

**John Elson**

**Okehampton Youth Hostel activity adventures at Meldon.**

Primarily what we do is we take young people on activity adventures, as it were, so we run a whole range of activities, particularly akin (sic) Dartmoor, you know, Dartmoor pursuits, rock climbing, walking, learning navigation, but we go into all the other things that young people want to do.

*So tell me about how Meldon is useful to you in that?*

Well Meldon is key to it all, and we were really lucky that the Duchy of Cornwall were cooperative, they knew what we were doing and they leased this part of Meldon to the Youth Hostel and that's the quarry and the river; and we use it for two main areas, the quarry is rock climbing, abseiling, which is key to what we do, but I think it's really good for young people, it gives them a way of excelling and certainly young people who are perhaps not so academic as others really find that they can gain new confidence in rock climbing. And the river, the river is absolutely fantastic, we use it for what we call gorge scrambling, some call it river walking, but young people go into the river, wearing wet suits and buoyancy aids and they go up the river using the water falls; but this river [the Red-a-ven] is really good because it doesn't flood, you know, it will gradually build up, but you don't get flash flooding, the source is only half a mile from here, but it's about young people working together, they have to help each other up the waterfalls, they have to pick their way through the river and it's not something they would normally do, so this river's critical to, well it's the only place we could actually run this activity.