

## Mountain men's legacy helps Beauty woman's epic ride in the hoofprints of the Pony Express



Edinburgh-based writer and horsewoman Caroline Flynn, who grew up in Beauty is set to ride 2000 miles along the historic route of the Pony Express, thanks to a grant run by the John Muir Trust in honour of two mountaineers.

Along with her partner Richard West, she will set off from Sacramento in early May for the epic journey to St Joseph, Missouri. They will travel across eight states via some of the world's wildest landscapes, including the Sierra Nevada, the Great Basin, the Great Salt Lake, the Rockies and the Great Plains.

The Pony Express – whose riders included Buffalo Bill Cody – operated in the early 1860s, providing the fastest means of delivering mail, messages and newspapers coast to coast in the US before the invention of the telegraph.

Caroline's expedition will be supported by an award from the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant – a memorial run by the John Muir Trust to celebrate the lives of two legendary mountain men from Edinburgh. Bill Wallace died in the Alps in 2006 while skiing – with two artificial hips – at the age of 73. Des Rubens, a popular 63-year old teacher at Craigroyston High School, was killed in June 2016 in an Alpine climbing accident. Both men had been former presidents of the Scottish Mountaineering Club.

While in the USA, Caroline plans to engage Scottish school pupils with her spirit of adventure and the wild places she travels through, via blogs, letters, videos and Skype-based talks.

She said: "I'm so delighted to receive the support of the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant towards the costs of my 1900-mile horseback expedition. As well as making an enormous practical difference, it's also a confidence boost to know I have the John Muir Trust at my back.

"I admire the work of the Trust greatly, and hope that through my writing and speaking. I can spread knowledge of and appreciation of the wild landscapes I will travel across."

