

PRESS RELEASE : 2016 Pinnacle Award

Blacksmith and Artistic Metalworker wins 2016 Pinnacle Award

The winner of the annual Pinnacle Award for a young entrepreneur to start or develop a business has just been announced by The Exmoor Society. Tom Lile has established a business for himself by working in traditional ironwork and wants to branch out into steel fabrication to widen his scope to meet the modern market. The award will help him invest in some of the equipment required in order to expand. He shares his workshop with his 'mentor' Ben Horrobin but sees the potential to progress into adjacent premises on his own and is anticipating taking on an apprentice. On hearing he had been successful, Tom said: 'I am grateful to The Exmoor Society for the opportunity to win the Pinnacle Award this year. The money will allow me to expand and diversify my service to the people of the Exmoor area and venture into new aspects of metalwork.'

Jackie Smith, trustee of The Exmoor Society, said: 'The purpose of the award is to give someone a leg-up in their business venture. Already in business and with an entrepreneurial understanding, Tom has an eye to the future and had identified opportunity for further expansion. The £3,000 award will assist in buying machinery to enable him to branch out into alternative metals, broaden his skills, services and employment to others.' The Exmoor Society set up the Pinnacle Youth Award, now in its fifth year, for young people aged between 16 and 25 year, who live, work or are studying in the Greater Exmoor Area. The money can be used for developing good ideas, new skills and start-up businesses to enable young people to continue to live and work sustainably. The previous winners have all progressed in developing businesses in the area. The Society hopes to attract other sponsors to help encourage a diverse range of business opportunities.

'There is a great deal of concern in the English uplands like Exmoor that young people have to leave because of a lack of jobs,' said Rachel Thomas, the Society's Chairman, 'We are concerned about local livelihoods and as a conservation body, want to show that protecting a beautiful landscape can go together with creating and sustaining employment. By providing seed-corn money, the Society hopes that young people will be able to stay in the area and help secure a lasting future for Exmoor's countryside.'

Tom's website is www.thomaslile.co.uk

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Image: Tom Lile (courtesy of Thomas Lile)

