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Somerset Rural Youth Project - Me in My Exmoor Project

The MIME (Me in My Exmoor) Project is to have its grand finale on Friday 23 September 2005 when there will be a chance to share the work and experiences of 300 young people living on Exmoor. Short films will be projected onto a giant screen on the front of the National Park Authority's offices at Exmoor House, Dulverton.

The MIME project originated from a discussion on a wet November day between Dave Gurnett (Exmoor National Park Authority education officer) and Nik Harwood (then Economic Programme Manager for Somerset Rural Youth Project) when Dave and Nik started discussing the potential of young people recording their experiences and also those of others in their communities. It was anticipated that their research would make them question their own futures and also help them appreciate both the natural environment as well as the role that others play in shaping their communities.

This landmark project was managed and run by Somerset Rural Youth Project's community programme manager John Stow, worker-in-charge Madi Robinson, youth workers Joolz Doncaster and Mervyn Mugford and Somerset artist Richard Tomlinson. Exmoor National Park Authority's education team was also involved, helping to make contact with the 300 young people that worked on the film over the 18 months.

The idea was of a Doomsday analogy, with information collected by young people to represent a cultural snap-shot of their experiences and those of others, on Exmoor during 2004/5, using the latest technology. This has been achieved by them recording their experiences of the past and present; and their fears, hopes and aspirations for the future. Additionally, the participants were encouraged to engage with older members of the community to find out what life was like in the parishes in days gone by.

The project outputs will result in a range of multimedia digital files (audio clips, video clips, images, artwork etc) for web & DVD promotion and be a valuable demonstration of competence in participants' CVs, hopefully enhancing their personal employment prospects.

The MIME project was supported by the Exmoor Sustainable Development Fund, Somerset Partnership Fund and Young Roots (Heritage Lottery Fund).

John Stow said, "The young people have excelled in creating an authentic picture of what it is like to live and work on Exmoor. They showed huge talent in exploring and recording what they found out, resulting in a view of *their* Exmoor that reveals real understanding".

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