

****PRESS RELEASE****

****REFERENCE: RAY MEARS' SERIES WILD BRITAIN, EPISODE 1 : THE FOREST OF DEAN ****

"WHY THE TV PEOPLE KEEP COMING" BY ALAN CREE, BUSHCRAFT SPECIALIST IN THE FOREST OF DEAN**

The Call of the Wild

Ray Mears in his new series on ITV, broadcast on 11th of October, chose to highlight the natural majesty of the Forest of Dean. Over the weekend of 25th and 26th of September Eden TV and Ben Fogle chose to host their first ever Eden-like base camp in an extraordinary location in a forest full of extraordinary things.

And still they keep coming, Naturalists, Wildlife experts, TV presenters. Perhaps they can hear the call of the wild in the whispers of the wind in the trees. I know I can.

I was an advisor and Bushcraft activity provider to Eden TV for the Base Camp Eden experience. It struck me just how easy it is in the Forest of Dean and the Wye Valley to find fantastic locations and inspiring activities in which to get them involved.

By all accounts they had an amazing and inspirational time here, and Eden TV has created some excellent professional videos of the event on their website at www.uktv.co.uk/eden with more to come over the following weeks.

I've been in the woods with Ray Mears on a number of occasions. It was going on some of his courses which changed my destination in life. One August week in 1997 deep in the heart of The Selborne estate with Ray and some other tenderfoots like myself, I came to realise 3 things. Firstly that I'd spent 20 years designing just about every type of building both here and around the world, yet I knew precious little about the natural world, secondly that it would take a lifetime to acquire the knowledge I desired, and thirdly that I wasn't going to be able to do it in London.

A year later I arrived with my wife and dog looking for somewhere to live, study and learn. And I found it precisely 1 step from my back door – The valley and the forest have been my school, my office and my home. On many hundreds of occasions it has provided me with all the necessities of life: Shelter, fire, food, water, medicine, soap and salt– it's all there out in the forest- all around you. Waiting patiently to provide for you.

Bushcraft and wilderness skills are about acquiring the knowledge of yourself, the knowledge of nature, the attitude and the practical skills which enable you to explore the natural world with greater awareness, understanding, and enjoyment.

And once you know some of those secrets, that lost and forgotten lore of the forest – then every day is an adventure – full of excitement and opportunity and unexpected good fortune.

In my work it is necessary to help people to slow down, adopt a more natural pace, and let it all in. Easy to say it - not always so easy to do in the hustle and bustle of a modern life. But here's what to do: Take yourself off to the Forest of Dean and Wye valley. Find a spot that attracts you. Sit down and concentrate on what your senses tell you. What do you hear?

What do you see? What can you smell? And then if you listen very carefully you too will hear it gently on the wind.

Can you hear it? That's the wild, and it's calling you.

Alan Cree runs Wilderness Discovery – providing bushcraft experiences in the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley. He was an advisor and activity provider for Eden TV's Base camp Eden experience.

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