

# The Edinburgh Mountain Film Festival 2017

☒ There are no prizes for a new climbing route, a first ski descent or for surfing a remote cold-water wave in Iceland. Yet many enthusiasts take great satisfaction if they manage to achieve any of these. And for some athletes, the danger faced is very much worth the risk, as you'll see from the safety of your cinema seat if you attend the 14<sup>th</sup> **Edinburgh Mountain Film Festival**, which runs from **Saturday 4th** to **Sunday 5th February 2017** at The George Square Lecture Theatre, Edinburgh University.

You've probably never heard of the sport called 'speed-flying' – a revved up, more dangerous version of paragliding, where you fly as low to the ground as you dare, at high-speed, perhaps pulling off tricks such as 'barrel-rolls' – basically a loop-the-loop on a parachute. Does this sound safe? Sensible? Fun, even? Probably not – unless your name is **Willis Morris**.

This young Scottish adrenaline-junkie has been taking on extreme sports since he was a kid. He found speed-flying by chance and set about learning with such ferocious enthusiasm, that he alarmed many of his peers with his flights. '**Hit The Ground Running**' by Scottish film-maker Euan Ryan documents the progress of Willis as he goes – very quickly – from complete novice flyer to someone already pushing the limits. The film starts off as a bit of fun but you quickly become aware how serious the risks are as things threaten to go wrong.

The most extreme action, however, can be found in the epic kayak film, **Chasing Niagara**. **Rafa Ortiz**, one of the world's top whitewater kayakers, puts his life on the line when he decides that he wants to be the first person to kayak over Niagara Falls – the only previous attempt ended in a fatality. This highly anticipated film has its Scottish Premiere at the

EMFF, having had one earlier screening in the UK, in London last month.

Not all of the 22 films being screened at the EMFF feature such extreme action. There are inspiring journeys, reflective biographies and plenty of good-old-fashioned adventures, covering a range of activities from climbing to canoeing, skiing to surfing, mountain biking to mountain walking.

As well as the films, the festival features guest lectures from American BASE-jumper **Steph Davis**, and from Scottish mountaineers and adventurers **Jamie Andrew, Greg Boswell and Luke Robertson**.

The two-day festival is being staged, as always, at George Square Lecture Theatre in Edinburgh. Tickets for the popular festival start at £7 and are on sale now at [www.emff.co.uk](http://www.emff.co.uk) with the organisers reporting that tickets are already selling fast.

With 22 films and 4 fascinating speakers, Stevie Christie, Festival Director, is getting excited as the festival weekend closes in:

*"The films we are screening are the very best adventure films out there – but we've stuck to our roots by including some no-budget grass-root movies alongside the blockbusters. The action takes us across the globe and back home again, from Greenland to Mexico, and from Dumbarton to locations across the Highlands. There's something for everyone."*

The festival, staged in association with Tiso, Mountain Equipment, Alien Rock and Wilderness Scotland, expects big numbers from the climbing, snowsports, kayaking, adventure sports, outdoor photography and filmmaking communities; as well as those who love the outdoors, travel and mountain adventure, from all over the UK to attend the event. From its humble beginnings in 2003, The Edinburgh Mountain Film Festival has grown to be one of the most popular and dynamic

events in Scotland's outdoor adventure calendar, attracting in excess of 2,000 outdoor enthusiasts annually.

For full details of the festival and how to buy tickets go to the EMFF website: [www.emff.co.uk](http://www.emff.co.uk)