

Press Release
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Student pledges £2,000 “Christmas present” for resort’s future

A University of Derby Tourism student wants to turn a £2,000 grant she has been given into a Christmas present for Matlock Bath’s visitor economy.

Seana Murphy has been awarded the grant under Derby’s Undergraduate Research Scholarship Scheme to fund her work with the University’s destination audit and management plan for the future of tourism in the Victorian resort.

She has identified the Christmas market as a potential new source of income for the town, set in a rocky gorge celebrated by poets ranging from Lord Byron to Sir John Betjeman, and she will use the grant to draw up an action plan to attract visitors over the festive period.

“The business people I’ve been talking to are passionate about Matlock Bath and I’ve become passionate about it, too,” said Seana, who is a 19-year-old International Tourism Management BA (Hons) undergraduate from Birmingham.

Seana is part of a team of students who are working in partnership with Matlock Bath Parish Council to produce a fresh vision for the town’s future as a tourist destination by developing a plan to help the famous Derbyshire resort refresh its image and boost its economy.

“I will be looking into events at Christmas along the lines of a Christmas wonderland or Christmas markets,” she said.

The students have already spoken to business focus groups, local residents, visitors and community leaders, and Seana will present her research at a Learning in Teaching Conference at Derby in July, as well as at the Atlas Postgraduate Research Conference at Canterbury Christ Church University in September.

“I’m so proud of myself for getting involved in a project like this,” said Seana. “The people of Matlock Bath are lovely and it would be great to help them.”

Matlock Bath’s setting on the River Derwent between limestone cliffs led it to be known as Little Switzerland in its Victorian hey-day, and now the cable cars which soar above the gorge to The Heights of Abraham are a major regional tourist attraction.

But changing leisure and travel trends have left the village with an identity problem which the University can help to change, says Parish Council Chairman Peter Baranek.

For more details about the project, contact Peter on intothefuture@matlockbathparishcouncil.gov.uk.

To study tourism at Derby, go to www.derby.ac.uk/tourism

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