

FORT WILLIAM MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL 2010

Thursday 11 - Monday 15 February

A celebration of mountain culture

<http://www.mountainfestival.co.uk>

News - Saturday 06 February 2010

TOP SCOTTISH HONOURS FOR MASTER OF THE ICE

The Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture 2010 Goes To Jimmy Marshall

Today (Saturday 6 February), Jimmy Marshall, the architect of modern Scottish climbing, becomes the third person whose contribution to mountaineering and Mountain Culture is recognised by the prestigious Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture.

This unique and national annual award, set up in 2008 by the Highland Mountain Culture Association Ltd, organisers of the Fort William Mountain Festival, and sponsored by Rio Tinto Alcan, celebrates the achievements and accomplishments of one inspiring individual and their outstanding contributions to Scotland's mountains, encompassing sport, theatre, art, photography, film and literature.

Though a relative unsung hero of Scottish and UK mountaineering Jimmy Marshall has been inextricably linked to the development of cutting edge climbing in Scotland since the 1950's and 60's. In one legendary week on Ben Nevis in 1960 Jimmy Marshall and Robin Smith transformed the shape of Scottish winter mountaineering, advancing it a full ten years. On consecutive days the two men climbed six first winter ascents, including the mini Alpine-route Orion Face Direct (V, 5), while also making the second and much quicker ascent of Point Five Gully (V, 5) for good measure - in seven hours as opposed to more than 40 hours when previously climbed.

The fact they achieved all this using rudimentary ice-climbing gear and by cutting steps up the snow and ice appears, from the remove of the 21st century, to be almost unbelievable. This was a feat of fitness, skill and commitment that some would argue has never been bettered; and the finest achievement in ice climbing using the step cutting technique.

Colin Wells writes in his book, *Who's who in British Climbing*: 'Marshall's skill was such that he could lead routes almost faster than some of his talented seconds could follow.'

Marshall was just as skilled an operator on rock and his futuristic climbs were an inspiration to others to push the standards of the day. He wanted to prove that Scottish climbers were as good as, if not better than, any in the world. To prove his point he not only began mentoring and tutoring the new wave of young guns but he also became a prime mover behind the post-war resurgence of the fusty and middle-class Scottish Mountaineering Club, leading by example and filling it with his young dynamic apprentices.

Marshall is also a prolific writer on climbing issues and has been a regular contributor to the SMC (Scottish Mountaineering Club) Journal for many years. His vast knowledge of climbing has both educated inspired thousands of climbers through his writing.

Mike Pescod, Chairman of the Highland Mountain Culture Association, organisers of the Fort William Mountain Festival, said: 'Mountains have always been inspiring. To some people the draw of the mountains is so strong that they devote their entire life to them and

make a massive contribution to the culture surrounding them in doing so. Recognition of their talent and commitment is rarely sought or given and this award is one opportunity to do so. We feel that this award will not only celebrate their achievements and contributions but will also represent the recognition of their peers. Jimmy Marshall not only led the way in what can be achieved in climbing in the mountains but he inspired countless other people to get out and enjoy the Scottish hills while never looking for recognition of his unique talents.

'By awarding one exceptional individual every year we will create a list of ambassadors who will represent the best in Mountain Culture in Scotland and beyond. We believe that the continuing success of the Fort William Mountain Festival, together with an increase in its significance and importance by the annual presentation of this award, will also be reflected in economic and cultural benefits to the people of Scotland, particularly those that are resident in mountain or rural communities.'

Jimmy Marshall will be presented with his award on Sunday 14 February 2010 at Nevis Centre, Fort William, after the showing of a short film that includes still photographic highlights of his lifetime achievements and testimonials from his peers and friends. This will form part of a very special mountain festival evening to celebrate Jimmy Marshall. Dave Macleod and Andy Turner will present their own experiences of the six gruelling climbs (February 2010) with film clips of the ascents, comparing the 21st Century experience of climbing the same routes using state of the art equipment and techniques with Jimmy's recollections of the first ascents using one ice axe and cutting holes in the ice for hands and feet.

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.'

Ends For full details of the Fort William Mountain Festival programme and to book tickets go to - <http://www.mountainfestival.co.uk>

Ends

Media Contact:

Paddy Cuthbert | Podge Publicity | M: 07968699636 | e: paddy@podge.co.uk

If you are keen to attend the Fort William Mountain Festival for a commissioned travel feature or adventure / activity feature please contact Paddy Cuthbert to discuss a funded press trip to The Outdoor Capital of the UK.

Notes to Editors:

The Fort William Mountain Festival, presented by The Outdoor Capital of the UK, runs from Thursday 11 to Monday 15 February 2010 - <http://www.mountainfestival.co.uk>

Festival information:

Tel: 01397 700 001 / E: info@mountainfestival.co.uk

Book Tickets:

Online - <http://www.mountainfestival.co.uk>. All online sales are subject to a £2 fee.

Ticket Office - Nevis Centre, An Aird, Fort William

Phone - 01397 700 707

Concessions for under 16's only.

The idea for the award has been 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.

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.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Paddy Cuthbert - Podge Publicity

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

M: 07968 699 636 | E: paddy@podge.co.uk | W: www.podge.co.uk