

## Mountaineering Scotland/Climb Scotland awards 2019

The Mountaineering Scotland and ClimbScotland awards 2019 were presented at the AGM meeting at Glenmore Lodge in November.

The awards recognised the efforts and achievements of three young people, with the ClimbScotland Young Climber of the Year Award going to Max Milne, and the Mountaineering Scotland Volunteer of the Year Award being shared between Ainsley Hards and Iona Rendall.

### Young Climber award

Max Milne started climbing around the age of 10, not long before his mother passed away, and has been an active member of the Scottish Youth Climbing community for the last nine years. His competition climbing achievements in 2019 were exceptional, ranking him as one of the best junior climbers in the world.

After an impressive 4th place at the World Youth Championships in Arco in August 2019, Max dug deep and went on to secure his first international podium at his last ever youth event, winning bronze at the European Bouldering Championships in Brixen in September. His results through 2019 also mean that he secured a place in the 2020 GB Senior Climbing Team along with fellow Scots William Bosi and Hannah Smith.

Not just an indoor climber, Max has also made a first ascent of Lord Farquhar 8b+ in Aberdeenshire.

Max trains all over the UK but remains close to the Scottish youth climbing community. He has been part of the setting team for ClimbScotland competitions this year, and his humble nature allied with his enthusiasm, commitment and success in climbing make him an inspirational role model for many young Scottish climbers.

Max shares his climbing journey through personal and heartfelt posts to a wide audience on his Instagram account and the comments from his Instagram followers make it clear that Max is an inspiration to climbers young and old, parents, his coaches, team mates and his competitors. GB team-mate Hannah Smith said: "He is the hardest working athlete I know and is so dedicated and motivated to do his best. He is a true inspiration. He always has time for younger climbers and is always willing to lend a hand if you ask."

### Volunteer of the year award 2019

Both recipients for the Mountaineering Scotland Volunteer of the Year Award impressed the judges with their enthusiasm, passion and commitment.

**Ainsley Hards** has been a volunteer for the children's climbing charity Urban Uprising now for many years. She is a dedicated sessional volunteer and has been consistently taking groups of young people climbing on a weekly basis for the last four years.



She's a pivotal member of the volunteer team at Urban Uprising and donates a significant amount of her time to fundraising and promoting youth involvement in climbing.

Beyond that she has been a lifelong volunteer helping young and hard-to-reach young people reach the outdoors and climbing. She is a Mountain Leader and Rock Climbing Instructor who regularly takes Duke of Edinburgh Award Schemes groups out to experience the outdoors, as well as having lifelong involvement with the Bishopton Scouts and taking their groups out.



Ainsley said: "I was really surprised to receive the award, but I'm absolutely thrilled! I really enjoy volunteering with Urban Uprising, and I love supporting young people to explore a new sport and develop their climbing."

*Ainsley Hards photo by @samscrvn*

**Iona Rendall** started Iona's Adventures just under a year ago. It's a Facebook group dedicated to encouraging people to get outside and enjoy the Scottish mountains and the countryside. Almost a year on and the group has over 2,200 members and has grown into a community that fosters friendship, support, inspiration, health and wellbeing and, most importantly, fun, and Iona is at the heart of it all.

As a child Iona wasn't particularly sporty or outdoorsy, but moved to Aviemore at the age of 19 and developed a love of the outdoors, climbing her first Munro in 2016. Ironically, she got even more into hillwalking when she moved back to Edinburgh to work in nursing and formed Iona's Adventures as a way to connect with people of all ages and abilities to join her on social walks, with the focus on encouraging more people to get outdoors.

Iona is now doing her ML training, and continues to dedicate her time and energy to supporting the group and developing opportunities for group members to get more involved in mountaineering, for example skills days with mountain leaders, overnight micro-adventures, camping weekends and opportunities for family walks. The clear message is that everyone of all capabilities is welcome.



Iona said: "When I first lived in Aviemore I remember feeling intimidated by all the 'outdoorsy people' I used to see around the area. I never thought I could be that kind of person. I've proved to myself and others that the outdoors is for everyone and an adventure is just what you make it."