

Press Release



Adventure grant supports 'Leading Lassies'

March 2025

Hannah Mason, is keen to give the women of Stirling University's climbing community a positive environment to boost their traditional climbing skills.

Hannah, Secretary of the University of Stirling Mountaineering Club (USMC), aims to provide the women in her club with a stigma free environment to learn and develop their skills and bridge the gap which exists between recreational and professional mountaineering.

The USMC's 'Leading Lassies' initiative is designed to give women easier access to upskill/advance to outdoor rock climbing, specifically traditional and sport climbing in a historically male-dominated sport.

Leading Lassies will provide members with the opportunity to transition from indoor climbing to outdoor rock climbing. By providing affordable access to accredited instructors to teach the required skills for traditional climbing, which includes placing natural rock protection, it ensures good practice, confidence and understanding are instilled for budding mountaineers. These skills are dangerous to self-learn, hence the requirement for professional teaching and guiding. By accessing funding for professional mountaineering instruction and training, we as a club can inspire a lifetime of climbing adventures and careers in the outdoors safely.

The USMC plans to use funding from the **Des Rubens Bill Wallace Grant** to employ professionally accredited mountaineering instructors for the weekend of leading lassies in Lochaber.

Hannah said: "The location is perfect because of its proximity to teaching a suitable crag in Glen Nevis.

"Through running a climbing course there, we are delighted to encourage a new generation of female climbers who will hopefully continue on to great things in the mountaineering and global community, while also providing more women with the opportunity to be out in nature and care for our environment."

The John Muir Trust, which administers the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant, said: "The grant panel is delighted to support an initiative that will encourage women to enjoy responsible climbing adventures."

The USMC's Leading Lassie project is one of four successful applications to the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant in 2025. This grant was established to give people the opportunity to seek out life-changing experiences in wild places in ways that will benefit both the person, and the wild places themselves.

Editor's Notes

About the John Muir Trust

The John Muir Trust is a UK-based conservation charity dedicated to protecting and enhancing wild places. The Trust owns and cares for some of the UK's most iconic landscapes, including Ben Nevis, Schiehallion, Sandwood Bay and areas within Skye, Knoydart and Assynt. The Trust also runs the John Muir Award, an inclusive environmental award scheme that encourages people of all backgrounds to connect with, enjoy, and care for wild places.

About the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant

The grant commemorates two former Presidents of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, who each led inspiring and adventurous lives. It was set up to give others an opportunity to follow in their adventurous footsteps and experience wild places. Projects should have an educational or scientific component and benefit wild places.

Bill Wallace died of heart failure in February 2007 while skiing in the Alps at the age of 73 with two artificial hips.

Des Rubens was a popular teacher at Craigroyston High School in Edinburgh was killed in June 2016 in an Alpine climbing accident at the age of 63.

Grants are for £200 to £2,000 and open to UK applicants of all ages. Closing date for applications is 15 January each year. Further details on how to apply: <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/whats-new/grants/des-rubens-and-bill-wallace-grant>

johnmuirtrust.org