will help fund a range of flood resilience measures, such as improved water management infrastructure, enhanced flood defence schemes, nature-based solutions and better watercourse maintenance.

Devon tungsten and tin mine on track to start production in 2026

Hemerdon, seven miles north-east of Plymouth, is one of the largest tungsten resources in the world. Tungsten West acquired the site in 2019. The company hopes the mine can produce 20 per cent of the global supply of primary tungsten outside of China once operational. Tungsten is used by many manufacturing companies, including in the automotive and defence industries. Production is planned to start in autumn 2026, bringing jobs to the local area.

Minehead coastal defences strengthened with new rock armour

The Environment Agency has completed a £1 million coastal flood defence project at Minehead seafront, providing greater protecton for 355 properties and businesses at risk in the town. The project, costing just under £1 million, extended existing rock armour to the east of the town, near Butlins and Minehead Golf Course. Just under 4,000 tonnes of pink granite rock armour, sourced from near Bodmin, Cornwall, was used to strengthen defences across 100 metres of a vulnerable shingle ridge. This scheme follows the successful completion of coastal defence works in 2023, when 14,500 tonnes of granite

rock armour reinforced Minehead's sea wall. Environment Agency flood mapping shows that the risk of coastal flooding is expected to increase due to climate change, making continued investment essential.



Looking for ways to explain the recent June heatwave to your class? The **Met Office** has provided this report on why it was so hot and humid and the BBC report **The UK's summers are getting hotter - but how prepared are we?** looks at some of the issues raised.



New geography resources



Do look at our latest articles and resources from Forestry England on the website.
Forestry England: landscape change in the UK, and **Forestry England: sustainable forest management in the UK.** These award winning resources created by Forestry England with Geography Southwest and aimed at Key Stage 3 provide comprehensive background information with PowerPoints and student worksheets.
They list the equipment you will need, plus starter activities and skills exercises.

The latest educational roundup in **Emma substack** from Emma Espley has many links to resources including news, GIS and video clips.

Draft National Curriculum Public Consultations ill take place in September. Read more on the GA website.

GA Model Making Competition 2026 on Fragile Environments. Entries for Key Stage 3 to be received by 31 July.

The **Big Summer Geography Quiz** from Discover the World education is a relevant way to occupy those end of term lessons. To access this FREE quiz you need to **request it here.**

Forthcoming events for geography teachers

Glosgeog is the GA Branch for students, teachers, ECTs, trainees, HE educators and anyone with a passion for geography within and beyond the county of Gloucestershire. It has a programme of events both virtual and in person. To become a member, complete this **Google Form** or contact **Peter Vujakovic (Secretary): peter.vujakovic@canterbury.ac.uk or Emma Espley (Chair): emma.espley@gmail.com**

Exeter GA Branch. Two teachers in the Exeter area, Rachel Hawke and Kate Williamson are lookng to set up an Exeter GA Branch. If you are interested, please complete this **google form** to express interest.

RGS courses for September:
Digimap for schools: using overlays and historical data at KS3 - Tuesday 22 September, 4.00 to 4.30 online.

What comes after fieldwork at KS3 and KS4? Tuesday 29 September, 5 pm online.



Look out for the first Newsletter of the next academic year, to be published in September 2026. 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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