

eX-factor winners

Bristol teenagers blossom on Exmoor

Ashley: The first week I come back [home after 1st Exmoor trip] I didn't get into trouble for two weeks. That ASBO should have been off ages ago. Then when I come back here [Exmoor], I know I ain't getting in no trouble ever again. I don't want to go to jail. I have that ADHD. Now I've learnt to control my anger, I've learnt to forget about it, forget about it all. I want to go back [to Exmoor]. It is good, it is fun.

Naela: Yeah I'm on a music and singing and dance course, and I decided to do that on Exmoor, it inspired me to do that - this is the direction I wanted to go in, whereas I was just wandering around feeling crap. I really want to go back next summer.

Scott: It gives you more options, a hell of a lot more options, and half of the things that we've done on the film week are attributed to the fact that we're out in the open, and nature, I like that word Nature.

Bradley: the music on Exmoor kind of prompted me to do the course I'm doing at college. It opened my mind a little bit more. I reckon it would be good to go again and bring some more people for them to have the same experience we did because it was good having a good time on the mountain, the moors.

Gemma: it's a protected area, so you keep everything safe and not build houses on it. Everything is growing and doing what it needs to do, without us interrupting it.

These five young people, from different parts of Bristol, were part of 133 from 6 different ethnic groups who have spent time on film, music, dance & survival weeks; all part of the eX Factor project organised by Imayla – urban rural creative connections. The location was Exmoor National Park Authority's remote Eco-Centre for Outdoor Education.

The short film of the young people's experiences in, and comments about, Exmoor National Park will be showcased, on 23 May 2006, at the "Outdoors for All?" national conference in London, where DEFRA Minister, Barry Gardiner MP, will launch the 'Outdoors for All?' plan to encourage more people from all cultures in UK cities to visit the countryside.

Pam Warhurst, Chair of The Countryside Agency and Board member of Natural England, said "So many Government objectives are met by this project – officials up & down and across Government departments, not just Defra, should watch this film."

Judith Davies, Connexions Bristol inner city key worker said
“How do you know about something if you’ve never been? It’s about knowing the difference between the two [town and country], and Exmoor gave that opportunity. The kids are asking to go back. Some of the young people were going home to serious stuff happening at home or at school, some of them weren’t in school, some of them were. But out there, nobody knew their history. They could be them. And some of them blossomed.”

Steven Pugsley, Chairman of both Exmoor National Park Authority and the Association of English National Parks Authorities said “this eX Factor project is an excellent example of how National Parks and inner city groups can work together for everyone’s benefit.”