

DAVIS EXPEDITION FUND

Call for Proposals

The Davis Expedition Fund Committee invites proposals for next year's awards.

In the terms of Professor Davis' will, "the Fund is to finance purposeful biological fieldwork and expeditions only outside the British Isles, in Temperate or Tropical Regions, by individuals or groups of any nationality who are studying the biological sciences at Edinburgh University and who are undergraduates in their second, third or fourth academic years, or who are current or past Edinburgh University postgraduate students."

Whilst it is clearly recognised that the widening of experience and of cultural horizons is a valuable result of expeditions, the emphasis here is intended to be on biological fieldwork and not simply on adventure and endurance. Preference will be given to the study of natural ecosystems and to proposals that arise independently, and the Trust will not support undergraduate course work. Usually we have a total budget of about £30,000 and receive around ten to twenty proposals per year. It is unusual to provide full funding.

Applicants are asked to submit their proposal online at:

www.ed.ac.uk/biology/davis-expedition

Proposals from students must be accompanied by a sponsoring letter from a member of the academic staff of the University of Edinburgh or associated institute, such as RBGE, who can give advice and support. **Applicants are encouraged to provide as much information as possible on all the participants (name + grounds for eligibility + costs per person), the aims of the expedition and methods to be used.** Except under exceptional circumstances, the Committee will not support lone working. **Example applications are at www.ed.ac.uk/biology/davis-expedition. Where sufficient information is provided applications may be granted or refused at this stage. Where too few details are provided applicants may be asked to submit a longer and more detailed proposal for a second consideration by the Committee. It is envisaged that fewer funds will remain to be dispersed at the second stage. Retrospective applications will not be considered.**

If an award is to be made, it will be subject to the following conditions. A brief report, laid out on the Report Sheet provided on the School website www.ed.ac.uk/biology/davis-expedition, outlining the main achievements of the expedition, is to be submitted electronically to the School of Biological Sciences within three months of return. In the case of group applications, the person stated as 'Group Leader' on the application form will be liable for submission of this Report. It should be noted that there is a stipulation in Peter Davis' Bequest that "... any plant collections made on these journeys should be offered in the first instance to the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh", who may or may not wish to have them. Compliance with the latter will obviously not pertain to all projects. These conditions will be included in a letter of acceptance to be signed by applicants, and must be returned to the School Office before awards can be actioned.

The deadline for proposals falls in **January** of each calendar year (see website for specific date), when applications must be submitted online if they are to be considered at the Committee's initial screening meeting.

Peter Hadland Davis (1918-1992) came to the University of Edinburgh in 1945, after war service in Palestine and Egypt, gaining a First Class Honours Degree. He subsequently took an Edinburgh PhD and was appointed to the academic staff. His interest in the plants and peoples of South West Asia and North Africa had been awakened during the war, and he resolved to research the flora of these areas and immerse himself in their culture. With the aid of grants (from DSIR and SRC – forerunners of the BBSRC), he began a mammoth project to research and produce the *Flora of Turkey and the East Aegean Islands*. This became his magnum opus, running to nine large volumes which eventually appeared at the astonishing rate of one every two years. He travelled and collected extensively in Turkey and North Africa. In Edinburgh he was appointed to a Personal Chair of Plant Taxonomy. Though based at the Royal Botanic Garden where he was an Honorary Curator, he taught in undergraduate courses

and supervised a cosmopolitan assemblage of students in their PhD research, also founding a successful Diploma course in Plant Taxonomy. Davis believed that good biological fieldwork was the basis of progress in Natural History and that travel provided a prime means of broadening the experience and cultural horizons of young people.

Closing date for all applications: January (annually)