

NEWS

Pleasures of the Peaks

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THE lungs of Tameside will soon be open to Asian communities some of whom have never been outside of their own local area.

Ruhel Ahmed (left in picture) a Tameside Youth Worker and myself Hakeel Qureshi (right) a BME Development Worker for T3SC are to lead Asian communities from Tameside up into the hills, valleys, lakes and reservoirs of the stunningly beautiful Peak District National Park. We joined a group of ethnic minority community leaders from as far away as London on a two-day course aimed at introducing them to the pleasures of the Peaks.



We were bowled-over by the experience. It was truly brilliant. I never knew such beauty was on our doorstep - and only half an hour away. We hope to take our first party out to the Peaks before summer ends."

Park authorities believe simple ignorance of what activities are available in the Peaks, and fears of not being welcomed there, lie behind the reluctance of many Asians to get out into the National Park.

We had a great, friendly welcome. The rangers told us about the history of the National Park and how it worked and then we visited several noted sites. It was amazing the amount of activities that are available.

We're so used to city life with all the cars and noise and hustle - the Peak District is so peaceful, you can forget about stress and come back refreshed."

Another member of the party, credit manager Hasmukh Mistry brought his wife, Hansa, and 15-year-old daughter, Seema.

He said: "My wife has never been to the Peak District before. She found it beautiful, so peaceful, and my daughter really enjoyed the activities.

"It's not that urban people don't want to come to the countryside, it's that they are not aware of the facilities of offer - for instance they may not know that there are prayer room available at the Youth Hotel Association and other centres."

The scheme to get more ethnic minorities visiting the Peaks and other nearby national Parks like the Lakes and the Yorkshire Dales is being run on behalf of the Council for National Parks by the Mosaic Partnership.

Project manager Stuart McLeod said he was pleased with the first visit.

"I think is surpassed everyone's expectations. The Rangers were fantastic and you could tell how much the participants appreciated their held and friendliness throughout the visit..

"It was a great pleasure to hear people thinking through the logistics of bringing their own community groups to the National Park."

Members of the BME Women Forum already attended for the country walk in Mossley and were taken back with the views and greenery.

Stuart McLeod, Project Coordinator for the Mosaic Project came from London to attend the BME Forum Meeting on the 28th of July and gave a presentation on the work that is currently being carried out.

A small group from Tameside are being taken to the Yorkshire Dales on the 19th of August 2005 and we are hoping to plan a larger one for Members of the BME Forum on a day visit to edale national park over Summer.

If you are interested in attending this please contact me for further information.