

Communicating Geoscience: ESTA Annual Course and Conference at Plymouth University, 2013

I attended my first ESTA conference at BGS, Keyworth last year. My abiding memories of the event are of the enthusiasm, immense commitment and enjoyment shown by delegates, exhibitors and organisers alike. This year Plymouth University plays host and we are aiming to equal the excellent meeting of last year. The University plays a central role in the cultural and economic well-being of the city and, in delivering our vision of excellent teaching, research and enterprise, works in partnership with many other organisations in Plymouth and the SW Region. Indeed, Plymouth City Museum, the National Marine Aquarium, the English Riviera Geopark and the Jurassic Coast will all be involved at various stages of the meeting. Over the course of the conference we hope to share our enthusiasm for these partnerships, and demonstrate how they can enhance the experience of students at all stages of their education.

Technical Programme:

Our keynote speaker is Dr David Rothery from the Open University. David is well known for his appearances on popular science programmes such as the Bang Goes the Theory. He has written a wide range of books aimed at communicating "key ideas" in the Earth Sciences and also the wider place of Earth Sciences in understanding the Solar System.

Lectures and exhibitions will be held in the Sherwell Centre, a purpose built conference venue converted from a 19th Century Church on the University Campus.

<http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/pages/view.asp?page=24543>



We also have a wide-ranging set of workshops confirmed. These will be held in the Earth Science teaching laboratories in the Fitzroy Building:



- Bringing fossils into the classroom (Jodie Fisher, Plymouth University Jan Freedman, Plymouth Museum)
- Microfossils as indicators of environmental change (Malcolm Hart and Christopher Smart, Plymouth University)



- Education through Expeditions (Antony Jinman, Polar Explorer and Explorer in Residence, Plymouth University)
<http://www.educationthroughexpeditions.org/>



- Using simple tools to model with seismic data (Gordon Neighbour and Jean Luc Berenguer)
- Virtual worlds and animations for teaching Earth Science (Oxford University, Oxford Sparks and Science Communication Team)
- A career in Earth Sciences ? Online resources for Schools (Mark Anderson and Luke Angell, Plymouth University)
- Models for visualising the Earth in 3D (Tom Argles, Open University)
- Primary workshops

We also have provisional workshops offered from the following:

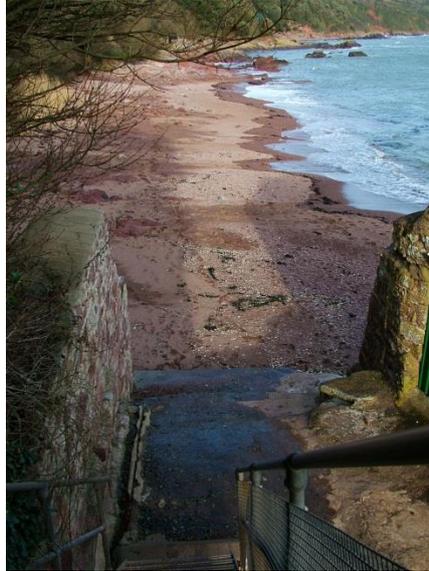
- Communicating volcanic hazards in Schools (Jenni Barclay, University of East Anglia and the STREVA project) <http://streva.ac.uk/>
- Models for visualising the Earth in 3D (David Bailey, BGS) <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/services/3Dgeology/teachingandlearning/>
- GeoBus(+) (Ruth Robinson & Kathryn Roper, University of St Andrews) <http://www.geobus.org.uk/>

We will, of course be offering the usual conference favourites such as bring and share. We will round of the Saturday programme, once again, with the frenetic excitement of a "Show and Tell" session.

On Sunday 29th September we will have an opportunity to show off spectacular field resources that the SW has to offer for teaching. We will focus our field visits towards those areas where national and international recognition of the teaching potential of the sites has generated a wide range of educational materials that are available for teachers of Earth Science to use in their teaching:

- The Jurassic Coast of East Devon and Dorset <http://jurassiccoast.org/education>. A spectacular opportunity to walk through 185 million years of Earth History but also for amazing cross-curricular activities. We intend to have guided tours and a boat trip of the coast and, hopefully, an opportunity to fly on the unique "Jurassic Airlines" – an unforgettable flight back through time <http://jurassicairlines.co.uk/>

- The English Riviera Global Geopark in Torbay (<http://www.englishrivierageopark.org.uk/>). Again we will examine opportunities for cross-curricular activities whilst also examining classic geological stratigraphic relationships and cave formation in limestones.
- A trip into Cornwall, just over the River Tamar from Plymouth. We will visit a wonderful self-contained site near the village of Kingsand. Here we will use "e-guidebooks" as a learning tool and as a way of allowing students to conduct fieldwork independently in a safe and supported environment.



Social Events:

Early arrivals on Friday will have an opportunity for an immersive experience in the University's "dome" (our Immersive Visualisation Theatre). We will demonstrate a range of immersive environments, as widely different as the solar system and a fly!! In the evening we will have a drinks reception in Plymouth City Museum followed by traditional West Country Fish and Chips on the University Campus.

After the workshops and presentations on the Saturday we will reassemble at the National Marine Aquarium, close to the historical Barbican area of the city. Here we will have a tour of this unique research and teaching facility and dine amongst the sharks ! Professor Iain Stewart will be our master of ceremonies for the evening and, for the more energetic delegates, we can walk over Sutton Harbour to the Barbican for some harbourside drinks in the balmy warmth of a late Summer evening !

We look forward to welcoming you to our University and our city and offering you all a useful but enjoyable conference.

Information provided by Dr Mark Anderson (Associate Professor (Senior Lecturer) in Structural Geology, School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (Faculty of Science and Technology), Plymouth University

**Please send all enquiries about this conference to Linda Marshall,
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