

Going Places with Geography: Report on July 1st 2009

Royal
Geographical
Society

with IBG

Advancing geography
and geographical learning

Over 230 Year 12 pupils from 56 schools in England attended our higher education and careers day at the RGS-IBG on Wednesday 1st July 2009. The event was organised by the **Geography Ambassador Project** and involved 15 workshops throughout the day on topics including making a UCAS application, careers in specific areas of Geography led by graduates, and discussions with current students on life at university.

Speakers on higher education included Chris Stokes, Director of Admissions for the Geography Department at the University of Durham, who opened the conference on 'How to make a successful **UCAS application**' and was later on hand to provide advice on **personal statements** specifically for Geography. Amber Sorrell from the Learning and Leading Project gave advice on **fieldwork, gap years and apprenticeships** relating to Geography, whilst Kate Amis from RGS-IBG gave guidance on **selecting the right Geography course** at university.

Careers were a big feature at the event, with professionals in a range of sectors exploring the opportunities available in Geography. Among them were Nick Austin and Damien McCloud, **Geographical Information Systems** Analysts who each ran sessions to introduce GIS and its significance. Catherine Udy, Learning Manager for Geography from Eltham Hill School enthused the sixth formers with her presentation about what was involved in a career in **teaching**. Sam Bompas of Bompas and Parr and Sorrel Comley of FD wowed sixth formers with an innovative and enlightening presentation on the power and role of **communications and PR**. (Marshmallows were involved!) Lucy Gosling, a Flood Development Officer for the Environment Agency enthused the students on her career in **water and flood management**, David Hollow, a PhD student in **International Development**, gave an insight into both development issues and postgraduate study, while Andy Wallace from Transport for London explained the use of Geography in **transport planning and management**. James Sawyer, Disaster Response Operations Manager for The World Society for the Protection of Animals presented a very popular workshop on careers in **disaster management**. Other workshops examined the use of Geography in careers connected to **green business and law**.

Throughout the day 11 undergraduate Geography Ambassadors from geography departments across England provided **informal advice on life at university** through discussions in small groups, and gave presentations on their experiences of higher education and what it is like to study geography at university. These informal sessions were well received by the students who were able to put problems on their mind to current university students.

A competition at the end of the day which asked the Year 12 students to think about why they loved Geography was won by Robbie Hoare who wrote that:

"I love geography because.....it provides me with an opportunity to change the lives of people and alter environments to make a better future for the human race by learning about the world that we live in and the history of our earth"

A huge **Thank You** to all our presenters for sharing their experiences and taking time out of busy working schedules to do so. Some of the feedback from the event included:

'The workshops were all really good and have helped me with deciding what to do with my future.'

'It's been really interesting and I have learnt something in all the sessions.'

'The students were worryingly enthusiastic about the whole day!

'My students have really benefited from this vital information in preparation for university.'

We are pleased to confirm that we will be offering this event again next year. The date will be Friday 25th June 2010. For further information contact b.cox@rgs.org. Places for named year 12 delegates can be booked from 1st December 2009.

