

"I just wish the world was twice as big and half of it was still unexplored."
David Attenborough



Planet



Earth

Despite the fact that there has been a bout of bad press recently concerning one of the cornerstones of a basic education and one of the most rewarding fields of further education; geography, the subject is thriving at Liverpool Hope University in the Capital of Culture city.

The general feeling being amplified by the press is that geography is boring and irrelevant. Early in 2008 the BBC reported that geography was the worst-taught subject in the school curriculum. As a result of time pressures in education, many people are not given the opportunity to study fundamental geographical concepts and ideas.

This is a scary thought; surely avoiding the study of geography is detrimental to our basic understanding of how the world works. Living in an increasingly globalised society means that we should have sufficient time to appreciate and comprehend not only the fundamentals of geography but also the intricacies of the world around us.

For decades David Attenborough has travelled to the four corners of the globe and kept audiences enthralled and educated about nature, the natural world and planet earth. Michael Palin has taught us about communities not through observations but through conversations. He has said: "You can travel the seas, poles and deserts and see nothing. To really understand the world you need to get under the skin of the people and places. In other words, learn about geography. I can't imagine a subject more relevant in schools. We'd all be lost without it."

I am happy to say that Liverpool is playing its part to gain a better perspective of the world around us, with The Big Hope Global Youth Congress being an astounding success. But also Liverpool Hope University is grounding those understandings to

what many of us take for granted; developing our knowledge of geography. The university is the home of the largest global network of geography departments (www.herodot.net). As part of the Big Hope congress, they recently published a book 'Promoting and Celebrating Geography,' a collection of academic essays. In it Eliza Donescu, from the University of Bucharest, Romania wonderfully sums up that: "People cannot live unaware of the world around them – it's a natural human impulse to want to explore this world and explain how it works. Geography is the

study of the Earth in all of its dimensions and it does exactly that: it studies the world we inhabit from countless points of views."

The fact is that geography is often subjugated not because of what it teaches but because of if, when and how it is taught. This publication is not about dismissing certain practices, it is about celebrating, engaging and hopefully, tackling misconceptions about the limitations of studying geography

and responding to the real needs of the world around us. Promoting and Celebrating Geography, a series of essays edited by Karl Donert and Glenda Wall is available from the HERODOT Network, Liverpool Hope University Press, Hope Park, Liverpool L16 9JD, for £5. HERODOT will hold its annual Conference 'Future Prospects in Geography' 4-7th September 2008 at Liverpool Hope University. It will be attended by geography academics and educators from around the world.

'Geography:
We'd all be lost without it.'



Contacts ● ● ●

E: walg@hope.ac.uk Or,

E: donerk@hope.ac.uk