



## International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), Initiative on Forensic Geology (IFG)

### Monthly Update and Information for IUGS E-Bulletin, November 2025

#### Forensic Geology, 'Listening to the Dead', Forensics Uncovered, Spotify and Apple Podcasts

Dr Laurance Donnelly regularly provides outreach presentations on IUGS-IFG and forensic geology to non-technical audiences that include school children, university students, special interest groups, the general public, press, broadcasting and on-line platforms and professional organisations. The two-podcast links below provide information on forensic geology:

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/0KJToMFWNjE4SM3eZWKyLX>

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/0E4psiVadmHCg0ts7MBmo0?si=j3PijKxXTcO7YTjWrEzmNQ>



#### Forensic Geology, BBC, Children and Science Festivals

Prof Lorna Dawson contributes to many science festivals and public events on the theme of forensic geoscience. At the Edinburgh Science Festival 2025, she played a prominent role in forensic science outreach and education. Representing IUGS-IFG and the James Hutton Institute and the SCANdI project (Single-Cell and Single Molecule Analysis for DNA Identification), she led a children's workshop: *'Solving a Crime, Brick by Brick'*, a hands-on forensic workshop where children investigated a crime scene for trace evidence including soil. She also created the evening play *Extracting Evidence*, aimed at audiences aged over 16 exploring the future of CSI, where it showcased cutting-edge techniques including soil forensics. She also contributed to the Aberdeen Science Festival, 2025 with a play *From Crime Scene to Court*. Lorna recently appeared in the BBC Murder Case into the death of cyclist Mr Tony Parsons in 2017. She recently published a paper with colleagues in the UK on the use of Lego in public engagement using LEGO® crime scenes as an inclusive way to 'build' student learning, engagement and educational experience in forensic science. Soil is included as trace evidence in the Natural History Museum and the Botanic Garden sets.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1355030625001315>

#### JpGU-AGU Joint Meeting, 24-29 May 2026, Chiba, Japan

A 90-minute session has been confirmed to be held at the Japan Geoscience Union (JpGU) and America Geophysics Union (AGU), at Chiba, Japan, in May 2026. Submission of abstracts will open on 15 January 2026, at 14:00 (Japan time), and close on 17 February 2026 at 17:00 (Japan time). The scope of the session is, Forensic geology is a field of forensic science to support solving crimes and consisting of three main areas: (a) Geophysical surveys (ground-penetrating radar, echo sounding, sonic surveys, and magnetic surveys). (b) Assessment based on research papers, topographical maps, geological maps, soil maps, geochemical maps, and geographic information systems. (c) Inorganic and organic analyses of rocks, soils or sediments typically including characterization of minerals, grain size, colour, and shape. Forensic geology can help in investigation of a wide range of criminal issues including violent crimes, counterterrorism, searches for missing persons, environmental crimes, fraudulent, illegal mining, geotechnical engineering, engineering geology and geohazards. This session invites submissions of forensic geology case reports on both criminal and civil cases. We also welcome submissions of geoscience technologies and analytical methods for solving criminal matters.

Conveners: [sugita@nrips.go.jp](mailto:sugita@nrips.go.jp) | [kawamura-noriko@jcg.ac.jp](mailto:kawamura-noriko@jcg.ac.jp) | [lstern@fbi.gov](mailto:lstern@fbi.gov)

General information: [laurance.donnelly@ahkgroup.com](mailto:laurance.donnelly@ahkgroup.com) | [geologist@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:geologist@hotmail.co.uk)

[https://www.jpгу.org/meeting\\_e2026/](https://www.jpгу.org/meeting_e2026/)

#### Forensic Geology in Japan, 12-13 December 2025

The 35th Symposium on Geo-environments and Geotechnics of the Japanese Society of Geo-pollution Science, Medical Geology and Urban Geology will be held on 12-13 December 2025. The symposium include wide range of topics such as geo-pollution, medical geology, urban geology, problems related to mining activities, international cooperation on geological issues, and forensic geology.

[https://www.jspmug.org/en/cn3/35th\\_sympo\\_geo.html](https://www.jspmug.org/en/cn3/35th_sympo_geo.html)

### Reuters, Forensic Geology Evidence, Mass Graves, Syria

Prof Lorna Dawson, Dr Ben Roche and Dr Alastair Ruffell provided forensic evidence with Reuters on soil transfer of mass graves in Syria, released in October 2025 leading to the discovery of mass graves, which had been moved and ultimately to the site being put under security control for further forensic investigation.

### 6th Ibero-American Seminar on Forensic Geosciences, Santiago, Chile

The 6th Ibero-American Seminar on Forensic Geosciences, was held at in Andrés Antonio de Gorbea Auditorium, of the Faculty of Physical and Mathematical Sciences of the University of Chile, and in collaboration with Red Iberoamericana de Investigadores Forenses (RIIF) and Ciencia Y Tecnología Par El Desarrollo (CYTED). This was attended by over 150 delegates from at least 12 countries. IUGS-IFG was involved in the first event of its type in Colombia, in 2009, and has played a key role in all previous conferences. IUGS-IFG was represented in person by Dr Laurance Donnelly, Dr Fabio Salvador and Dr Carlos Molina. Dr Alastair Ruffell dialed in remotely and Dr Ricardo Moraes attended the evening session. The focus of the conference was on the search for human remains and graves in Latin America, water searches, gold and doré traceability illegal mining and the illicit trafficking of minerals.

[https://www.cytel.org/web\\_redes.php?id\\_rede=155](https://www.cytel.org/web_redes.php?id_rede=155)

<https://redforenseiberoamericana.org/>

<https://forensicgeologyinternational.com/riif/>



*Selected photographs of the 6th Ibero-American Seminar on Forensic Geosciences, Santiago, Chile*