

PRESS RELEASE

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Liverpool student to research Caucasus insect life thanks to Scottish mountain men's legacy

Georgia Drew, a PhD student at the University of Liverpool is preparing to head off on the scientific adventure of a lifetime helped by the Rubens-Wallace Grant in honour of two respected Scottish mountaineers who died in separate incidents in the Alps.

The 24-year-old will combine her love for bugs and mountains by undertaking a bicycle expedition to monitor the effects of climate change on insects at high altitude in the Greater Caucasus mountain range in West Asia.

She was one of five winners of the grant, which is run by the John Muir Trust, a Scottish-based wild land charity which owns and manages a number of famous and coastal properties in the Scottish Highlands – including Ben Nevis – and recently took over the management of Helvellyn in the Lake District.

Bill Wallace, a former national treasurer of the John Muir Trust, died in 2006 at the age of 73 while skiing in the Alps. Des Rubens, a popular 63-year old teacher in Edinburgh, was killed in June 2016 in an Alpine climbing accident.

Georgia said "I'm incredibly excited and grateful to receive the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant. Insects are such crucial elements of healthy ecosystems, despite their importance often being overlooked.

"Through this project I hope to study insect biodiversity across different mountain habitats, and contribute a little to filling the knowledge gaps that surround insect life. I cannot thank the John Muir trust enough for supporting this cause."

Toby Clark, the John Muir Award Scotland Manager who coordinates the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant said: "Georgia was one of just five successful applicants from an extremely high calibre of candidates. We're pleased that we've been able to support this worthwhile environmental expedition and wish her all the best in this great adventure. "

NOTES

ABOUT THE DES RUBENS AND BILL WALLACE GRANT

The John Muir Trust administers the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant for free. The grant aims to give people the opportunity to seek out life-changing experiences in wild places of the world in ways which will benefit both the person, and the wild places themselves.

The grant commemorates two former Presidents of the Scottish Mountaineering Club who each led inspiring and adventurous lives.

The John Muir Trust looks to support projects, adventures or expeditions that reflect the ethos of both men and give others an opportunity to follow in their footsteps.

ABOUT THE JOHN MUIR TRUST

The John Muir Trust is named after the great Scots-American scientist, environmentalist, explorer, mountaineer, writer and campaigner who was born on the North Sea fishing village of Dunbar 180 years ago this month (April 23).

The Trust looks after some of Britain's most scenic famous scenic landmarks, including Ben Nevis, Helvellyn, part of the Skye Cuillin, part of the Knoydart and Assynt peninsulas, Sandwood Bay in the far north west corner and Schiehallion which towers over Highland Perthshire.

The Trust also runs the popular environmental scheme the John Muir Award across Scotland, England and Wales.

For more info about the Bill Wallace Grant, contact:

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<https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/grants-and-awards/the-bill-wallace-grant>