What is geographical research?
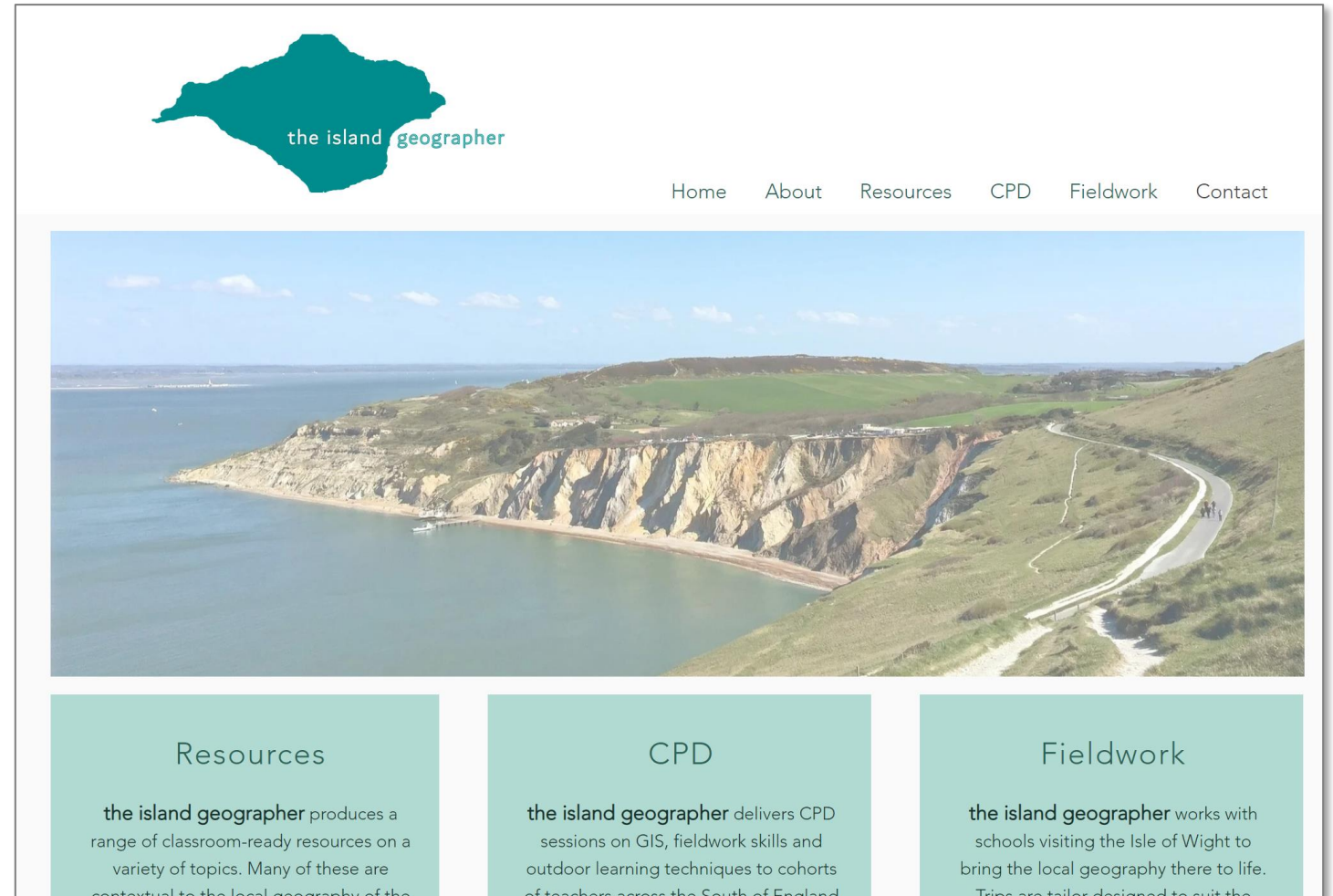
Chloë Searl

Introduction

- Chloë Searl – The Island Geographer

- Teacher, tutor and examiner for 20 years

www.theislandgeographer.co.uk

Introduction

Monday 14th November   5pm-6.30pm
The nature of geographical enquiry

Monday 5th December   5pm-6.30pm
Data collection techniques

Monday 23rd January   5pm-6.30pm
Data presentation techniques

Monday 13th March   5pm-6.30pm
Data analysis and evaluation

What is a geographical enquiry?

- A series of stages of work that take you from a geographical question towards a geographical answer.

A geographical question, framed as a title for the fieldwork enquiry

Introducing the topic of investigation through a literature review

What is a geographical enquiry?

- A series of stages of work that take you from a geographical question towards a geographical answer.

Creating smaller research questions or hypotheses about what you will find in the field

Collecting data in the field to support the answering of the research questions

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What is a geographical enquiry?

- A series of stages of work that take you from a geographical question towards a geographical answer.

Presenting data in the best way to help you find patterns and relationships

Explaining patterns and relationships in the data using geographical theory and understanding
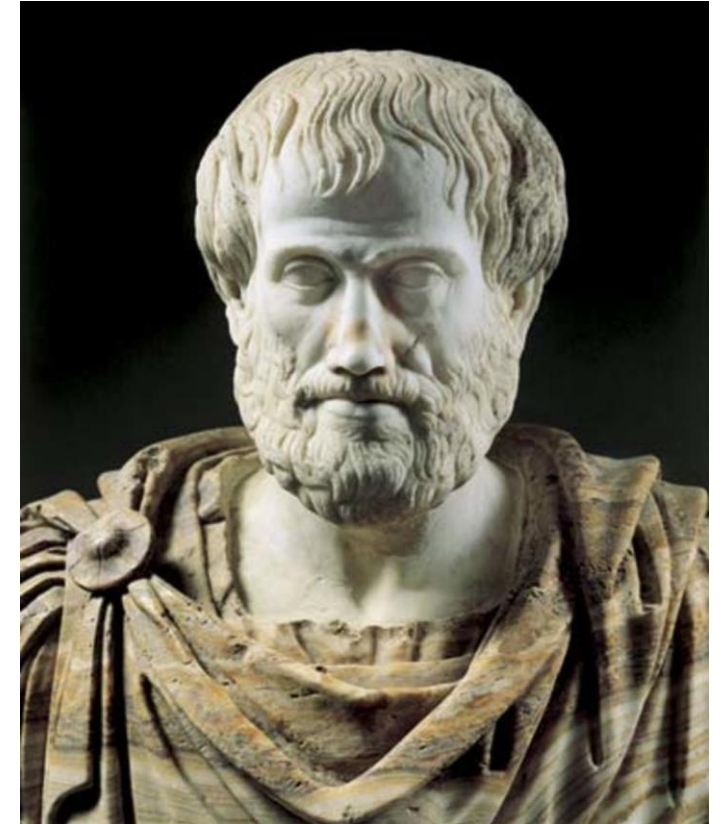
What is a geographical enquiry?

- A series of stages of work that take you from a geographical question towards a geographical answer.

Evaluating and critiquing the enquiry process through reflection on the whole research journey

Empirical evidence

- Widely known as 'the scientific method'

- The structure has largely been unchanged since its conception by Aristotle and the idea of empiricism

- Empiricism is the notion that new knowledge comes about through experience and perceptions made through the senses

So… what makes it *geographical*?

- In geography fieldwork today there are certain emphases that make the structure stand apart from that used in the pure sciences

So... what makes it *geographical*?

What makes geography research different to traditional science research?

So... what makes it *geographical*?

- In geography fieldwork today there are certain emphases that make the structure stand apart from that used in the pure sciences
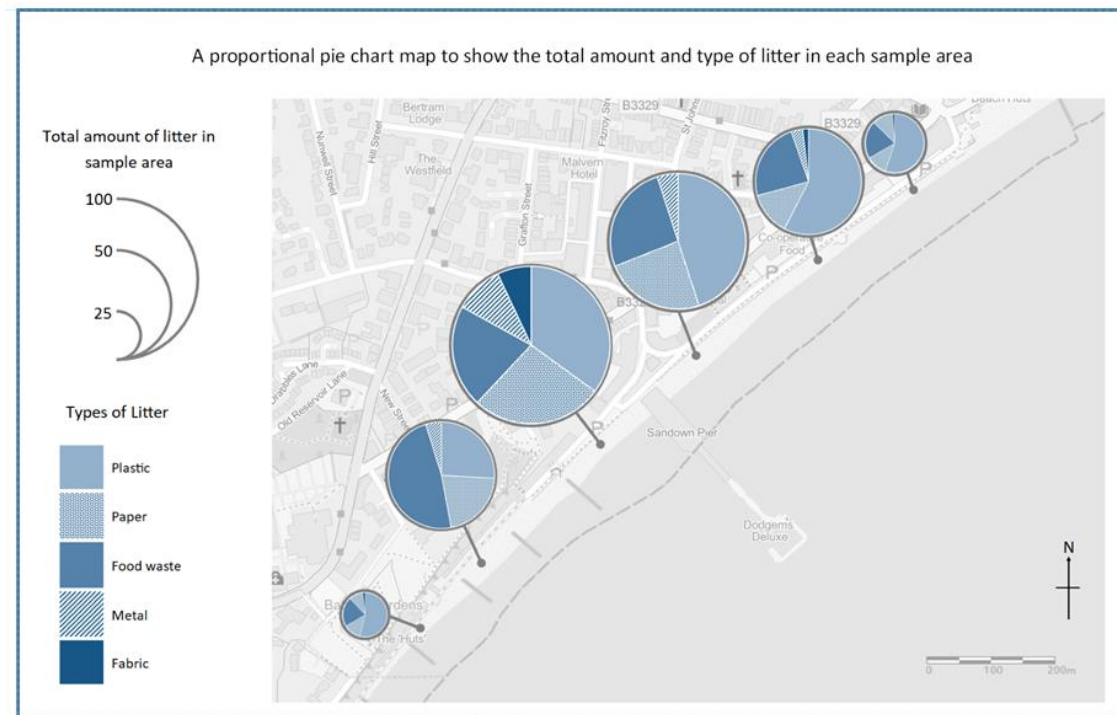
- The main emphasis is on spatial data

- Good geographers can easily get distracted and forget about this!

A proportional pie chart map to show the total amount and type of litter in each sample area

Titles

- Answerable

- Detailed

- Allows discussion

- Meaningful

A geographical question, framed as a title for the fieldwork enquiry

To what extent is Ventnor a sustainable tourism destination?

Common frameworks for geographical enquiries

- Comparing two places

- Investigating how a place has changed over time

- Investigating how the introduction of a human feature affects physical processes

- Investigating how changes in physical processes affect people / their behaviour

Using the topic of 'Coasts' come up with an investigation title for each of the common frameworks

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Common frameworks for geographical enquiries

- Investigating how closely a place 'follows' a geographical model

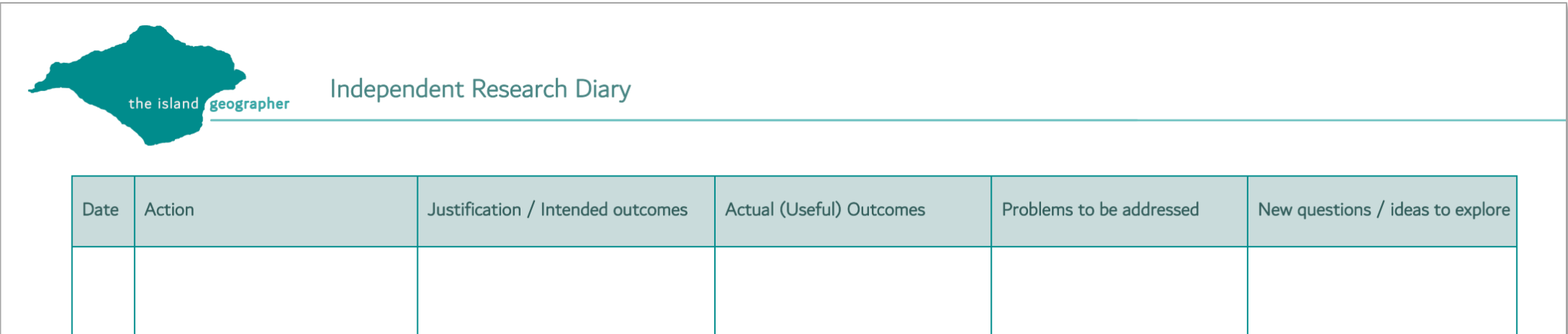- Evaluating the effectiveness of a human intervention

?

Using the topic of 'Coasts' come up with an investigation title for each of the common frameworks

Literature reviews

- Good quality sources of information

- Note everything carefully

- Keep a research diary

Introducing the topic of investigation through a literature review

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Independent Research Diary

Date	Action	Justification / Intended outcomes	Actual (Useful) Outcomes	Problems to be addressed	New questions / ideas to explore

Research questions

Creating smaller research questions or hypotheses about what you will find in the field

- Break the title question down into more manageable parts

- Some of these questions might be 'desk research questions' while most should be 'field research questions'.

Research questions

To what extent has the regeneration of Ventnor sea front created an economically divided town?

Research questions

To what extent has the **regeneration of Ventnor sea front** created an economically divided town?

What regeneration has taken place? …When? …Why?

Research questions

To what extent has the regeneration of Ventnor sea front created an **economically** divided town?

What factors are indicators of economic sustainability?

Research questions

To what extent has the regeneration of Ventnor sea front created an

economically divided town?

How do factors indicating economic sustainability change across

Ventnor?

Research questions

To what extent has the regeneration of Ventnor sea front created an economically **divided town**?

Are there distinct areas of economic decline and economic growth?

Research questions

To what extent has the **regeneration** of Ventnor sea front created an economically **divided town**?

Are the regenerated areas most associated with economic growth or decline?

Research questions

Take one of the titles that you generated in the last exercise and come up with one 'desk research question' and two 'field research questions'

In your own time...

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Thinking through different geographical research frameworks

For a topic of your choice, come up with an investigation title for each of the common geographical research frameworks listed in the table.

Topic	
Comparing two places	
Investigating how a place has changed over time	
Investigating how the introduction of a human feature affects physical processes	
Investigating how changes in physical processes affect people / their behaviour	
Investigating how closely a place 'follows' a geographical model	

An opportunity for questions...

The next session...

Monday 5th December   5pm-6.30pm

Data collection techniques

- Data led rather than method led research

- Questionnaire design

- Pilot studies

- Secondary data

- Using GIS