

FORT WILLIAM MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL 2009  
6 - 14 March  
A celebration of mountain culture  
<http://www.mountainfestival.co.uk>

News Release - Wednesday 19 November 2008

WANTED: Mountain Culture Mavericks For Top Award

Organisers of the Fort William Mountain Festival have just announced the opportunity to nominate candidates deserving of the Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture. This prestigious and unique national award, sponsored by Rio Tinto Alcan, has been set up to promote mountain culture within Scotland and beyond. It celebrates the achievements and accomplishments of one inspiring individual and their outstanding contributions to Scotland's mountains. Nominations can be made on the festival website at: <http://www.mountainfestival.co.uk/culture-award-nomination.asp>. Nominations will close on Wednesday 31 December 2008.

Mike Pescod, Chairman of the Highland Mountain Culture Association, organisers of the Fort William Mountain Festival, said: 'Mountain culture encompasses a broad spectrum of concepts that influence all of us. However, some of the greatest proponents of mountain culture often go unnoticed. They can be quietly working away, bringing new people to understand the influence that mountains have on our daily lives and how rewarding they can be to each of us, without any recognition of their work. The Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture recognises these people and how they have enriched our lives.'

In rewarding the best of the best contributors to mountain culture nominees are required to fill at least two of the following four criteria:

- Has promoted Mountain Culture over a sustained period of time and not less than 5 years. This promotion can take the form of outdoor enthusiast / writer / rescuer / artist / photographer / musician or any combination of the above
- Has encouraged and/or educated others to engage and indulge in Mountain Culture in either physical / artistic or musical methods
- Is or has been inspired by Mountain Culture and support it in all its various forms
- Has 'achieved' within their own field of Mountain Culture & Excellence

The prestigious Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture has its integrity ensured by a further set of criteria. Potential recipients should:

- Have inspired others in their particular field and beyond within the scope of Scottish Mountain Culture
- Have influenced at a national/international level.

Proposed recipients must either be a Scottish citizen, a resident of Scotland or have been a significant contributor in their field to Mountain Culture within Scotland.

Mick Routledge, from Rio Tinto Alcan, said: 'We are very proud to sponsor the Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture. The ethos of this award fits well with Rio Tinto Alcan's business culture and our drive for sustainable operations within this spectacular mountain environment.'

Setting the bar high for future recipients the inaugural award in 2008 was won by Hamish McInnes. As a world-renowned climber and pioneer, Hamish is both an innovator in climbing practice and a noted inventor. The MacInnes stretcher is used for Mountain rescue all over the world and as designer of the very first all-metal ice axe Hamish's knowledge and expertise have made him a legend in mountaineering circles. Already a member of the Scottish Sporting Hall of Fame (inducted in 2003) Hamish has written 21 books on mountaineering and his talents have been sought on film sets such as the James Bond thriller *The Living Daylights*, Clint Eastwood's *The Eiger Sanction* and Robert De Niro's *The Mission*.

The Fort William Mountain Festival, presented with The Nevis Partnership, is a nine-day celebration of mountains and the culture that surrounds them and runs from 6 - 14 March 2009. During the best winter walking and climbing conditions of the year, audiences will be entertained by a varied and packed programme of mountain sports, films, lectures, guided walks, workshops, exhibitions, literature,

photography and music for residents and visitors who want to learn about and celebrate mountain culture. The full programme for the 2009 Fort William Mountain Festival will be announced on Tuesday 2 December 2008 - <http://www.mountainfestival.co.uk>

ENDS

Media Contact:

Paddy Cuthbert | Podge Publicity | M: 07968699636 | e: [paddy@podge.co.uk](mailto:paddy@podge.co.uk)

If you are keen to attend the Fort William Mountain Festival for a commissioned feature or as part of an adventure travel / activity feature please contact Paddy Cuthbert to discuss a press trip to Fort William and Lochaber.

The Award

Edinburgh stained glass artist Emma Butler-Cole Aiken, who has taken holidays in the Outdoor Capital of the UK from childhood and takes much inspiration for her work from the area's landscape, was commissioned to create the award in 2008. Emma has created the piece from fused glass - sections of coloured glass layered on top of one another making a rich colourful and textured, two-dimensional sculpture evocative of the mountains. It has been mounted on a wooden block that will have the names of the recipients engraved upon it. The award will be permanently housed in the West Highland Museum based in Fort William with a smaller replica piece being awarded to each recipient.

The idea for the award was modelled on 'The Summit of Excellence award' introduced at the Banff Mountain Film Festival in 1987 and awarded to an individual who has made a significant contribution to mountain life in the Canadian Rockies.

NEVIS PARTNERSHIP - Presenting Partner

A charitable company formed in 2003 to guide future policies and actions affecting Ben and Glen Nevis and the surrounding area. The Partnership is committed to protecting, managing and maintaining this unique and special environment in a sustainable and balanced way. <http://www.nevispartnership.co.uk>

RIO TINTO

Rio Tinto is a leading international mining group headquartered in the UK, combining Rio Tinto plc, a London and NYSE listed company, and Rio Tinto Limited, which is listed on the Australian Securities Exchange. Rio Tinto's business is finding, mining, and processing mineral resources. Major products are aluminium, copper, diamonds, energy (coal and uranium), gold, industrial minerals (borax, titanium dioxide, salt, talc) and iron ore. Activities span the world but are strongly represented in Australia and North America with significant businesses in South America, Asia, Europe and Southern Africa. <http://www.riotinto.com/riotintoalcan>

ELLIS BRIGHAM - The UK's leading Mountain Sports retailer with its heart and soul firmly in the mountains. With over 60 years experience and 16 stores nationwide we cater for the needs of climbers and walkers, skiers and 'boarders, travellers and explorers and all who appreciate being out and about in the great outdoors - <http://www.ellis-brigham.com>

HOTSCOT - HotScot is a leading Scottish web site design agency with an established specialism in tourism and the outdoors. Based in Fort William 'The Outdoor Capital of the UK' they have developed an established pedigree with their reference client portfolio and can deliver a high quality solution backed by real experience - <http://www.hotscot.net>

NEVIS RANGE - Situated on the slopes of Aonach Mor, Scotland's highest ski area, Nevis Range run the UK's only mountain gondola carrying visitors to 2150ft. Winter climbers can also make the most of a ride up on the climber's chair. The downhill mountain bike track has hosted the Mountain Bike World Cup since 2001 - <http://www.nevisrange.co.uk>

THE OUTDOOR CAPITAL OF THE UK

A not-for-profit community company established to promote Fort William and Lochaber as the best place to experience the outdoors in the UK. There are over 65 different activities to choose from in an amazing landscape that encompasses the small isles to Ben Nevis with white water rivers, sea, lochs, beaches, forest, glens, cliffs and mountains in between. <http://www.outdoorcapital.co.uk>

THE HIGHLAND MOUNTAIN CULTURE ASSOCIATION

The Highland Mountain Culture Association Limited, is a not for profit organisation, whose aim is to promote the understanding and appreciation of the world's mountain places and people, by creating opportunities for people of all ages to share their mountain experiences, ideas and visions. To showcase these ideals, it stages annually a programme of events within the Lochaber area, called The Fort William Mountain Festival.

Corporate sponsorship is crucial to the future success of The Fort William Mountain Festival and with your help we can maintain this support and the healthy and productive relationships we have with our sponsors by crediting them in print. This makes a real difference to the festival. Mentions are counted and used as an evaluation of sponsored projects. A credit at the foot of an article or a mention as the title sponsorship can make all the difference to us. Please credit our sponsors where you can.

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Paddy Cuthbert - Podge Publicity

Lawhead House | East Linton | East Lothian | EH40 3DT

M: 07968 699 636 | E: [paddy@podge.co.uk](mailto:paddy@podge.co.uk) | W: [www.podge.co.uk](http://www.podge.co.uk)