

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

News Release - Tuesday 02 December 2008

HIMALAYAN EXPERT AND LEGENDARY SLOVENIAN CLIMBER JOIN SCOTS FOR 2009 FORT WILLIAM MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL

Fort William launches 2009 Mountain Festival programme

The best of the best in the fields of climbing, kayaking, and skiing and much more are flocking to Fort William from Friday 06 to Saturday 14 March for the 2009 Fort William Mountain Festival. The launch of the festival today (Tuesday 02 December 2008), unveiled a programme that will put the Outdoor Capital of the UK - Fort William and Lochaber - at the centre of Scotland's events programme in 2009. Presented with The Nevis Partnership, the week long celebration promises a varied and entertaining programme packed with mountain sports, films, lectures, guided walks, skills workshops and fringe activities for all those who want to learn about and celebrate mountain culture.

Highlights of the 2009 Fort William Mountain Festival include:

Fast and Light in the Himalaya - the world renowned mountaineer Adrian Burgess, a pioneer of high-altitude climbs will join forces with Slovenian climbing superstar Marko Prezelj, known for his impeccable style on spectacularly difficult routes, to share the passion that drives them to keep exploring ever-higher and more exhilarating climbs. Following these empowering talks the winner of the second Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture, sponsored by Rio Tinto Alcan, an annual award to celebrate outstanding contributions to Scotland's mountains, will be announced.

Paddle Sports evening with Lee Kelly, the legendary whitewater kayaker, photographer and filmmaker. Snowsports Evening with Myrtle Simpson, the first woman to ski across the Greenland icecap, who will trace the rapid development of Scottish Skiing from an occasional aid to winter mountaineering to the weekend recreation of tens of thousands.

Dave MacLeod, a local climber at the forefront of the modern sport who is opening a new chapter of world-class climbs on Ben Nevis, will host a Climbing Evening. He will explain his unique high-risk, high-stakes approach through inspiring chat and the screening of two incredible films of his recent climbs.

The Best of Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour & International Adventure Film competition evenings - the most inspiring mountain films from the UK and around the world will once again be the festival hot tickets. From jaw dropping action to fascinating mountain culture and wildlife; two nights of thrilling entertainment guaranteed. This year organisers are offering a special Film Buffs ticket that will insure entry to both nights.

Mike Pescod, Chairman of the Highland Mountain Culture Association, organisers of the festival; said: 'The 2009 Fort William Mountain Festival encompasses the ethos of the Outdoor Capital of the UK - to promote the mountains as an attractive, accessible and above all enjoyable place to be by pulling together adventure, sport, culture and the environment; all the ways people experience and love the mountains.

'Our 2009 programme is bursting at the seams with exciting and inspiring events and workshops guaranteed to get you into the mountain mood. We are delighted to be welcoming a superb line up of guests from the worlds of mountaineering, paddling, music, poetry, writing and broadcasting including Adrian Burgess, Marko Prezelj, Dave MacLeod, Cameron McNeish, Linda Cracknell, Hamish MacDonald and the 4-MALITY Percussion Quartet to Lochaber to showcase their work and share their passion for the outdoors.'

This year's ambitious programme of new events and old favourites sees a wide selection of cultural and sporting events and activities throughout Fort William and Lochaber during the best winter walking and climbing conditions of the year. Residents and visitors of all ages, from extreme adrenaline junkies to outdoor enthusiasts, can discover the excitement of extreme whitewater kayaking, the drama of Dave MacLeod's envelope-pushing climbs, the fascinating story of Scottish skiing, the secrets of high alpine climbing and the rich heritage of the working mountains in the 21st Century; whilst celebrating the iconic Nevis name and enjoying the very best in mountain films from around the world.

The festival will kick off in style with the 'Party at Nevis Range', the official opening ceilidh at the Snowgoose Restaurant at the top of the Nevis Range mountain gondola. Further highlights include an evening exploring the little known yet rich heritage of the Working Mountains in Lochaber. With the help of early photographs and archive material the history of Rio Tinto Alcan, one of the area's biggest employers, will be explored; from the harnessing of Lochaber's water power, one of the most ambitious projects of the industrialization of Scotland, in 1929 to supply new aluminium smelters at Fort William and Kinlochleven, to the amazing innovator it continues to be today.

Nevis Connections, a whole day of themed walks, talks, music and adventure, presented by The Nevis Partnership, to celebrate the iconic Nevis name makes a welcome return to the 2009 Festival programme. During the day there will be a choice of two guided walks, one the North Face Walk up the Allt a'Mhuillinn path with stunning views of the majestic North Face of the UK's highest mountain and the other a winter ascent of Ben Nevis. The 4-MALITY Percussion Quartet, one of the world's most compelling and innovative percussion quartets who have command of over eighty drums, gongs, cymbals and tuned percussion, will spend the day working with local school pupils and young people to produce Rock and Rhythm, a piece of mountain music inspired by the Nevis landscape. The final multi-media piece will be performed as part of the Nevis Connections Evening, an evening of poetry, prose, photography film and music.

Children and adults will have the opportunity to try out new activities and learn new skills through an expanded programme of daily mountain skills workshops. New for the festival in 2009, world-renowned climber Dave MacLeod will be offering free bouldering master classes for one day only! Highly experienced and fully qualified guides from Abacus Mountaineering, in conjunction with Nevis Range, will lead full day courses in avalanche awareness, winter walking and winter climbing. Kinlochleven's Ice Factor Indoor Climbing Centre will be offering taster sessions in indoor climbing and ice climbing throughout the festival. For those keen to explore their creative ideas in a stimulating environment the John Muir Trust and Nevis Partnership will be hosting a Writers' Walk and Workshop afternoon with poet and writer Susan Richardson. Beginners ski and snowboard packages and Back Corrie tours, for the more experienced, will also be on offer at the Nevis Range ski area throughout the festival.

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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 press trip to The Outdoor Capital of the UK.

Notes to Editors:

The Fort William Mountain Festival, presented with The Nevis Partnership, runs from 6 - 14 March 2009 - <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.

Festival Partners & Sponsors

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.

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 ALCAN

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 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.

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