

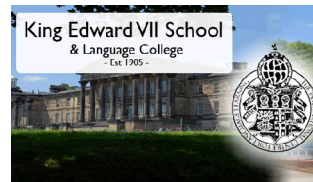
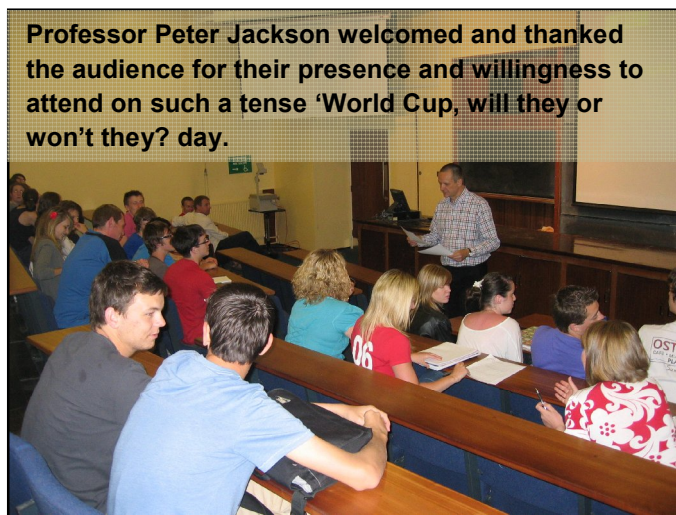
**Report on an event jointly organised by the Sheffield branch of the Geographical Association and the University of Sheffield for sixth form students and teachers**

**Sheffield students assess the current and past state of Earth and Humanity**

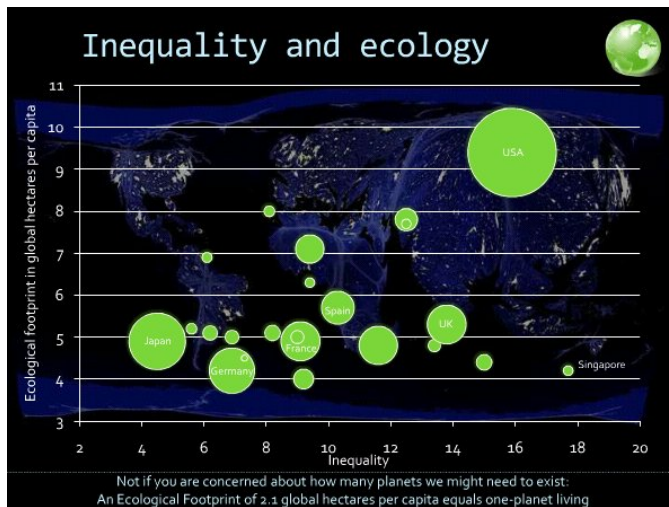
23 June 2010

A collaboration between The Geographical Association and The University of Sheffield's geography department, this jointly organised event featured various workshops for students to discuss important and profound questions such as '*What is the greatest threat to the survival of humankind in the future?*' It gave them the opportunity to venture into the past and imagine a frozen Britain during the Last Glacial Maximum, to consider concepts of food and globalisation, and to explore issues around International Development and aid!

This event certainly appeared to achieve its aim to provide additional insight to the study of geography and inspire A-Level students from Silverdale, King Edward and Notre Dame Schools.



The Social and Spatial Inequalities Research Group is lead by Professor Dorling at The University of Sheffield ([www.sasi.group.shef.ac.uk](http://www.sasi.group.shef.ac.uk)) and the visitors were fortunate to hear about their recent research. To set the scene the audience were asked to physically position themselves into a population cartogram to produce a reflection of '*their Sheffield*' relative to where they all reside. This immediately engaged the group to question one another's resident location in relation to other fellow students. They repositioned themselves to the north, south, east, and west part of the lecture theatre. This short exercise demonstrated how population data produces maps, examples of which were about to be discussed in the imminent lecture '*Is more equal more green?*' (<http://www.slideshare.net/GeoSaSI/is-more-equal-more-green>).



### 'Is more equal more green?' Example slides

#### Understanding Inequality

Inequality can be explained by looking at the ratio of the share of income from the richest 10% to the poorest 10% of the population. In the United Kingdom this ratio is 13:8

...but what does it mean?

This ratio was revealed by the UNDP in their world report 2009 (table M)

The lecture by Professor Dorling, 'Is more equal more green?' was presented with a relaxed style, strong message and laced with interjections of humour. It held the audience captivated by the concepts, statistics and realities of inequality. The intelligent questions that followed showed the impact of this lecture on a group of motivated students.

Following this session the students were divided into groups to work with a lecturer on a current geographical area of research. This gave them the opportunity to witness university teaching, reading and to individually contribute to the workshop topics. The choices were: International Development / aid; Global Warming and Climate Change; Food and Globalisation and Glacial Landforms in Britain and Ireland. Assisting with the Global Warming and Climate Change workshop gave an insight to the students understanding and willingness to take on an uncharted work area. The workshop was based on James Lovelock's Gaia theory and a recent interview with him by the Herald Express. This involved the students reading the article, followed by discussion and presentation in small groups to answer two important questions: *What is the greatest threat to the survival of mankind in the future? What is the single most important step we should be taking to address it?*

The participation of students in this workshop was inspiring to be amongst. Participants debated the concepts with formed opinions which were confidently conveyed to their audiences. The opportunity to ask and answer questions (post presentations) was taken seriously and professionally, evidencing their ability to maintain and further explain an expressed opinion but also showed willing to listen to others points of view.

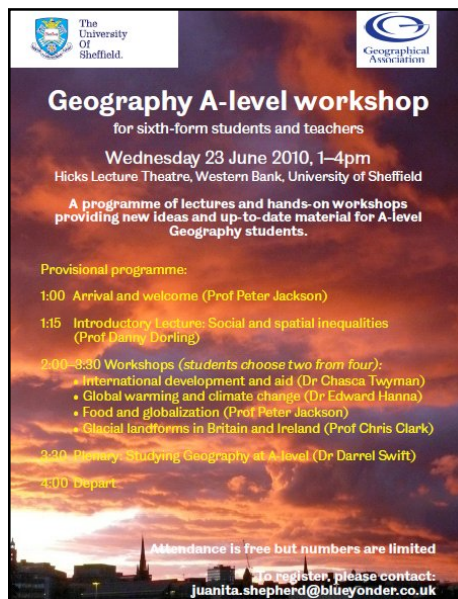
The groups rejoined for a plenary session with Dr. Darrel Swift who gave a comprehensive guide to studying geography at Sheffield with insights to module choices and possible careers with a geography degree. It was outlined that geography's broad nature gives scope for lecturers to research what interests them, and this research develops taught modules to undergraduates. Applicants were encouraged to research this carefully from one university to another to ensure that the study of geography is related to their interests. The feedback from this session was described as informative and interesting.

### **Summary feedback evaluation from teachers and students**

'What was the **best** thing about the event?': From students: discussions in workshops, debating problems and solutions, listening to other peoples points of view, good opportunity to see university environment, talk to lecturers and enjoyed the enthusiasm that came across from lecturers. Direct quotes from student feedback: 'made me want to do international development at university', 'I really enjoyed finding out facts'. From teachers: workshops provided a good insight into university-style teaching, a good choice of workshops, good interaction between lecturers, undergraduates and students, overall a useful experience.

'What was the **worst** thing about the event?': Timing clash with the England game. Some wanted a full day, or a chance to do more than one workshop, some felt intimidated about making presentations to strangers, some thought there was too much talking and not enough interaction on the lecturer's part during workshops.

The teaching staff thought the booking process was 'very easy' and they had enough information to request time out of school. This event is hoped to be repeated to encourage more A-level students to participate and engage with geographical issues, with the overall aim to enhance their understanding of the subject and its place in Higher Education.



The poster features logos for The University of Sheffield and the Geographical Association at the top. The background is a sunset over a city skyline. The text is centered and provides details about the workshop.

**Geography A-level workshop**  
for sixth-form students and teachers  
Wednesday 23 June 2010, 1–4pm  
Hicks Lecture Theatre, Western Bank, University of Sheffield

A programme of lectures and hands-on workshops  
providing new ideas and up-to-date material for A-level  
Geography students.

Provisional programme:

1:00 Arrival and welcome (Prof Peter Jackson)

1:15 Introductory Lecture: Social and spatial inequalities  
(Prof Danny Dorling)

2:00–3:30 Workshops (*students choose two from four*):

- International development and aid (Dr Chasca Twyman)
- Global warming and climate change (Dr Edward Hanna)
- Food and globalization (Prof Peter Jackson)
- Glacial landforms in Britain and Ireland (Prof Chris Clark)

3:30 Plenary: Studying Geography at A-level (Dr Darrel Swift)

4:00 Depart.

Attendance is free but numbers are limited  
to register, please contact:  
juanita.shepherd@blueyonder.co.uk

***EJ Browning***