

THE NEIL MACKENZIE TRUST

NEWSLETTER, JANUARY 2026

Happy New Year!

Following our successful St Andrew's Eve ceilidh we are now looking forward to 2026, which kicks off with a few deadlines. 31st January marks the last date for applications for the VOC (Varsity Outdoor Club of the University of British Columbia) Neil Mackenzie Adventure Grant. We are pleased to continue to be part of this award, which allows an individual or group from the VOC to go on an expedition they would otherwise have difficulty in funding themselves. Over the years we have helped members adventure in British Columbia (Canada), Scotland, France, Kazakhstan, Namibia, and Iceland.

15th March is our deadline for our 2026 Educational Expedition Grant, and 15th March and August 23rd are this year's deadlines for our main expedition grants. If you, or anyone you know are interested in funding for an expedition – anything from DofE or other short, local adventure to a major expedition anywhere in the world – get in touch through our website or directly by email to theneilmackenzietrust@dr.com. Tell us what you are planning. As long as it is appropriate we will send out an application form. More details of the grants can be found at <https://theneilmackenzietrust.com/fundraising/grants-available/>. The grants offered are up to around £800 - £1,000.

This year our Supporters' Open Day 2026 will be on 22nd August and again based at Farr Hall, IV2 6AX, and we look forward to another active, interesting and social occasion. If you received a grant in 2025 we hope you will come along.

Grant news: Expedition

We had a great response to Ella's piece in the last newsletter. The full trip report is now available: <https://theneilmackenzietrust.com/ali-rose-kyrgyzstan/>. These are a few of Ali Rose's words and photos from the trip: "We spent most of the month of August in the Ak su valley, Kyrgyzstan repeating existing routes and trying to add some of our own..... It was truly amazing to spend a month in such a beautiful place and we would like to thank the British Mountaineering Council, The Alpine Club, The Rick Allen Memorial Fund, The Neil Mackenzie trust and Fenix Lights for their support. Without access to the grants and funding it would be incredibly hard to finance trips like these. We were keen to experience some of the famous big walls and attempt new lines while also having some members newer to "big wall" style climbing and expeditions. It was brilliant to climb famous routes like Perestroika Crack. However, having access to the Russian guidebook and observing several large rockfalls curbed our enthusiasm for new routes on the bigger faces."



Top Left: Our team plus hosts Top Right: Al, Neil and Ali on the Perestroika

Bottom Left: Getting injured Jack back across the river Bottom Right: Ulug Beg biv



Expedition Grants for small groups, families or individuals to go anywhere in the world

Outdoor skills training grants, including enhanced grants for training at Glenmore Lodge, for anyone resident in Scotland over the age of 14

Visit our website for further information or to donate:

www.theneilmackenzietrust.com

Visit us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/theneilmackenzietrust

Or contact us by email: theneilmackenzietrust@dr.com

Donate:



Skills Training

Since its inception our skills training grant has been awarded to people who are challenging themselves to learn a new skill or advancing their current skill level in an outdoor activity, and who will use their newly gained skill to help or mentor others. Abel McLinden carried out what must have been the most challenging training we have supported. Last November he attended a wilderness Emergency Medicine course held in the Cairngorms and carried out by The Wilderness Emergency Medical Services Institute (WEMSI). He wrote:

“The Wilderness Emergency Medical Technician (WEMT) course is the longest, most rigorous wilderness medical course in Europe. The course is certified by the Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh for 54 contact hours of training. In reality, over 80 hours of training were delivered over the course of the week. The pace of the course is intense, running from 8am to 10pm each day over 8 days, from Sunday evening to the following Sunday midday. The WEMT course is aimed at people who may be responsible for providing advanced level medical and trauma care in remote environments anywhere in the world. This course goes further than advanced first aid and there is little in the way of basic skills training (e.g. bandaging) in the curriculum – participants needed to know the basics of first aid already. In short, the course aims to move the participant from the conditioned ‘trained’ operator into a thinking, educated practitioner capable of working alone, with others, or with remote medical support. For myself, this was in the context of operating as a volunteer Remote Rescue Medical Technician within Torridon Mountain Rescue Team, and as a Winter Mountain Leader. Training focused on patient assessment, treatment principles and management of patients and incidents, rather than the traditional protocols associated with first aid. A thorough understanding of principles enabled us to interpret guidance and adapt the care provided to each individual situation and environment. We were encouraged to make differential diagnoses and then provide patient management that is both practical and advanced.”

Abel’s full report with photos:

<https://theneilmackenzietrust.com/abel-mclinden/>

In recent years we have also been assisting people, (mainly youngsters) with skills training who would not otherwise have access to the training due to their circumstances, be it financial, family, health or other issues. **Iona Walker** (16) completed an equestrian course and is continuing to mentor younger children at the equestrian centre that she attends in the Borders. **Jessica Douglas** (17) from Milton, (one of the most disadvantaged communities in Glasgow), is going on a ski training course in France, in March. She hopes to mentor other children from this and other inner city areas in skiing and paddle sports, in a voluntary capacity with [theGKexperience](#)

Successful St. Andrew’s Eve Ceilidh

Thanks to everyone who was involved we raised £2,200 and congratulations to all the raffle prize winners! It was a great, family friendly affair, with an excellent local band (Marrak), stovies during the interval, and the draw of our first “big” raffle for a while. We will not be holding a ceilidh in 2026, however do have plans for one in the spring of 2027. Watch this space!



Fundraising: As ever we need to keep funds coming in to help to support the people we do. Huge thanks go to those of you who contribute on a regular basis – the amount we raise in regular donations helps to pay for several grants a year. Over the years we have had supporters raising money through sponsorship for participation in major and minor events. You may not be able to do either of these, but would you be able to raise a little for us by helping a neighbour (shovelling snow comes to mind!) or selling something (baking), at a car boot sale? If we have helped you, please help us to help other people like you!