

PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT IN GEOSCIENCE EDUCATION

Amy Ball and Rose Want report on the latest activities from the Education Department.

Earth scientists have a critical role to play in tackling some of society's most pressing issues. As the Society's Education Department, it is part of our job to communicate this role to both teachers and students, and to show them that by studying the Earth sciences they can make positive changes in the world. For example, Earth scientists can help meet the challenges of decarbonisation and sustainability, in an effort to mitigate climate change; they can explore for and extract critical resource minerals and metals to help meet future demand; and they can understand and communicate the effects of geohazards. However, geology GCSE and A level are not taught in every secondary school across the UK, so it is crucial for us to encourage the current cohort of geography and science teachers to inspire students via other education initiatives.

One way of engaging students with geology is via participation in the Society's National Schools Geology Challenge (<https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/geochallenge>). The challenge asks teams of geology, geography or science students to compete in a regional heat—held by their relevant Regional Group. Using poster and short oral presentations, the students present a geological topic to a panel of judges. After competing in a quiz round, the teams with the highest combined score from all three elements proceed to the final at Burlington House, London. For 2020, the final has a new format to test student's teamworking and problem-solving abilities, as well as their geological knowledge. Regional Groups have already started the



ball rolling for the 2020 regional heats, so we are hopeful that we will maintain or beat 2019's record year for the number of entries.

Another way to get more Earth science into teaching is through the Geoscience Education Academy (<https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/gea>), a two-day teacher-training course for secondary school teachers and teacher trainees. The course aims to boost teachers' knowledge of Earth science, while providing innovative teaching ideas and activities that could be delivered in the classroom. This year's Geoscience Education Academy was held in July and included workshops such as 'a journey to the centre of the Earth', 'tectonic hazards and a nice cup of tea' and 'our climate disaster', as well as an urban geology fieldtrip to help teachers brush up on rock descriptions and a guest lecture on slow-slip earthquakes by Dr Rebecca Bell from Imperial College London.

If you are a teacher or teacher trainee interested in getting involved with the Schools Geology Challenge or attending future Earth science CPD courses, please contact the Education Department (education@geolsoc.org.uk) to sign up to be one of our Geological Society School Affiliates. Similarly, if you are interested in getting involved in geoscience education and outreach, you can help us out by becoming a Geology STEM Ambassador, judging one of our competitions (such as the Schools Geology Challenge or the Early Career Geologist Award) or even by joining our Education Committee (<https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/About/Governance/Committees/External-Relations/Education>).

PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES

London Lecture: The Big Antarctic Freeze

Speaker: Caroline Lear, Cardiff University

Location: Burlington House, London

Date: 18 September

Programme

- Afternoon talk: 14.30 Tea & Coffee; 15.00 Lecture begins; 16.00 Event ends.
- Evening talk: 17.30 Tea & Coffee; 18.00 Lecture begins; 19.00 Reception.

Further Information

Please visit www.geolsoc.org.uk/gslondonlectures19. Tickets are now available on Eventbrite.co.uk and will work on a first come first serve basis. The lectures will be available to watch livestreamed at both the 3pm and 6pm lecture. To watch, please check the lecture webpage for the link. (This talk will be repeated as a Regional Lecture on 26 September, at the National Museum Cardiff; <https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/Events/Regional-Public-Lectures-2019>.)

Regional Lecture: Volcanoes and past climate—adventures with deep carbon

Speaker: Tamsin Mather, University of Oxford

Location: University of Plymouth

Date: 23 September

Programme

- Evening talk: 18.30 Lecture begins; 19.00 Reception.

Further Information

Please visit <https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/Events/Regional-Public-Lectures-2019>. Tickets are now available on Eventbrite.co.uk and will work on a first come first serve basis.