

# ROUTE 4/NEW PATHS

## In a few words...



Creswell Crags is a limestone gorge honeycombed with caves, including Britain's only known Ice Age rock art. The gorge is part of the Creswell Heritage Landscape Area and incorporates a Museum and Education Centre. Since 2005, Creswell Crags has been delivering a pilot project to provide young people at risk of exclusion from school with an alternative environment in which to learn.

**"It introduces culture and heritage to kids that normally wouldn't go anywhere near a museum"**

## The situation

The museum is one of a number of sites based within the Creswell Crags Heritage Area on the Derbyshire/Nottinghamshire border, a limestone landscape of considerable significance.

**"A specific and relatively unique environment"**

The museum had successfully undertaken projects with youth groups in the area, primarily those within former mining villages, and wished to progress this work to find ways of involving hard to reach groups.

## The idea

The project offers an extra dimension to the alternative curriculum and takes the focus out of school for students at risk of exclusion. Students would develop practical skills such as environmental management outdoors during the tourist season, but would also experience the museum environment out of season. Both environments have the advantage of not having a 'classroom' feel. Developing self-motivation and initiative is an important part of the project, so students are not pressured to turn up.

## Making it happen

Derbyshire County Council's Community Economic Development team linked with Shirebrook Secondary School to develop pilot project Route 4 for pupils on the verge of exclusion. A student at risk of being excluded has worked at Creswell Crags for the academic year 2005/06 one day per week instead of attending school.



The museum's Heritage Learning Officer has managed this pilot project. One of the Creswell Crags wardens has acted as a mentor to the student, providing direct one to one support. The student reports back to school every week.

Creswell Crags is now preparing funding applications to develop the work under the working title New Paths, as they have been approached by other organisations to repeat the project, but currently have insufficient capacity. If this bid is successful, the site hopes to host 6 students in total and to introduce a wider range of skills (for example ICT and presentation skills). New Paths could also draw from a wider catchment across the limestone landscape area, depending on the response locally.

## How it was done

The funding for the pilot project, *Route 4*, was from Derbyshire County Council's Community Economic Development Team, which has a base in Bolsover. Creswell Crags is approaching various funding streams for *New Paths*. The new project would aim to build partnerships with more schools, Connexions and other organisations such as local history groups.

## The result

The outcomes of the project have included:

- \* Helping to expand the education provision available through the museum and make it more accessible to hard to reach students
- \* An increase in confidence and self esteem for the student involved in the pilot project
- \* Developing interest in and commitment to the heritage sector - for example, the student has begun to be involved with events on voluntary basis, and has decided to spend his fortnight's work experience there
- \* Skills development, including environmental management, maintenance, team working, interpersonal skills and work skills
- \* Increased capacity for Creswell Crags, both through the development of in-house skills and provision and through benefiting from the input of the student
- \* A learning experience for Creswell Crags - particularly for the Warden involved as a mentor. If New Paths proceeds then the Warden will be more directly involved in the recruitment of students.

**"We realised that giving responsibility is nothing to be scared of"**

## The reasons for its success

Creswell cites the following factors as contributing to the success of the pilot project:

- \* The site offers a unique environment in which to learn
- \* There is a friendly, relaxed, welcoming atmosphere, which has helped to make the student feel at home
- \* Site staff are a close knit team with a strong commitment to outreach/community work
- \* The project has offered a tailored programme providing the student with what they need - close one to one mentoring, backed up by a programme of activities
- \* Flexibility and enthusiasm of staff have been crucial to the project's success. There was a willingness to be bold and open - and run with it!

**"We want this to be student centred - we take it at the student's own pace"**

*Further information*

Contact : John Charlesworth, Heritage Learning Officer

Address : Creswell Heritage Trust, Crags Road, Welbeck, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, S80 3LH

Telephone : 01909 720 378

Email : [john.charlesworth@creswell-crags.org.uk](mailto:john.charlesworth@creswell-crags.org.uk)

Website : [www.creswell-crags.org.uk](http://www.creswell-crags.org.uk)