

# DOWN TO EARTH



# IMAGES and GRAPHICS



Wallpapers are a good source of free images for teaching purposes. This image is called "the last tree on earth" (1022x766 jpeg) and is available from the Department for International Development at

[www.developments.org/downloads](http://www.developments.org/downloads)  
Check out their pdfs, publications and free magazine as well.



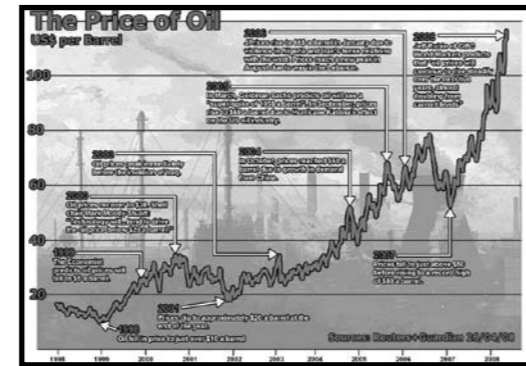
Yann Arthus Bertrand is still a big favourite. Over a thousand of his images (1024x686 jpegs) are available for download at

[www.yannarthusbertrand.org](http://www.yannarthusbertrand.org) for private use (this includes education, I've checked!). Yann's old education section was even better but its gone. French schools have been treated to posters by Yann and they are available for download as well.

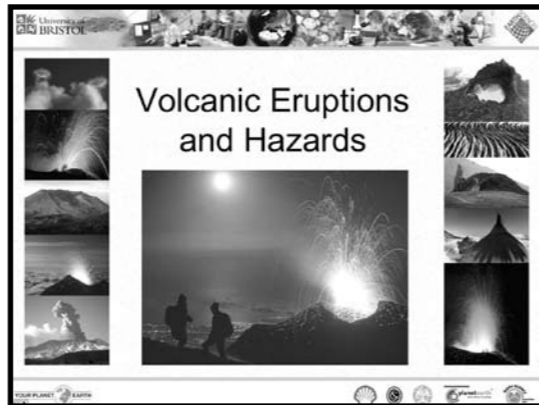


Grangemouth refinery was silenced by the strike which took place on April 27th and 28th 2008. Images of the gradual shut down of the refinery, the media frenzy, the picket lines and the garage forecourts lottery are available for download at

[www.flickr.com/photos/geojuice](http://www.flickr.com/photos/geojuice) along with graphics on the price of oil and the



location of all the refineries in the UK. There is also a presentation available for download at [www.slideshare.net/aland](http://www.slideshare.net/aland)



Dr Jess Trofimovs (University of Bristol) and his/her colleagues have produced a series of resources, aimed at introducing earth science topics to 14-15 year olds. These resources are available for download at

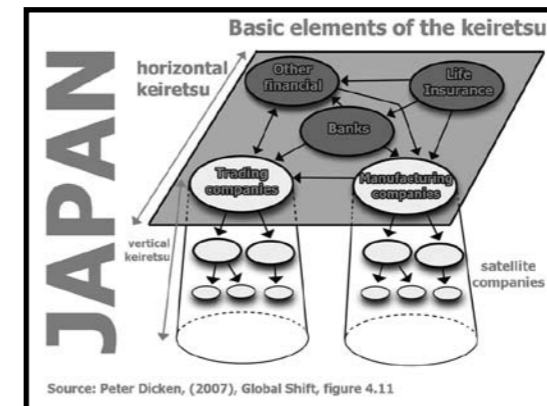
[www.earth4567.com/](http://www.earth4567.com/)  
The URL "earth4567" quotes the current best estimate of the age of the Earth, in millions of years. The powerpoints provided are fully editable. Brill!

## Jargon Busters

JPEGs, TIFFs, PSDs, PDFs, GIFs and EPS are all current image file formats. You can get away with working just with JPEGs but there is a problem. The JPEG format is popular because it provides dramatic compression of image files (and is therefore very popular on the web) but the heavier the compression, the more degraded the image becomes. It is a "lossy" compression method. Once an image has been compressed using the JPEG format, it is not a bright idea to repeatedly resave it as a JPEG. The image will quickly degrade beyond repair. It is a good idea to set up an archive (DVDs, CDs or hard drive and copy from the original as required. Even better save your best images as either TIFFs or PSDs as there is no degradation in these formats. You can send images for SGN in any format - just give us as many pixels as possible to play with please!

# DOWN TO EARTH WEB WATCH

Curriculum for Excellence: The deadline for commenting on the draft experiences and outcomes has been extended to 30th June 2008. All you have to do is log on to [www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk/online-surveys/index.asp](http://www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk/online-surveys/index.asp) and complete the online questionnaire. The draft experiences and outcomes are to be found at [www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk/outcomes/index.asp](http://www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk/outcomes/index.asp)



GeoJuice CD3 accompanies this SGN. It contains several graphics on Japan but this one on the keiretsu - the organisations which metamorphosed from the zaibatsu after WW2 - wasn't ready in time. It will appear on [www.geojuice.org](http://www.geojuice.org) in due course but a larger version is to be found on flickr in the meantime.

[www.flickr.com/photos/geojuice/sets](http://www.flickr.com/photos/geojuice/sets)  
Gordon Lobban (Trinity Academy) has donated some of his images to the GeoJuice collection and I'm looking forward to seeing the fruits of his school's and Beeslack Academy's recent student excursion to Japan. Awesome! Its China CD4 next, but only for subscribers. The SAGT committee has not renewed the contract. Damage. Mustn't be worth £1.20 eh?



Unesco Year of Planet Earth: The International Year of Planet Earth aims to ensure greater and more effective use by society of the knowledge accumulated by the world's 400,000 Earth scientists. The Year's ultimate goal of helping to build safer, healthier and wealthier societies around the globe is expressed in the Year's subtitle 'Earth science for Society'. Their site will be worth keeping an eye on over the coming months.

[www.yearofplanetearth.org/](http://www.yearofplanetearth.org/)  
Something a bit different now. Adobe has launched a beta version of Photoshop Express in the USA. It allows the sharing of images using social networking sites such as Photobucket, Facebook and Picasa and offers an extensive toolkit for basic image manipulation. It is a free and easy to use online image editor and is most certainly a step in the right direction. Adobe warns of occasional performance problems when using the service from the UK but it is worth the risk to take the "test drive". Cool, oh yes, very cool!

[www.photoshop.com/express](http://www.photoshop.com/express)  
There is seemingly a movement from ego-centric networks such as MySpace and Facebook towards object-centric networks such as You Tube, Del.icio.us and Flickr. This is certainly at least partly responsible for the appearance of Photoshop Express. According to Fred Stutzman, "Our ability to handle social interactions has limits, as per our attention. But our ability to accumulate digital objects, with their negligible size, is infinite." Hmmmm. I thought it was around two gigabytes myself - for friends and digital objects!

We are now in the fifth of Kondratiev's economic growth cycles - the 'information and communication Kondratiev' and boy, don't we know it. Information overload is a burden to us all and seemingly it is a problem which we have to learn to manage before it becomes terminal. Rather than clicking from site to site it is now possible to have the latest news and features delivered directly to you via an RSS feed. Not all websites currently provide RSS but as more do it will become a more and more useful educational tool. The BBC and the Guardian are my two main sources at present. There are two main methods to get started. You can either use a news reader or an RSS enabled web browser such as Firefox, Opera or Safari. Popular news readers include Newz Crawler, FeedDemon and Awasu (for Windows); Newsfire or NetNewsWire (for MacOSX); and Bloglines, My Yahoo! and NewsGator to use on the web. Do a bit of research on Google and away you go. Enjoy!

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