

## **Raleigh offers words of wisdom to school leavers**

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With A' Level results looming, it won't be long until this year's students will be making life-changing decisions about their future. Students are now faced with an array of choices, including whether or not to take time out before continuing with their studies. However, help is at hand as a Raleigh alumna offers words of advice at this crucial stage of student development.

A true pioneer of gap year experiences, youth and education charity Raleigh has been offering 17 to 24 year olds the chance to participate in unique and challenging expeditions to awe-inspiring locations around the world since 1984.

Sam de la Haye decided to go on a ten week expedition with Raleigh to Mongolia after finishing her A' Levels. She remembers only too well how it felt waiting for the results. But rather than waiting nervously with school friends, Sam's results were broadcast over the radio in the middle of the Gobi desert. Sam said: 'It was a strange experience hearing my results broadcast phonetically. I was really chuffed to hear that I had three 'B's. It was funny hearing 'bravo, bravo, bravo' coming over the airwaves in the middle of the desert!'

Sam decided to go on a Raleigh expedition to Mongolia so that she could see more of the world before continuing with her studies. Sam added: "I went to a small girls' school and I wanted to open my eyes to new people and places before continuing with my studies. It was so useful to have some time out before going to university to really think about what I wanted to do. There's so much pressure to decide what you want to do and where you want to study. It really helps to get away and do something worthwhile when you're thinking about it all."

Sam has fond memories of her time in Mongolia where, among other things, she helped to build a medical centre for a nomadic community in Galshar. The expedition also involved environmental work monitoring the local wildlife and finished with an 18 day trek across the Gobi desert. Sam said: "The trek was one of the most difficult things I've ever done. It was quite a struggle at times walking for days over the sand dunes but I had a real sense of achievement at the end. We finished the trek in an oasis and it was the most amazing feeling."

On return from expedition, Sam studied at the University of Edinburgh. After graduating, she continued with her studies and recently graduated with a Masters degree from Oxford Brookes University. Looking back on her time out, Sam commented: "My Raleigh expedition really made a difference in terms of leadership training, planning and problem-solving skills. It gave me the confidence to believe in myself and to try to make a difference in the world. I got more out of it than I could ever have imagined. On a personal level, it was possibly the ten most worthwhile weeks of my life."

Whilst not all students will hear their results broadcast in the Gobi desert like Sam this year, a Raleigh expedition can certainly give young people the opportunity to do something worthwhile before continuing with their studies.

**For further information or to interview Sam de la Haye, please contact:**

Anne Grenyer  
PR & Campaigns Manager  
Raleigh  
Tel: 020 7183 1298  
Email: [anne.grenyer@raleigh.org.uk](mailto:anne.grenyer@raleigh.org.uk)

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**Notes to editors:**

**Raleigh**

Raleigh is a youth and education charity. Since 1984 our expeditions have inspired 30,000 people from all walks of life, nationalities and ages to be all they can be, helping them develop new skills, friendships and make a difference to communities and environments across the world.

*We all have an expedition inside us.* Find yours at [www.raleighinternational.org](http://www.raleighinternational.org)