



GeoPoint

Newsletter of the Association of Geography Teachers of Ireland

The Death of Irish Geography?

By the time you read this, the decision may already have been made to remove from the curriculum two of the most fundamentally important disciplines that form the foundation of Irish peoples' culture and identity, namely, the study of our history and our geography. This is to say nothing of their value to our biggest indigenous industry - tourism.

It has been suggested that aspects of geography could still be taught in the new Junior Cycle curriculum. However, this would be up to individual schools. And while there are advantages to 'social studies', the suggested replacement, there are also all of the disadvantages that come with not having the critical thinking nor intellectual discipline of a systematic course of study.

While there has been a lot of media spin and hype about the need for Junior Cycle reform, I have yet to read a coherent justification for wholesale curriculum change. It is ironic that in our efforts to create a 'Knowledge Society' we should devaluing knowledge in favour of amorphous topics such as 'wellbeingness'.

The mantra that we have lost our economic sovereignty and that spending needs to be reduced is not in question. That we should make short term savings for longer terms costs makes no sense when we are dealing with the lives of children and the broader common good of society and where there are many areas of current spending that could be rationalised. The removal of geography and history from the core curriculum in the UK in the 1980's was as disastrous there as it risks being here.

While I would like to argue that the jobs of geography teachers is an issue, I think the contribution of a historically and geographically educated population to its society is a far more important justification for retaining geography in the core curriculum.

By releasing the **2005 Rebalanced Syllabus JC Geography Syllabus**, the NCCA could facilitate geography teachers contribution to JC reform. I call on them to do so.

A sample letter has been enclosed with this issue of GeoPoint should you wish to write to the Department of Education.

Peter Lydon, President

37th Annual Conference

Friday October 21st and Saturday 22nd October
Clayton Hotel, Ballybrit, Galway.

details and booking form inside

Branches 2011

Branches currently recognised by the National Executive are

AGTI - Navan Branch (North East)
 AGTI - South East Branch
 AGTI - North Munster Branch
 AGTI - East Central Branch
 AGTI-Ballina

We are keen to re-establish branches in Cork and Galway. Funding and advice is available to help with this. If you would like to be involved in this, please contact Peter Lydon (peterlydon@iol.ie).



National Geography Quiz

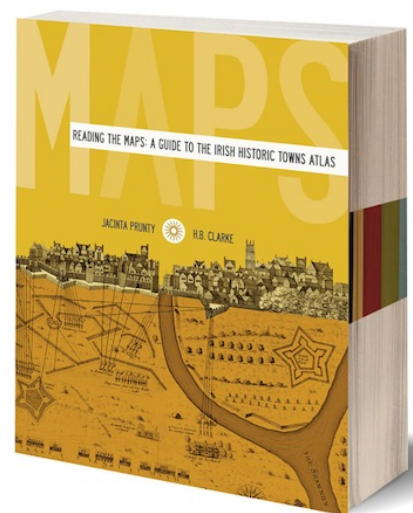
This year is the 50th anniversary of the AGTI. The Association would like to mark the event by holding a National Geography Quiz for students. The quiz would be initially organised at branch level with each branch forwarding a team(s) to the National Quiz. The National Quiz would be held most likely on a Saturday.

We want to gauge interest and views for this idea. If you think you could help a team participate in this event, please email the Honourary Secretary, Ute Duane at secretary.agti@gmail.com

Ideas for Transition Year

Does anything of medieval Bray still exist? How does historic Trim compare to other Irish towns? The answer to this and many other questions are to be found in ***Reading the Maps: A guide to the Irish Historic Towns Atlas***.

This is a user's guide to the 23 atlases that have been published in this series and is geared towards teachers and use in the classroom..



This new publication from the Irish Historic Towns Atlas, Royal Irish Academy uses an historical and geographical approach to understand the

evolution of 21 Irish towns and cities through the ages. The book is richly illustrated with maps, historical plans, views, illustrations, reconstructions and photographs and includes assignments at the end of each chapter.

It explores themes such as 'buying and selling' and 'amusements and pastimes' and has chapters dealing with particular periods of urban development in Ireland from the monastic town to the nineteenth-century resort town.

The authors Dr Jacinta Prunty and Professor Howard Clarke are both editors of the Irish Historic Towns Atlas series and have published widely on Irish towns and map history.

SPECIAL OFFER price for teachers is €15 plus €5 postage. To avail of this, please contact the Irish Historic Towns Atlas project, Royal Irish Academy, 19 Dawson Street, Dublin 2.

Email: s.gearty@ria.ie Phone: 01-6090641.

For further information see www.ihta.ie

37th Annual Conference

Clayton Hotel, Ballybrit, Galway.

See the website
www.agti.ie
 for further details

Friday 21st October 2011

Registration from 7.30pm

Opening of Conference at 8.00pm

Dr. Clionadh Raleigh

"Climate Justice" & TY Resource for teaching Climate Justice

Video Message from Mary Robinson, Former President of Ireland
 Mary Robinson Foundation - Climate Justice

Saturday 22nd October 2011

9.00am

Registration

9.30am - 10.30am

Core Unit 1

Irish Tectonic History

Tom De Bret

Poster Resource - Geological Periods and Ireland's Changing Location over time

10.30

Tea & Coffee

10.45 - 11.45 pm

Core Unit 2

Regional Case Study - Brazil

Sue Honan

11.45 - 12.15

AGTI AGM

12.15 - 1.15pm

Lunch

1.15pm - 2.15pm

Parallel Session

The Exam and the Elective

Charles Hayes

OR

Case Study of Multinational Company - Merit Medical
 Geroid Quinn

2.30pm - 3.30pm

Parallel Session

GeoEcology

Susan Honan

OR

Global Interdependence
 Liam Ashe

3.30pm - 4.30pm

Geographical Investigation

Landform Formed from Geomorphic Processes

Sue Honan

4.30pm - 5.30pm

Special Plenary Session

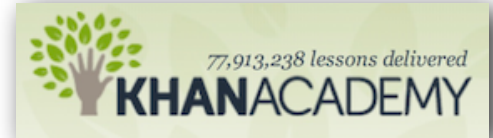
The position of geography at Junior Cycle and the implications for Leaving Certificate and Third level

Post Marking Review

Return your booking
 form (enclosed) as
 soon as possible to be
 sure of a place.

Alternative view of European Core and Peripheries using Twitter

The map below from Eric Fischer (<http://twitter.com/enf>) maps the distribution of tweets on the basis of number of tweets per box. Each box contains the same number of tweets but some boxes must be bigger to contain the same number of tweets as smaller boxes elsewhere.



Khan Academy is an online/virtual school offering free lessons in a mind-boggingly huge number of areas including maths and science. You can search for other topics though.

Go to www.khanacademy.org and type 'plate tectonics' in the search box.



The PDST - Professional Development Service for Teachers - has circulated to schools its programme of in-services for Autumn 2011. Your principal or Subject Coordinator should have received it by now. There is a range of in-services planned including strategies for teaching population and field studies. www.pdst.ie

NoticePoint

East Central Branch

Lecture & AGM

Wednesday 5th October 2011 7.30pm
Dublin West Education Centre, Tallaght
"The Development of towns in Ireland:
Using the Irish Historic Towns Atlas"
Dr. Jacinta Prunty, NUIM

South East Branch

The South East Branch AGM will be held on Thursday October 19th at 7.30pm in the Waterford Teachers Centre. There will be a talk on Leaving Certificate and on the Junior Cycle reform.

Keep up with South East Branch at www.agtise.blogspot.com



Comhlámh produces a periodical called '**Index**' - a Development Education newsletter. They also provide other resources and training on Development Education issues.

You can subscribe to receive the newsletter at www.comhlamh.org or download it from the site.

If you would like to contribute to GeoPoint, please forward your article to peterlydon@iol.ie