

# THE OGWEN VALLEY MOUNTAIN RESCUE ORGANISATION



## 40th ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2004

Published by the Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation  
Bryn Poeth, Capel Curig, Betws-y-Coed, Conwy LL24 0EU

Edited by Dave and Jo Worrall

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*Please note that the articles contained in the Annual Report express the views of the individuals and are not necessarily the views of the Team.*

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Team Photo, 2004 Annual General Meeting

With thanks to those who have provided photographs.

## **Chairman's Foreword**

For the Annual Report it is usual to review the past year and its significant events and I certainly intend to do that. However, on our fortieth anniversary, it is also appropriate to be considering how we might celebrate that birthday as well as looking to the future and what it might be. The past year has been quite eventful and the current year looks like it might be even more so. As for the next four years (it would be unwise to forecast the next forty!) I suspect this will be a period of consolidating all the techniques, resources and equipment that we have developed in recent years.

The past year has seen two major items of expenditure. One we knew about for we had been planning for it for a number of years. The second rather came out of the blue. The replacement of Mobile 1 with a new customised Land Rover with forward seating was a very welcome change, no one enjoyed riding in the back of the old vehicle. The adoption of Rigging for Rescue (R4R) techniques has standardised our cliff rescue methods after many years of new members to the Team being shown slightly different layouts at different training sessions which, at the very least was the matter of some conversation. While the cost of the new vehicle had come from a ring fenced kitty the funding for the R4R courses and the follow up purchases of new equipment and training manuals has begun to make a slight dent into our Charity Commission dedicated reserve.

Other expenditure has included subsidising the purchase of clothing for members on an optional basis and increasing the lighting ability of our lamps for dealing with incidents at night, both due to the initiative of Chris Cooksey, the Equipment Officer. The I.T. Group, by their nature a bunch of computer enthusiasts, have come up with some original ideas for developing further the uses of the computer set up that they have developed in recent years. These include a 'wish list ' placed on the Team web site for anyone considering making a special sort of donation.

On a lighter note the Team once again indulged in a raft race on the lake followed by a BBQ at base. This was a very successful and enjoyable day, thanks in part to the weather but principally due to the efforts of 333, our support group and those Team members and their families who provided and cooked the food. The pre Christmas mulled wine and mince pie slide show at base now seems to becoming an annual event and being appreciated this year by a larger audience.

The coming year will see, subject to having our landlord's final permission, the sideways extension of the garage to accommodate the second vehicle. This will be our largest capital expenditure since we first developed the base many years ago. The Team is grateful to the architect who is doing the plans free of charge. A new extension combined with a fortieth birthday has got to be a cause for celebration. Early plans are for two major events, one formal with someone prominent to cut the tape across the new garage doors and perhaps make some sort of long service presentations. The second event will be later in the year, probably involve a raft race followed by a BBQ at base with a wide variety of guests including past Team members and 333 our support group.

For the Team I feel that it should be a year of consolidation, particularly with regard to the new R4R techniques, ongoing casualty care training and expanding the issue of personal radios. While the older members continue to get even older we are fortunate to attract a small number of competent young, and one or two not so young, new members from within the surrounding area. They are the next generation of the Team and it is important that the teamwork, both on and off the mountain is maintained.

The Team remains indebted to our support group, 333, which continues to grow at a steady rate. Their membership subscription gives the treasurer a guaranteed sum each year and their fundraising efforts enable this to be topped up. They are spread across the country so that we do not ever see most of them. I hope some will be able to attend the anniversary celebrations later in the year. The group have represented us at windy air shows and sunny village fetes.

Throughout the year we have again been fortunate to have received a few donations of quite appreciable sums. This is not the place to name all those who have donated following incident on the mountain, however it is the place to thank one regular source of donation. For a number of years past Innogy, the power station at Dolgarrog, in the Conwy valley, have supported the Team financially and recently allowed us the use of their off-road track for driver training – a sort of fun day out for those who do not normally drive 4WD. Donations sometimes come in kind, such as the nine Mars bars given as replacements by a 'grateful' climber rescued from a big cliff in the Carneddau.

At the beginning of the Team year committee lost two of its members. Jed Stone had represented the members for some years and decided to stand down while MarieAnn Gladstone moved house further afield and decided it was more sense to work with Llanberis, her nearest Team. Committee welcomed Ginge Farrar and Pete Gadd who were elected at the AGM. This year committee will loose its two most important members. Pauline Hallett is standing down after a second stint as secretary and Dave Jones is passing the financial buck to a new treasurer. Chris Lloyd is also standing down from committee after many years as a Team representative and as a past chairman. In such a small voluntary organisation people who are willing to give of their time are much appreciated. I know all members will join me in thanking them and all the other members who give of their time for all their work on our behalf.

K C Gordon  
Honorary Chairman



## **TEAM LEADER REPORT**

### ***Team Operations***

In 2004, the Team has been reasonably busy with some of the most memorable operations being in areas outside our primary area. There have been several joint operations with the neighbouring Llanberis Team and occasionally other teams. This is a welcome change and provides good experience in different areas and with different challenges.

In March, there was a major joint operation with Llanberis MRT and Aberglaslyn MRT to rescue 2 people high on Crib-Y-Ddysgyl in difficult winter conditions. During this operation, we were called to assist an injured person high on the Glyders. Difficult communications and weather conditions made these rescues even more challenging.

In July, we were called to assist the Fire and Rescue Service to extricate a very wet and slightly injured person from a gorge near Bethesda. The person was flown by Air Ambulance to Bangor. This was the first of three operations where the Team worked closely with the Air Ambulance.

In October new radios were issued to the entire region in the move from low band to high band frequencies. This change has resulted in a significant degradation in the coverage of previously good areas. Detailed investigation is needed and there is a strong probability that repeaters and other technical solutions will be needed as a matter of urgency to ensure adequate operational radio coverage.

During October and November, there were 4 operations in 6 weeks for people lost on the Glyders; possibly related to the publication of an inviting article in a walking magazine.

There was a moderate increase in the number of people getting lost or stuck and then requiring assistance. It is possible that the ubiquitous mobile phone has resulted in some individuals forgetting their basic mountain-craft and hoping that just one phone call will solve all their problems.

Continuing advances in callout messaging and other initiatives should further improve the response of the Team to callouts.

### ***Technical Rescue Activities***



A major update and improvement to our technical rescue capabilities has been driven by the need to use robust, evidence-based techniques. This new system is being rolled out across the entire team and will mostly replace the previous methods of technical rescue. The benefit of this major investment in time, training and money will be a safer and more consistent approach to our technical operations.

The introduction of this new system was the subject of a paper presented by two Team Leaders to the national Mountain Rescue Council Team Leader meeting in November.

### ***Training***

The continued intake of new members is very heartening and will further strengthen our ability to implement a high quality operational response. The increasing diversity of training including river rescue, casualty care, search skills and technical rescue places a high demand on our Team Members. The need to remain current and up-to-date is a critical responsibility for all Team Members so that the most appropriate techniques can be safely applied and the best possible outcomes obtained.

External factors are driving formalisation of helicopter training and this more formal process may begin to creep into other areas of our training.

### ***Managing The Operation***

Team Leaders are often faced with making decisions on rapidly changing, often inaccurate information. Post-operational analysis from the comfort of an armchair is easy and some considerable latitude should be given to the Team Leaders who are doing a difficult job balancing operational, logistics, personnel, administrative and inter-agency issues against the pressures of justifiable high expectations from all quarters.

About 25% of calls to the Team Leaders from the Police do not result in a callout as these requests are initially investigated by the duty Team Leader in a low profile, investigative mode. These requests from the Police range from reports of lights seen on the mountains, shouts heard (often goats etc) together with requests to phone people claiming to be "lost on the mountains".

### ***Support***

For operations to be safe, successful and effective, Team Leaders need the continued support and commitment of the Team Members irrespective of the time of day, type and location of the incident or the weather conditions.

No search or rescue operation would be possible without the continued support, dedication and true professionalism, in the best sense of the word, of the Team members. The ever-present support and patience of our families and the superb fundraising and support 333 Group link together to make our training and operations easier.

A heartfelt "thank-you" is extended to all those who contribute so much to support and improve the Team.

John Hulse  
Team Leader

**PETER AND SUE AT  
THE CONWY FALLS CAFE AND RESTAURANT  
ARE PROUD TO SUPPORT THE  
OGWEN VALLEY MOUNTAIN RESCUE  
ORGANISATION  
AND WISH IT TO BE KNOWN THAT WE WILL  
CONTINUE UNASHAMEDLY TO COERCE, CAJOLE  
AND GENTLY "PERSUADE" ANY HIKERS, BIKERS,  
CLIMBERS, RAMBLERS, PADDLERS AND LOST  
LOOKING MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO  
"VOLUNTARILY" DROP MONEY INTO OUR  
O.V.M.R.O. MONEY BOXES  
P.S. WE ALSO DO RIGHT GOOD FOOD AND BREWS**



## Incident Report

Another year passes and still the rescues go on. Not quite so many this year as last and without the large combined searches with Llanberis and Aberglaslyn Teams, we still added up to 57 incidents. The occurrence of incidents was spread throughout the year with September topping the monthly tallies with 12 rescues during that period.

The age range of 'clients' spanned from 5 yrs old to 77 yrs old. The young, under 20, accounted for almost 25% of the rescues and the higher age range, over 40 accounted for 19.7%. Being in this age group myself, my excuse is that most of the other brackets are a 5 year range while every one over 40 is added together.

22 Squadron feature well in our statistics. This was partly achieved by them kidnapping Team members on training days and taking them to go on rescues (One in the Liverpool bay for a yachtsman).

Incidents in which the major injury was:

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Dead	5	1	5	5	<b>1</b>
Head Injuries	5	8	2	6	<b>6</b>
Trunk Injuries	2	5	5	1	<b>0</b>
Arm Injuries	4	2	0	0	<b>0</b>
Leg Injuries	12	13	10	20	<b>10</b>
Exhaustion/Exposure	1	0	0	1 (dog)	<b>0</b>
Heart Attack	1	1	0	0	<b>0</b>
(survived)					
Illness	1	1	0	1	<b>4</b>
Lost, Stolen or	25	11	24	30	<b>28</b>
Strayed					
Stand-bys	6	9	3	5	<b>2</b>
Total	62	51	49	69	<b>51</b>

The age distribution of those assisted was as follows:

	2000	2001	2002	2003	<b>2004</b>
	%	%	%	%	%
Under 16	14.3	6.5	14.0	3.2	<b>9.9</b>
16 - 20	14.3	12.9	9.9	12.8	<b>14.9</b>
21 - 25	21.9	16.1	15.6	7.4	<b>7.5</b>
26 - 30	11.4	9.6	2.8	9.6	<b>11.0</b>
31 - 35	8.6	4.8	2.8	11.7	<b>11.0</b>
36 - 40	6.7	13.0	7.0	11.7	<b>8.6</b>
Over 40	13.3	24.1	36.6	38.3	<b>17.4</b>
Not Recorded	9.5	13.0	11.3	5.3	<b>19.7</b>

I think that the rise in the number of unrecorded ages is due to the numbers taken directly to hospital by helicopter.

Incidents where we have worked with other teams or agencies:

	2000	2001	2002	2003	<b>2004</b>
C Flight 22 Sqn	38	29	22	33	<b>23</b>
RAF MR Service	4	3	0	5	<b>2</b>
SARDA (W)	5	2	0	5	<b>3</b>
Llanberis MRT	7	4	6	5	<b>1</b>
National Park	3	5	1	4	<b>2</b>
Wardens					
Aberglaslyn MRT	0	0	0	3	<b>0</b>
Police Helicopter	5	2	1	3	<b>1</b>
Air Ambulance					<b>2</b>

It is nice to see that we are now working with the Air Ambulance when the terrain is suitable for their aircraft. As always due to the terrain for most of our operations, we look forward to see the yellow shape of the Seaking 22 Squadron arriving. Although it is sometimes annoying to be beaten to the casualty by them when you have flogged up the hill to get close but not be there first. I don't think that any of our casualties mind who gets there first as it must be nice just to be moving off the hill if you are injured or just one of the growing number of Lost, Stolen or Strayed.

Neil Adam

## Incident Narrative

### JANUARY

2<sup>nd</sup> 1416 hrs 2.2 hours West slopes of Glyder Fawr above Llyn y Cwn

Male 32 yrs

Fractured Pelvis, Lacerations to buttocks legs and hands.

Slipped on ice and slid approx 30m before stopping in boulders. Wearing summer walking boots, no ice axe or crampons.

20 Team members involved

3<sup>rd</sup> 1100 hrs 4 hours Stream, Blain Cwm Idwal Male 49 years

Minor head, back, knee and ankle injury plus lacerations.

The party mistook the county boundary for the Devil's Kitchen path and he slipped while ascending the stream bed. His companions were scared to descend and went over to Nant Peris to raise the alarm. His shouts for help were heard by M R troops and was reached by Ogwen and RAF Leeming Troops. 22 Sqn evacuated the CAS. to hospital.

18 Team members and 10 Leeming members involved

3<sup>rd</sup> 1540 hrs 3 hours 20mins Cwm Bochlwyd Female 29 yrs

Ankle Injury

Tripped while walking tried, to come down with help from the rest of the party but very painful plus approaching darkness prompted a call to the team. The casualty was carried down to the ambulance.

8 Team members involved

17<sup>th</sup> 1621 hrs 3.5 hours West face of Tryfan Male 19 years

Separated from party, cragfast.

A family party were walking up Tryfan when they came to the snow line and decided to descend the west face, got into one of the gullies. The rest of the party descended a rock step but he could not do the step even having thrown his rucsac and gloves to the party below. He was led to safety in the darkness.

18 Team members involved

24<sup>th</sup> 1700 hrs 3.25 hours North Ridge Tryfan . Female 39, Male 26

The pair left the road at 0930 hrs and at 1300 decided to turn back (they think they were just below the summit but had not crossed the deep gully. They were on the eastern side of the ridge and being lost and confused they phoned for assistance. Visibility was good with cloud well above 1000m. Inexperience and lack of fitness the main reason for their problems. Led off the mountain.

7 Team members involved

### FEBRUARY

17<sup>th</sup> 1847 hrs 3.5 hours North Ridge Tryfan Male 28 yrs

Severe soft tissue injuries to face.

He was descending Tryfan on his own when he tripped and fell about 5m. damaging his face and glasses. He tried to descend on his own until the swelling restricted his vision and flashed his torch for help. He was seen by another mountaineer who went to his assistance. They were assisted off the hill.

9 Team members involved

21<sup>st</sup> 2010 hrs 5.6 hours Idwal Slabs 2 Males, 32, 23 yrs

No injuries, Cragfast.

Lost their way on the walk off Idwal Slabs. Wearing rock shoes, good clothing. Sacs at bottom of Cliff. Walked off by team.

13 Team members involved.

## **MARCH**

1<sup>st</sup> 2100hrs 3 hours Pen yr Ole wen

Reports of flashing lights

A party on the Glyderau noticed flashing lights on Pen yr Ole wen and having watched them for over an hour reported them to the Police. Attempts were made to locate the lights . 22 Sqn over flew the area and found a person snow-holeing to photograph the dawn. He had seen noone else and was OK (Possibly it was his lights the party had seen from the Glyderau.

8 Team members involved.

8<sup>th</sup> 1627hrs 2.5 hours Craig yr Isfa Male 26yrs

No injuries, cragfast.

Was walking from Capel Curig to Bethesda and was trying to go from Bwlch Eryl Farchog to the summit of Carnedd Llewelyn. 22 Sqn located him and returned him to Og Base.

6 Team members involved

## **APRIL**

3<sup>rd</sup> 1220 hrs 2 hours Cwm Idwal Female 17yrs

Collapse (pos. epilepsy)

School party in Cwm Idwal when a pupil collapsed and went unconscious. Attended by National Park Warden and team members. 22 Sqn could not hover at the location so the casualty was moved to a suitable location.

12 Team members involved

9<sup>th</sup> 1630 hrs 4.1 hours Glyder Fawr Male 45, Female 9,  
Male 38, Female 8, (2nd Group Male 28, Male 19)

No injuries

The first party had gone over the Glyderau and arrived at Glyder Fawr but could not find the path down to Llyn y Cwn, and so returned to the Summit and requested assistance as they were concerned for the safety of their daughters as the weather was getting worse. Team members went up to escort them down and found that another group of two had joined them and were also lost. All six were escorted down arriving at the road as it became dark.

5 Team members involved plus another 13 on standby in case of problems.

19<sup>th</sup> 2026 hrs 4 hours Milestone Buttress Male 24 years  
Fractured Leg and minor head injuries.  
They had finished the climb and were descending when the casualty slipped on wet rock after a heavy shower and fell about 25m.  
20 Team members and some good flying by 22 Sqn involved.

21<sup>st</sup> 1245 hrs 2 hours Llyn Cowlyd Male 15 yrs  
No injuries.  
D of E Party walking to Ogwen when one of the party could not walk any further .  
They were found and escorted to the nearest vehicle.  
14 Team members involved

22<sup>nd</sup> 2010 hrs 2.75 hours Cwm Dilyn Female 18 yrs  
D of E group were going to bivy in the hut in Cwm Dilyn and walking in in the dark one of the party collapsed due to a previous medical condition. Found and escorted off to the vehicle with a teacher and another pupil who were put up in Oggie base for the night.  
9 Team members involved

## **MAY**

2<sup>nd</sup> 1630 hrs 10 min North Ridge Tryfan Male 37 yrs  
Damaged ribs and thigh  
The party were walking up Tryfan when one slipped and hurt himself. They continued over Tryfan, walked into base and asked if someone could have a look at him. He was checked over given pain relief and advised to go to the hospital for a check . Tough these Russians.  
1 Team member involved

12<sup>th</sup> 1716 hrs 10 hours Cwm Clyd Male 77  
Fatal  
Two friends walked up Y Garn as they had on many occasions. Near the summit one left the path to relieve himself and must have gone too close to the cliff edge in the very thick cloud and slipped and fell about 120 m sustaining fatal injuries.  
24 Team members

13<sup>th</sup> 1341hrs 1 hour Cwm Idwal, Cragfast  
Information taken by a Team Leader. A single person in the party. Spoken to on the mobile. Incident over after an hour.  
1 Team member involved

30<sup>th</sup> 1410hrs 3 hours Aber Falls Area Male 34  
Fracture to ankle.  
Was walking down a grassy slope wearing trainers when he slipped fracturing his ankle. A person from a nearby group phoned for an ambulance and they tried carrying him down on a gate. The ambulance could not reach the area and returned to the A55 to call the team. The Team sent a party in and put up a radio link on Anglesey. A helicopter was training in the area and offered to assist with the evacuation.

17 Team members involved plus 5 on stand by at home. Ambulance service, and 22 Sqn.

## **JUNE**

2<sup>nd</sup> 1700hrs 1.5 hours Pen yr Ole Wen 3 males 50, 14 and 45.

Lost and cragfast

The Party set off up Pen and became confused on the summit plateau and started down the ridge towards Bethesda and then turned down the flank onto Braich Ty Du gullies and became cragfast. They were spotted from the other side of the valley and the helicopter was directed in to them. They were landed at Oggie Base to be debriefed and returned to their transport.

5 Team members involved plus 22 Sqn.

6<sup>th</sup> 1612hrs 1 hour Cwm Bochllwyd Female

Damaged ankle.

Descending the footpath from Bochllwyd and slipped and redamaged her ankle (damaged recently in a mountain bike accident). Given assistance and recovered to the hospital by 22Sqn.

7 Team members involved, plus 22 Sqn.

8<sup>th</sup> 1006hrs 12 hours St. Llechwedd, Conwy Missing person Male 15 years

No injuries

After a bad day of exams the young man left home in the middle of the night with no money or possessions. He was suffering from depression. An extensive search was made; a friend returning to his accommodation eventually spotted him. He had hitch hiked to Crewe and back?? And was no longer depressed with his lot in Conwy!

26 Team members, 3 SARDA, Police and police helicopter.

27<sup>th</sup> 1450hrs 1 hour Bwlch Tryfan Male 34

Knee injury

He was descending Tryfan and was near the Bwlch and slipped.

Evacuated to hospital by 22 Sqn.

14 Team members involved.

11<sup>th</sup> 1935hrs 3 hours Llywelyn/Cwm Lligwy area Lost

3 males, 3 Females all 17 yrs.

A Duke of Edinburgh party. Poor clothing for the weather (Windy, showers and some low cloud). They had failed to get up Siabod the previous day but set out from Capel to go up Llywelyn and to camp in Eigiau. They were lost, demoralised and unable to pitch their tents in the high winds. They were soaked and had resorted to wearing bin liners. They failed to contact their teacher and phoned the police. They were contacted by phone and after some discussion directed on the easiest way down and members were sent up to meet them and assist them down. They were very poorly equipped and totally unable to manage themselves in the mountains. The instructor was oblivious to the hazards of the terrain, weather and the risks the group had been exposed to. It was very surprising to see such a poorly organised and supervised group in this area.

10 Team members plus 8 on standby at home.

16<sup>th</sup> 1636hrs 3 hours Pen yr Ole Wen, Cwm Lloer Female 28 yrs

No injuries, Cragfast while Walking.

A couple decided that they would walk the Carneddau using only the Lonely Planet walking guide to Britain. They failed to follow the description and wandered off onto very steep ground. The female became stuck as she was wearing slip on (or should it be slip off?) shoes. The report by mobile was unsure of their position. 22 Sqn were called in to assist with the search and recovered the female, the male would not go into the helicopter and walked down with assistance.

18 Team members and 22 Sqn involved.

25<sup>th</sup> 1500hrs 4.3 hours Tryfan, possibly East Face 6 Whistle blasts heard.

A group from a centre heard the whistle blasts and the instructor did a quick check along the ridge to try and locate the noise. They heard nothing further and two other parties on the hill had heard nothing. Team parties were put into the area but found nothing. No one was reported overdue or in difficulties and the search was abandoned.

15 Team members involved plus a further 9 on stand by at home.

26<sup>th</sup> 1428hrs 3 hours Cwm Bochllwyd Female 74 yrs

Collapse due to a new medical condition

She was out for a walk with her daughter on a very familiar route when she collapsed and was violently sick and was unable to stand. Assisted by a passing party of soldiers who called out the team. 22 Sqn evacuated her and Team members escorted down daughter.

10 Team members and 22 Sqn involved.

## **AUGUST**

1<sup>st</sup> 1400hrs 1 hour Moel Siabod Male 60 yrs

No injuries.

They were ascending Moel Siabod when he felt ill with nausea and severe chest pains. His companion located someone with a mobile who called an ambulance. At the road head they realised they could not reach the casualty and the Team and Air Ambulance were called. Good flying saw the Air Ambulance evacuate the casualty and the companion was escorted off the hill.

16 Team members involved.

15<sup>th</sup> 1237hrs 2 hours Grooved Arête, Tryfan Male 33 yrs

Fractured Jaw, wrist, ankle, cuts & abrasions. Lead fall while climbing.

Was leading the Knights move on Grooved Arête when he fell and his protection failed, he landed at the belay stance, Evacuated by 22 Sqn. His helmet undoubtedly reduced his injuries.

17 Team members and 22 Sqn involved.



15<sup>th</sup> 1520hrs 3 hours Grooved Arête, Tryfan Male 61 yrs  
Fractured ankle  
Climbing in the same place as the previous accident, slipped and his ankle was caught in the groove. Again 22 Sqn evacuated.  
18 Team members and 22 Sqn involved.

31<sup>st</sup> 2115hrs 4 hours Top of Gribbin Facet1 Male 40, 3 females 42,7,5 yrs  
No injuries, benighted  
They had walked over the Glyders and descended to Bochllywd and decided to take the easier route down towards Llyn Idwal rather than the steep Bochllywd steps. It became dark when they were above the Gribbin Facet and telephoned for help. They were walked down to safety.  
8 Team members involved.

## SEPTEMBER

3<sup>rd</sup> Bangor Area. Missing from home.  
Asked to assist with the search for an elderly man. He turned up as the search was about to start.

6<sup>th</sup> 1507hrs 3 hours South Ridge Tryfan Male 14 years  
Severe lacerations to head.  
Lost his balance while descending towards Bwlch Tryfan and fell forward and struck his head on a rock. Evacuated by 22 Sqn.  
8 Team members involved.

9<sup>th</sup> 1715hrs 5 hours Glyder Fach Female 38 yrs  
No injuries  
She was attempting to walk from Capel Curig to Glyder Fach. With very hot weather and walking for six hours without reaching the summit she became exhausted and dehydrated. She was encouraged to walk to meet the team party who provided food and water after which she managed to walk off the hill all be it very slowly.  
9 Team members involved.

9<sup>th</sup> 1915hrs 1 hour Idwal Slabs Nothing Found. Shouts for help.  
An experienced mountaineer was convinced he and his partner heard shouts for help but could not see anyone. A search of the area found nothing. False alarm with good intention.

11<sup>th</sup> 1615hrs 4 hours Heather Terrace, Tryfan Male 51yrs  
Large gash to head and general pain, abrasion to knee.  
The party were following a watercourse when they came across a steep wall, he was having help in placing his foot when he somersaulted backwards over the helper, falling a further twenty feet.  
Ground conditions were very wet with heavy rain and mist.  
20 Team members and 22 Sqn involved.

11<sup>th</sup> 1830hrs 2 hours Foel Grach, Carneddau Male 57 yrs  
No injuries.

While the previous incident was taking place the team were phoned by the mislaid person who thought he was on Carnedd Llewelyn . Once he was persuaded that in fact he was in the refuge hut on Foel Grach and a discussion on his route down he was happy to make his own way down. He phoned in at 2030 hrs to say that he was in sight of Bethesda and happy. 2 Team members in base, none on the hill.

15<sup>th</sup> 1200hrs 1.25 hours North Ridge, Tryfan Female 17 yrs  
Possible rib injury.

Slipped on the exposed part of the upper North Ridge fell approx 15 ft. 22 Sqn evacuated direct to hospital.  
2 Team members co-ordinating from Base.

17<sup>th</sup> 1430hrs 2.66 hrs Top of Milestone Buttress, Tryfan  
Male 41 yrs Female 42 yrs

This couple decided to walk up Tryfan and followed various tracks until they ended up above Milestone Buttress in terrain beyond their capabilities and got stuck. They decided to call for help. A party of three heard them and got over to them and were joined by an off duty policeman who was climbing on the Buttress. They managed to lead them off without further help from the team.  
3 Team members involved.

18<sup>th</sup> 1345hrs 2.75 hrs Near Llyn Bochllwyd Female 24 yrs  
Damaged ankle.

A gusty day that was wet underfoot but not raining. She slipped and twisted her ankle while falling.  
18 Team members, 4 RAF St Athen, 3 National Park Authority involved.

18<sup>th</sup> 1640hrs 10 minutes Idwal path at junction with Bochllwyd path.  
Male 40 yrs.

When the previous rescue got to the junction of the paths we were greeted by this gent with his party . He tripped and fell over while walking round Idwal and damaged his knee. He had reached this area with the help of his friends and they asked for help. He was given assistance with standing and human crutches and slowly made his way down. As it looked like ligament damage he was strapped up and as he had his own transport it was suggested that he visited the Hospital for a check up and treatment.

About 4 Team members assisted him while the others continued with the carryout of the first casualty.

24<sup>th</sup> 2130hrs 1 hour Llyn Elsi 2 Male 53 & 30. 1 Female 33.  
No injuries.

Contacted by mobile phone. They had been taking their dogs for a walk when they got lost in the forestry. While the landrover was going up to the lake they made their way to the monument at the end of the lake, and were taken down to Betws y Coed.  
2 Team members involved.

26<sup>th</sup> 1731 hrs Y Garn – Foel Goch area Male  
No injury, lost.  
Contacted by Mobile phone. Discussed situation met up with another and made their own way down.  
A stand by, 1 Team member involved

## **OCTOBER**

28<sup>th</sup> Carnedd y Filiast 2 people Report of shouts for help  
Police helicopter was in the area and looked around the area. Others had seen a couple with two children who were shouting. Nothing found.

28<sup>th</sup> Idwal Slabs  
With low batteries on their mobile phone text messages located the benighted couple.

## **NOVEMBER**

6<sup>th</sup> 1440 hrs 10.5 hours Glyder Fawr, above Dinas y Cromlech.  
Party of four. Lost No injuries.  
They were walking from Idwal to Capel Curig when in their words their compass was affected by 'magnetic' rocks and they decided to go down Cwm Ffynnon and came to steep ground where they went west and were 'entrapped' by steep ground.  
After being located partially by the landrover with blue lights on the road they were found and brought down to the Llanberis Pass.  
24 Team members and 3 SARDA members involved.

7<sup>th</sup> 1300hrs 3.5 hours East of Bryn Hall, Bethesda. Male 16 yrs.  
Back spasm (re-occurrence of an old injury)  
Duke of Edinburgh group under instruction. Poor visibility, good for their navigation exercise. The team carried the casualty down to below the cloud level and he was evacuated by the Ambulance helicopter.  
11 Team members involved.

13<sup>th</sup> 1710hrs 2 hours Central Buttress area of East Face Tryfan.  
2 Males ( 23 & 24 yrs ) No injuries.  
They left the road late to do First Pinnacle Rib. By then there were other parties on it so they decided to follow another group up an adjacent route which was not in their guide book. The other party climbed faster and they lost touch with them. As it was now dark and the weather was getting worse they decided to retreat but their rope became jammed on their second abseil and they were stuck on a ledge. They phoned for assistance. A party set off and assistance was requested from 22 Sqn. Some good flying allowed the party to be evacuated from just below the cloud level. Complicated by the pair not knowing where they were on the East Face.  
13 Team members involved.

14<sup>th</sup> 2100hrs 9 hours Glyder Fach South Slope Male 36 & Female 35.  
No injuries.  
Party phoned for help after getting lost on the Glyderau. They thought they were in the area of Glyder Fach with 1.5 hours of life left in their torch, low batteries on their

mobile and their compass was 'playing up' ? After this call no further contact was made until they were found. They had wandered around trying to find their way down and were at the top of the steep ground descending to Llyn y Cwn. They were unaware of all the activity that their call had triggered.

20 Team members and 2 SARDA involved.

20<sup>th</sup> 2015hrs 1hr 45 min Reports of lights in area of Bristly Ridge.

A man camping in Cwm Clyd on Y Garn reported lights flashing SOS in the area of Bristly Ridge. There was snow cover above 2000 ft. The area was watched from both East and West and no further lights were seen by the Team or the informant and at 2200 hrs it was decided to take no further action.

2 Team members involved.

21<sup>st</sup> Liverpool Bay.

Team members on exercise with 22 Sqn were hijacked while a search and evacuation of a crew member on a yacht in the Liverpool Bay.

4 Team members involved

27<sup>th</sup> 1600hrs 5 hours Summit area of the Glyderau No injuries

Female 35 & male 31.

They were walking from Capel to the Devils Kitchen leaving at 0945 hrs. and made good progress passing the Cantilever in the early afternoon. Visibility was poor and they were navigating by map and compass. At some time the compass fell out of his pocket and in the area of Castell y Gwynt they discovered they had lost it. They tried to retrace their route but got lost with no torches and limited local knowledge they asked for help. They were found by hill parties and walked off the hill.

20 Team members, 3 Llanberis Team ,2 Sarda, 1 Newsar.

## **DECEMBER**

9<sup>th</sup> Grooved Arete, Tryfan 2male, 1 female, Cragfast, Climbing. No injuries.

11<sup>th</sup>. 1530hrs 2 hours Horseshoe Pass area, Denbighshire.

Male.

Team members were on training at RAF Valley with 22 Sqn and were at the end of the exercise when 22 Sqn were tasked to assist a paraglider who had crashed above the Horseshoe Pass on steep ground. They requested that 2 members went with them to assist with the steep ground evacuation. A fast passage and evacuation to Wrexham hospital and return to Oggie Base made their day.

2 Team members involved.

11<sup>th</sup> 1700hrs 2.3 hours Glyder Fawr 2 males 28 & 26yrs)

No injuries

Lost on SW flank of Glyder Fawr. They did not find the Cantilever but reached the Castle of the Winds and the summit of Glyder Fawr. They lost the path on the descent and got into difficult ground and called for help. They could see a road but this was not the A5 as they did not see the Ambulance Blues. It was then sent round to the Llanberis Pass where the pair saw it and their light was spotted. The

helicopter returning from the previous job with two OVMRO on board retrieved them to Nant Peris.

22 Team members involved.

12<sup>th</sup> Glyder Fach Walking party, possibly fractured leg. Evacuated by 22 Sqn.

12<sup>th</sup> Llyn y Cwn Walking

Found by two members of the team. Injuries to knee as they were very slow in moving and going to be caught by darkness they requested further assistance. The cloud lifted and 22 Sqn were able to evacuate the couple to Pen y Pass where they got a lift to their car in Ogwen.

## **Communications**

It's that time of year again and as the new 'Comms Officer' it has fallen on me to give an update for the Annual Report.

1. As you are all aware, we have new radios, which are 'high-band', and these have been allocated to a number of Team members.
2. At present, the radios do not seem to have the same coverage as the old ones but this will change following some fine-tuning by the Police.
3. When the radios were issued it was agreed that in six months time there would be a review of the sets held by Team members. This review is about due, and as stated in point 2 all sets will have to be returned to base on an agreed date for fine-tuning by the Police. This would also be a good time to look at allocation.
4. We are also considering some GPS sets. This would mean that when you send a message, base would be able to pinpoint your location (even if you don't know it yourself) Could this be the demise of the 'White Stick Award'?

Pete Gadd

## **Equipment Officer's Report**

When I became Equipment Officer two years ago I made a mental equipment wish list, and was naïve enough to think that most of what was on that list could be accomplished within one year. How wrong I was. I utterly underestimated how much work being equipment officer involved, and so the wish list has been something of an ongoing project for the ensuing year!

During my first year I concentrated on the lighting capabilities of the Team and as a result the rationalisation and standardisation of the equipment has to be put on hold until the following year. Within the past 12 months the Team has adopted the Rigging for Rescue (R4R) approach and that in itself instigated the start of the rationalisation and standardisation process. This dovetailed nicely with my intentions and facilitated the process we now have completely overhauled our technical rescue kit, and we have reduced the variations within type of kits (standardisation). This process of reviewing the kit has even been continued through into how the kit is stored – now in new shiny bags hanging on the walls!

The 'Wednesday Night Crew' has worked immensely hard yet again this year in reorganising the kit room. Each piece of equipment is now kept in an allocated space in the kit room. The room is divided into zones, a casualty area, technical rescue, static ropes and a lead climbing areas. This organisation of how the kit is kept means that it is easy for experienced Team members and trainees alike to be able to locate the correct item of kit during the first few adrenalin filled moments when a job breaks. Adjacent to the equipment the crew have constructed a drying room. This is an invaluable resource and creates a significant difference when operational as it means equipment can be dried in a quarter of the time. The rather bright pink colour scheme is still taking a bit of getting used to....!

So what are the main changes?

The myriad collection of old and new krabs (which came in every combination and colour you could imagine!) has now been replaced by an easily identifiable rescue grade 33kn hybrid krab. These krabs are of

the highest quality available and whilst not cheap were worth the expense.

Gone too are the assortment of slings. We had different colours, different lengths, different strengths and varying materials. These have all been replaced by standard 2.4m slings which conveniently were available in the Team colours of bright orange!

I also standardised the vast array of lowering and friction devices that we had in operation. We had everything from 'bottle openers' (figure of eight belay devices) to some I don't even know what to call. These have all been replaced by a brake rack friction device which has been proved in the field and in testing to the highest stringent standards. This has been supplemented by a R4R derived S40.

The entire collection of Rocks and hexes has been replaced by modern, lightweight ones and while I was replacing the old stock I took the opportunity to increase the range we have available in kit bags.

All of this new equipment is stored in our revamped kit room, in bright shiny new bags, with sparkling labels on the front, clearly stating what is in which bag. Quite how long the bags will remain new and shiny remains to be seen!





The major task of the past 12 months was to replace the entire stock of static ropes with new ones...and finally, OVMRO has joined the rest of the UK and has gone metric. Gone are the 250ft and 500ft ropes, to be replaced with (again in nice shiny bags!) 100m and 200m lengths. These new lengths are supplemented by shorter 50m ropes for smaller jobs. Now there is no use in me acquiring new ropes for the Team if we don't look after them, and so we have invested in rope protectors. These durable items have been made in the ever so practical, and mountain rescue friendly colour of bright shiny white. Something tells me they won't stay this colour for long...and that next year the equipment officer will be trying to negotiate a trade price for Persil! We have also bought polypropylene ice cube tray style edge protectors. These items proved their worth almost immediately when used on a job in Vivian Quarry on the steep slate edges.

Not only have I been busy in buying items for the Team as a whole I have also made a start on the issuing of personal kit. The demise of the belay and ledge bags saw them being replaced by 5 technical rescue bags and 1 highline bag. To supplement these each Team member has been issued with 10m of 8mm cord, 2 prussick loops, and 4 of the new krabs, a Team sling and a standard 5m length of webbing. Although an expensive initial outlay, it has the main advantage of no single Team member having to carry an excessive amount of kit onto a job. Each person produces their own personal kit at the incident site and the equipment is then pooled to create belays etc..

2004 has also seen the retirement of our new Mark 3 Bell stretcher. We took advantage of the MRC (now MREW) offer whereby we could purchase a Mark 4 Tangent Stretcher from Bell and only needing to pay for 50% of the cost with the MREW contributing the other 50%. With immense saving and assistance the Team has been able to buy two of these new stretchers.

And so what of my wish list?

All that's left for me to achieve is the computer database of our equipment. This would mean that all of our equipment, no matter how big or small can be entered into a computerised inventory and in conjunction with a barcode reader, could be used to record every detail of a piece of equipment – date of acquisition, job history, inspections,

dates and financial stocks. This is a project I am looking forward to seeing completed.

The past 12 months have seen an incredible amount of changes to the kit, but I see the ensuing 12 months as a period of consolidation so that the Team can get used to the new kit, so that the new items can be tested under the circumstances for which they were designed – a time for review and evaluation.

I am immensely grateful for all the encouragement I have had while revamping the equipment. I fully recognise my efforts are merely building in the prodigious path of my predecessors. I feel we are at the stage where the Team has the equipment that enables them to respond to a job efficiently, effectively and safely.

It has been an exciting period for me as equipment officer (maybe I need to get out more!?! ) and I am looking forward to seeing how all this new kit works operationally. These changes have only been achievable by the continuous generosity of the public. All of this has been paid for by direct monies received from the public, and for that I can not express sufficiently my gratitude. Similarly I have to thank the Team members for their unwavering support and help. Thank you too to the Committee for giving me the remit and freedom to do as I thought best with the equipment, though it has to be said that no change has taken place without consultation with the Team Leaders, the Team members and a vast amount of research.

Those observant enough amongst you will notice I have forgotten to mention one item that was present on my initial wish list in 2003 – the one item that I just cannot get organised – the helicopter!

Chris Cooksey  
Equipment Officer

## **Treasurer's Report**

The demands to spend are relentless as there are so many good ideas and developments, coming from Team and Treble Three members, from operational developments to administrative and publicity. It is only because of the generosity of many that we have been able to accommodate most of these initiatives.

The organisation has been in a fortunate position this year where it was able to replace one of the ambulances due its age. This project had been discussed for the past two years and funding had been ring-fenced for this purpose.

Technical operations have undergone a review this year by way of buying in the services of a trainer, followed by a review of the equipment used in technical rescues. This has resulted in an evaluation exercise which has led to upgrading the items used in rope systems and disregarding items no longer required. This has resulted in significant expenditure.

I would like to express my thanks to all who have submitted a Gift Aid form therefore allowing OVMRO to claim back the tax paid on the value of the donation (however large or small). I would still urge those who make annual donations and pay tax, or are just wanting to make a one off donation, if they have not already done so to complete the "Gift Aid" form enclosed in this Annual Newsletter.

The nature of the organisation is that we come into contact with people, and sometimes friends, who have lost relatives or colleagues in the hills, or who loved the hills. I would like to thank the families and friends for all contributions received in 2004 in memory of the following people:

Mr Richard Booth  
Mr Charles Nightingale  
Mr Martin Poynter

Mr Keith Thwaites  
Mr Anthony Edwards  
Mr William Sutherland.

I feel privileged that the last three years has brought me into greater contact with the people and workings of the Treble Three support group. Their committee work very hard to keep the group running which has an ever increasing membership. I was fortunate enough to join them on one of their monthly events - a walk along the Llangollen escarpment – and enjoyed their company immensely. Whilst the hard work continues, I would like to urge all donators to consider becoming members of Treble Three, particularly clubs, associations and businesses who already donate, as all their members can take advantage of the membership benefits.

This is my last year in post as I feel I do not have sufficient time to devote to the position, in addition to being an active Team member. I am grateful to the Committee three years ago for appointing me and hope I have met their expectations. Although it has been extremely demanding at times, I am very grateful for the opportunity as I now understand the organisation and how it operates.

I would like to express my thanks to the spending departments of the Team for their continued support and for their company on the many late evenings at the committee meetings – I will think of you in the future. I am also grateful to Bill Dean (Asst Treasurer) for his support and hard work with the Treble Three finances this year. Thanks again goes to Barrie Buels from Fraser Wood, Chartered Certified Accountants, for his role in verifying the year end accounts.

David Jones

**Summarised Management Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2004**

	2004	2003	
<b><u>Income</u></b>			
General & rescue donations	13362.52	21,012.62	7650.10
333 Group	9568.72	9,986.24	417.52
Collection Boxes	2306.02	1,274.92	-1031.10
Annual Reports, Stamps, Interest	5559.09	5,276.91	-282.18
	30769.35	37,550.69	6754.34
<b><u>Expenses</u></b>			
Base Running Costs	7680.09	8,472.39	792.30
Base Windows	0	1,367.00	1367.00
Land Rover	4687.12	4,004.62	-682.50
Vehicle Purchase	23094.76	0	-23094.76
Equipment, First aid & Training	25110.28	5,509.75	-19600.53
Social (Dinner,etc)	636.50	232.70	-403.80
Team Kit	325.38	2,101.70	1776.32
Postage, Printing & Stationery	2708.32	2,950.40	242.08
Other costs	1612.97	515.43	-1097.54
Telephone & Pagers	3304.04	2,956.92	-347.12
	69159.46	28,110.91	-41048.55
Net increase	38363.11	9,439.78	-32444.57

## 40 years of OVMRO Transport 1965-2005

### History

Over the past forty years the mode of transport available to the Organisation was whatever belonged to members of the Team. In 1965 this was not a lot. The odd mini van or motor bike and side car with a top speed of 40mph, was considered a luxury. As we all know a third class ride is better than a first class walk! We also had at our disposal a motor scooter which came to grief on a bend near the Pen-y-Gwryrd. That's not to say all Team members' transport was less than desirable. Tony Mason, a founder member of the Team, had a Rolls Royce and would pick up some of the members from the pubs of Bethesda en route to a rescue, maybe on Tryfan or some similar place.

### The First Vehicle

With the passing of time and the need for a more professional approach to transport it was evidently time to stop relying on members to use their own vehicles for rescue work. In 1994 we approached Land Rover for support with this project. Support came in the form of a discounted 110 Ex Works with 600 miles on the clock. This was then prepared to specifications by Conway Land Rover and came into service in January 1995.



110 Land Rover 1995

The sponsorship in 2000 by Safeway, HM Bennett & Welsh Lamb and Beef gave us a new 130 Land Rover Ambulance in 2001.

By 2003 the 110 was coming up to 10 years old and a second 130 Land Rover was ordered from Frogs Island 4X4 Ltd. The new 130 was delivered in April 2004 and now the organisation has the flexibility of a second Land Rover Ambulance for rescue work.

The vehicles were also on standby for the North Wales Ambulance Trust when it snowed last March and during the floods in Llanrwst 2004.

Vehicle driver training is on going with Dolgarog Power Station making their off road course available to us and it's anticipated that more use will be made of this facility in the next year. It's proving to be a very valuable source of driver safety and vehicle care.



130 Land Rover Ambulances 2004 & 2001

As transport officer I would like to thank N Power Renewables RWE Group's support for the use of their off road course, Hill House Hammond our insurers, for renegotiating the insurance on our vehicles and L.A.S Land Rovers Ltd, Bangor for efficiently keeping us on the road.

Roger Jones  
Transport Officer



## **Training Officer's Report**

Over the last 40 years OVMRO has undergone a considerable evolution in the skills that its Team members are expected to have, but the ethos of every Team member being a mountaineer first and rescuer second still remains.

In the early days training was a more casual affair, sometimes it was a day out with Team members mountaineering, other times its was learning new skills for a particular aspect of rescue work. We learnt a lot about other Team members and what they were good at; and took away things that we needed to learn again and again.

Indeed the post of training officer (or training co-ordinator) wasn't a full committee post until the early 1990s when John Hulse took on the role. Since then Chris Onions and Adam Charlton have held the posts, each one seeing in more changes as expectations of Team members and the public have changed.

In 2004 we brought in more change but I hope that with our technical rope rescue skills it will now bring a period of consolidation. In June the Team paid for Kirk Mauthner to teach two Rigging for Rescue Courses. One of the aims of running the two courses was to reach a critical number of Team members who had the right skill set so that we could confidently deal with any technical rope rescue incident.



The longer 5 day course aimed to provide a good level of knowledge and skill for Team members who want to be at the forefront of this area of rescue. We were put through class room lectures and practical sessions that were interesting, informative and challenging.

Kirk also taught a 2 day Introduction to Rigging for Rescue Course over a weekend for other Team members to attend.

The days were long but I think the skills we learnt have seen a huge increase in our ability to handle technical rope rescue incidents. We have also seen a major overhaul of our equipment to support these sorts of incidents.

Since the courses we have continued to develop our skills and various technical rope rescue practices have been held although a number of them were curtailed due to incidents. A technical rescue working group has been established to ensure that the equipment, training and documentation are developed to meet the needs of the Team.

Other aspects of training have continued, the one day swiftwater safety training continues to be a popular training day – even if it is held in October. This day is run by Plas Y Brenin for us and we can practice the skills on our local rivers which is a real benefit.

Winter skills' training was held in Glencoe and although the snow line was high two very valuable days were achieved. This weekend continues to be a good way to brush up on skills that potentially are rusty because of the recent poor winters. When we do get snow, we still have to be able to work in that environment and personal skills are important to get to an incident site.

Helicopter training with RAF Valley took on a new dimension this year following a serious incident in the Lake District where a member of a mountain rescue Team was injured. All Team members should undergo basic aircraft and winch training annually to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to work safely with the aircraft. A number of Team members also had extended training being deployed with the aircraft for a number of hours when they were diverted to real incidents on two different occasions.

Stretcher skills days, first aid training have all helped in maintaining the bread and butter abilities of Team members in getting a casualty off the mountain.

At a regional level the Team has supported North Wales Mountain Rescue Association's various training events during the year. In December OVMRO hosted a Basic Search and Rescue Skills weekend which was attended by new Team members from around the region. It provides an introduction to the various skills expected from a Team member and is a good way to meet other Team members. Search skills were also taught by Team members over a weekend in October which culminated in a major search exercise that challenged the search managers.

Nationally Team members attended the MRC training day held at Plas Y Brenin and two Team leaders made a presentation about the implementation of Rigging for Rescue principles to the National Team Leader training day.

What does 2005 hold for us? Consolidation of the technical rope rescue skills is vital if we are to build on the progress made during 2004, more interaction at a regional level is also likely. This brings many benefits when we have to work with other Teams in the areas and with the RAF Valley Mountain Rescue Team back in existence there is an opportunity to re-establish previously close ties.

Finally I would like to thank everyone who has helped in running the training over the past year, and for Team members who attended. Without all the assistance I have received the number of training events and quality would be severely diminished.

Alistair Read  
Training Officer

## **PRESS OFFICER'S REPORT**

When asked to write an article for the Team's Annual Report, I always refer to my other badge of office, The Archivist. As Archivist I try to collect newspaper reports and other items to record the history of OVMRO.

Opening up the scrapbook at the beginning of 2004 I see that I have filled seven pages with newspaper cuttings. Our gratitude must go to the Daily Post who regularly report on the Team's activities including rescues, training, fund raising and concerns. The Bangor Chronicle frequently supports the Team with good articles and news reports. However, it is not only the local and regional papers that report on OVMRO. Reports by the Press Officer complaining about the inappropriate use of mobile phones to call the Mountain Rescue have found themselves in the national newspapers.

Rarely do the persons rescued offer themselves to the Press. However, after a treacherous winter's night on the slopes of Crib y Ddysgl, when two Asian lads were rescued by members of Ogwen, Llanberis and Aberglaslyn MRT's, the two were happy to publicly confess the error of their ways and express sincere gratitude to the volunteers who rescued them.

In May OVMRO took delivery of a new custom built Land Rover ambulance to replace an older vehicle. This older Land Rover has passed over to Global Rescue. Later on in the Summer, a £4000 donation to OVMRO from Innogy (Dolgarrog Hydro Electric Power Station) received good coverage. The Daily Post also covered the "Fatal Incident" training for Mountain Rescue Team members.

Both BBC television and radio have regularly given OVMRO "air time". A reporter from Radio Wales drove up from Cardiff to spend a day with the Team. And a Team member has kept the BBC at Bangor well supplied with video footage of rescues. He has also fed numerous Web sites with news and links. So thank you Pete Douglas for your support.

Christopher Lloyd

## IT Officers Report

Well another year has flown by. What has IT done for the Team in this time?

The weather station is now fully operational and is linked up to the web site updating the weather details every 5 minutes. The weather pages and the two web cams showing a view of Y-Garn from Oggi Base and a view of The Devils Kitchen from Bethesda receive the most hits of all the site. The guest book shows that people from throughout the world like to see pictures that remind them of past visits to North Wales. The BBC's web site has links to our web cams and a guest book which also receives many comments from throughout the world

On the 29<sup>th</sup> March, Steve Wright, of BBC fame, featured our site as 'web cam of the day'. Visits to the site went from an average of 350 a day to 1500 for that day alone. The site currently receives over 170,000 hits per month and this is rising.

The hits to date (It is late January as I write this) are as follows;

Jan 2005	167628
Dec 2004	171564
Nov 2004	245839
Oct 2004	160812
Sep 2004	158156
Aug 2004	155595
Jul 2004	188524
Jun 2004	120962
May 2004	117461
Apr 2004	203899
Mar 2004	73746
Feb 2004	42233

Please visit our web site and pass on any comments about what else you would like to see on the site.

We purchased a new multi-function printer to allow us to scan, print and copy. We have been making good use of the main base computer for administration, producing the many forms we have to fill in (Yes, every

rescue leaves us with paperwork to do) as well as printing maps of our area for use during operations.

What are our plans for the coming year?

As I write this article I am organising a visit from iCom, who produce our radios. They have a system whereby each radio on the hill can send back its location to the base where it is displayed on a digital map. It will be interesting to see how we can utilise this facility.



Over the coming years we aim to put all of our training courses onto DVD to make interactive videos. Old training events from VHS tape and filming the others during new training exercises will also go onto DVD.

We are working on allowing on-line donations from the Team website. We have produced some A5 leaflets to 'advertise' the Team to the wide world. We were once known as Ogwen's best kept secret. We aim to change this by making people more aware of what we do and how they can help.

Russ Hore  
Head of IT

## **OGGI BASE**

The home of Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation has not always been the comfortable, well-appointed palace of Bryn Poeth. Many Team Members will not remember Bryn Poeth without its garage, loft conversion, central heating, kitchen, showers, bunkrooms etc. But there was a time when Oggi Base was just a small corner of Bryn Poeth and that was nearly thirty years ago.

OVMRO grew out of The Ogwen Cottage Mountain Rescue Team, which was based at Ogwen Cottage. Ron James and his staff of instructors at their private mountaineering school formed the Og Cott Team. In 1963 the school was sold to Birmingham Education Authority and for the first time the instructors were able to take regular holidays. It was during the summer holidays of 1964 when most of the staff were climbing in the Alps, a remaining member of staff suffered a severe accident. Apart from the shock of the accident, he then realized that the local MRT was away in the Alps. I believe that John Clews conducted the mis-match of climbers and walkers who rescued him.

The staff returned refreshed ready for a new school term and realized that there was a flaw in their MRT and so OVMRO was formed. It was made up of regular climbers who visited Ogwen, members of local mountaineering clubs and organisations and local climbers all of whom agreed to train together and provide an emergency service. The Team became more independent of Ogwen Cottage though still based in the old Generator shed at The Cott. By 1975 Birmingham education Authority needed to maximise use of its limited property and the Team needed to leave.

For a brief Dark Age, Oggi Base moved to a very small stone building at the rear of the chapel at Idwal Cottage. This old generator shed had NO facilities and was purely a store. In the meantime Team members were in discussion with The National Trust to lease a small corner of Bryn Poeth. Whilst The Trust was in agreement, certain influential people of that time objected to the Planning Permission. OVMRO took the appeal to the Welsh Office who granted the permission.

In 1976 Oggi Base moved to Bryn Poeth but it was not the palace of today. The track was passable by 4x4 only. Today's car park was at a much lower level and was a slate fenced potato patch. The whole



building finished at a line between the kitchen back wall and the division between the two bunkrooms. There were two WC's placed in a well ventilated outhouse roughly where the ablution room is now. And there was a lean-to which stretched from the second bunkroom to the storeroom, which you could barely stand up in. Oggi Base was this lean-to and the current Ops room though this was only two thirds of its current width. The only heating was one small electric fan heater, which didn't work during regular power cuts.

In the mid 1980's after an informant started going down with hypothermia in the sanctuary of Oggi Base, the Team decided that Bryn Poeth in that format was not suitable for an emergency service. Negotiations with The National Trust resulted in permission to double the size of the building in exchange for shared usage. Over a period of three years £64,000 was raised to extend and refurbish Oggi Base. Work started after Easter 1988 so Oggi Base moved house once more to a Police signals wagon based on a Bedford RL. This was parked on a patch roughly between the base of the concrete ramp to the garage and the fence line. By Christmas, the Team moved back into Bryn Poeth with its spacious car park at the front, a weatherproof roof, a broadened Ops Room, a tiled and spacious crew room, a proper kitchen with stainless steel units, two bunk rooms, showers with hot water, comfortable WC's, central heating, a stand-by generator and a good sized store. There was even a storage area in the loft for surplus kit, old relics and some Team members!

OVMRO had come of age. For years it had lived on a shoestring not knowing if it could pay the next bill. It had now proved that it could raise substantial sums of money through increased publicity and Team profile. So now it had a major financial commitment to maintain Oggi Base with insurance costs, electricity bills, 'phone bills etc. And this it managed.

Up until the early 1990's, the Team had always survived using private transport. However, ancient and battered 4x4's were becoming less reliable and on one occasion members shared the rear of a farmer's Land Rover with bales of straw and a sheep to go on a "call out".

Enough was enough, OVMRO had done it once before, it was time to buy a Team Land Rover. The ex-works 110 hard top was bought in 1995 for £20,000. At weekends it was stationed at Bryn Poeth. But with the risk of damaged due to weather, vandalism or theft, the vehicle was

parked in Bethesda during the week. The vehicle needed to be garaged so that its reliability could be maintained. So once again OVMRO appealed for funds and permission to build and by 1998 the garage was built. The loft conversion was thrown in too so as to give a good meeting, lecture and training room.

Then in 2002 a second Land Rover arrived as a result of a successful promotion by HM Bennett, The Welsh Lamb and Beef Association and Safeways supermarkets. And by 2004 the ten-year-old hard top Land Rover was replaced with a second custom built 130 Land Rover.

And so as OVMRO goes into 2005 to celebrate its' 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, plans to build an extension to the garage are well underway. The National Trust has granted our last extension to Oggi Base at Bryn Poeth. Hopefully, £30,000 worth of new Land Rover will be stored safely under cover later in 2005.

Finally, to those who have not known or experienced the development of Oggi Base at Bryn Poeth, it has come out of much hardship and hard work. Even today Oggi Base is maintained by Team members who not only attend "call outs" and training but also put away equipment, wash up mugs in the kitchen, sweep out muck from the Carneddau which gets brought in through the front door, vacuum the grit from the Glyders on the stair carpet, (back door for muck and grit please) and polish the porcelain in the WC's.

Oggi Base at Bryn Poeth is a valuable asset. All Team members use it. All Team members must care it for too.

Christopher Lloyd



**Treble Three**  
**The Support Group of the**  
**Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation**

This year, 2005, sees the celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Team, so before continuing, may I, on behalf of all members of 333, offer our sincerest congratulations to all Team members, both past and present for the excellent service given to both mountain rescue and search and rescue over the past four decades.

At this important landmark in the Team's history I believe it would not be out of place to briefly reiterate where, when, and why 333 came into the picture. By 1996, the cost of running the Team had escalated well beyond its modest beginnings, in fact in that year the expenditure reached £25,000 per annum, with the vast proportion coming from donations. It was becoming obvious that in order for the Team to remain viable, as costs inexorably climbed, other forms of income needed to be explored. It was decided to look into the possibility of setting up a support group with the purpose of raising funds for the Team; 333 was born. By last year, 2004, the cost of running the Team had reached well over £30,000, this was offset by income from 333 of over £11,000 virtually one third. It is now accepted that without the efforts off 333 the Team would have difficulty in meeting its financial needs.

However the story does not end there, 333 has become an integral part of the Team, and with the subsequent closer ties with the Team, many joint ventures have taken place not only on the social side but in many other activities. As you browse through this report, any of the Newsletters, or visit the website, you will find many examples of these joint ventures. Since the formation of 333 many other teams throughout the UK have tried to emulate our efforts; I firmly believe however that 333 sets the standard in what is given to members in return for their support.

To those of you who read this report and are not members of the Team or 333, why not visit our web page or contact us in anyway you wish, but please consider joining our ranks. You may not have the time to join the Team or are no longer fit enough to be on the sharp end, it may be simply that you live too far away, but whatever the reason, we need you. Joining will ensure that the Team is able to continue in its vital work and enable you to participate in activities with what I believe, although you may say it could be a biased view, is one of the best teams in the country.

Finally, once again I must thank those dedicated members who turn out in all weathers to raise funds for the Team, and work quietly in the background ensuring that like the Team, 333 goes from strength to strength. They know who they are and are probably the last people on earth who would want their names published, but sincerely, THANK YOU.

Clive Swombow  
Honorary Chairman, 333



333 Members Adventuring

## Treble Three Standing Order Authority

### Please enrol me in Treble Three, the Supporters Group of the OVMRO

Type of membership:	Individual	£15.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Senior citizen/Student	£10.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Family	£25.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Corporate	£100.00	<input type="checkbox"/>

Title..... First name.....

Surname .....

Address .....

Post Code .....

Telephone .....

Please Initiate the following standing order payments

Amount (in words) .....£ :

Beneficiary *Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation*

Bank *Midland Bank Bethesda*

Branch *High Street, Bethesda, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 3AP*

Sort Code *40.09.03 21107321*

Your Bank and Branch .....

Branch Address in full .....

Sort Code ..... Account No .....

Date of first payment *Immediately*

Frequency *Annually until further notice*

Signed .....Date .....

Please return the completed form to  
333, Bryn Poeth, Capel Curig, Betws y Coed, N Wales, LL24 0EU

## Location of Collection Boxes

Abergwyngregyn  
Aber Falls Hotel

Bangor		
The Great Arete	Bangor YHA	Students Union

Bethesda		
Douglas Arms	GLSW Scout Hut	Idwal Youth Hostel

Ogwen Bank Caravan Park

Betws Y Coed		
Conwy Falls Cafe	Pendyffryn Stores	Ultimate Outdoors
Stewart Cunninghams	Snowdon Ranger	The Stables Bar
Pont Y Pair Chippy	Pont Y Pair Hotel	Miners Bridge Inn
Cotswold 'Royal Oak'	Cotswold 'Rock Bottom'	Rose Hill B&B
Maes y Garth B&B	Hawkshead	Blacks
Bryb y Gwent B&B	Swallow Falls Hotel	Spar
Londis	Gwydyr Hotel	Glan Aber Hotel
Waterloo Hotel		

Chester		
Soldier of Fortune	The Walls	Ellis Brigham
Great Outdoor Shop		

Capel Curig		
Pinnacle Stores	Joe Brown's	Plas Y Brenin
Cobdens Hotel	Tyn Y Coed	Bryn Glo Cafe
Snowdonia Cafe	Youth Hostel	A5 Services

Conwy Valley		
Ty Gwyn, Rowen	Princes Arms, Trefriw	Cafe, Llyn Crafnant
Conwy YHA	Craft Centre Cymru	Pwllanu Farm
Conwy Outdoor shop	Trefriw Wells Spa	Black Cat Service Station
Dyffryn Conwy Leisure Centre, Llanrwst		

Llanberis		
Caernarfon Airport	Gwynedd Hotel, Llanberis	Vaynol Arms, Pentir

Llandudno  
Blacks

Llandudno Junction Leisure Centre

Anglesey  
The Panton Arms      HMS Indefatigable

Miscellaneous

High Sports, Shrewsbury      The Griffin Inn, Birmingham  
Jacksons of Old Arley, Coventry      Escape 2, Warwick  
The Outdoor Shop, Stoney Stratford

Many apologies if you have a Collection Box but your name is not included here - we do appreciate what you do for the Team. Thanks must also go to those who empty the boxes, both Team and 333.

### **Stamp Collection - for Team Funds.**

Can I remind all team members and members of 333 that for many years we have collected used stamps and have raised many hundreds of pounds for team funds over the years. Recently the supply has dwindled but we are very grateful to those who are still collecting for us.

If you have a source, can you please consider collecting used stamps for us - just tear them off the envelope with a small amount of envelope attached. Not too close as we sell them by weight!, but equally not too large as this puts off potential purchasers. Just put them in a bag and accumulate them over a period of time and drop them into the box on the top shelf by the door in Ops. Room at Base. If you have any foreign stamps and you can keep them on the original full envelope, please do so as we get significantly more for full envelopes (an increase factor of may be x 10 ). If possible please keep all foreign separate from UK stamps as again this helps and we get many times more value for foreign than UK stamps.

If anyone can offer any special stamps or collections we can also sell these for the team.

With your help we will be able to raise more funds for the team.

Thank you  
Bill Dean

## **CASUALTY CARE REPORT**

It is beyond the scope of this author to comment on 40 years of casualty care in mountain rescue. One has therefore to consider evidence of those involved during that period (coupled with memories dating 32 years). Those few remaining Team members of such vintage endorse the changing attitudes that we have clearly seen evolving, in particular the Team members attitude, training and the 'customer's' expectancy. But firstly let us consider the words of Doctor Ieuan Jones, our Team doctor of the early '60's.

"Even before the second world war, doctors were numbered amongst mountaineers and there were occasions when they did what they could for injured fellow mountaineers. Their help was generally restricted as they carried little if any medical equipment. In consequence, they were instrumental in forming the Mountain Rescue Committee to try to ensure that first aid equipment would be available together with other rescue equipment at Mountain Rescue Posts. Local doctors were also occasionally called out, generally by shepherds or quarry workers, to tend to injured mountaineers. One such occasion was when Dr Arnold Rees-Pritchard from Bethesda attended a climber with a broken leg at Idwal Slabs. It happened to be a certain Major John Hunt.

When I moved to the area in 1960 and became a member of Idwal Cottage Team, I found hardly any First Aid knowledge amongst rescuers. Their main aim was to get an injured person off the mountains as quickly as possible, even if the roughness of handling, incorrect position of carrying and the lack of treatment meant that he died when he got to the ambulance. The rescuers admitted that it was difficult to get onto First Aid Courses and in any case, the subject as taught in those days did not give a solution to many of the problems that they encountered. Pete Greenall agreed to teach me rock climbing in exchange for me teaching First Aid to the Team. The teaching was extended when Tony Bennett as Leader of the RAF Valley MRT asked me to sign the certificates that allowed them to carry Morphine. I found that they knew nothing about the properties and effects of Morphine and gave them instruction in the subject so that they could answer questions when I tested them.

I then contacted the St Johns Ambulance Brigade, Bangor Division and arranged to run a course under their auspices with a view to being able to issue one of their certificates to people who passed an assessment at



the end of the course. We ran the course at the Physiotherapy Department of the C & A Hospital. Present were St John members, ambulance men and mountaineers. As it was virtually only the mountaineers who passed the first aid examination, it became clear that it was easier to teach First Aid to mountaineers than to teach anything about mountain conditions to First Aiders.

In 1964, I went to the East Midlands to work for the Coal Board and as part of my duties ran courses of lectures on First Aid as Assistant County Medical Officer for St Johns. That year the brigade annual report showed a big increase in the number of those who had failed their First Aid tests. I realised that I was responsible for half the national failures. This explained to me why the Bangor division had looked rather shocked the previous year when most of them had failed my test!

When I returned to Bangor as head of the Accident Unit in 1966, I joined the committee of OVMRO and was persuaded by people like Ron James, Don Roscoe and Rowland Edwards to run Courses on First Aid in Mountain Rescue. The lectures were run on one evening a week in one of the University Lecture Theatres. I was shocked to find that nearly all the 300 seats were taken and that people like Carol Eaton were travelling from Birmingham for each lecture. St Johns Brigade Wales were very helpful and issued special certificates for the course. I slowly increased my collection of slides but it took me many years to complete the collection with a slide of fern-shaped lightning burns. By then the courses had extended to several centres in England, Scotland and Ireland. "

This course proved to be the corner-stone of our Team's training from its inception until the mid 90's. The basic principles of first aid obviously remain the same, however technology provided us with the means to introduce different teaching / training techniques, plus the advent of diverse techniques in the advanced provider skills that will be referred to later.

The attitude of the Rambler / mountaineer in general has certainly changed with regards to their expectancy of rescue. A cursory glance at our records will indicate the lack of rescues carried out to those suffering relatively minor injuries e.g. fracture lower arm, sprained ankle, they usually 'got themselves off'. But we must remember that in the earlier days the injured or their colleague would need to descend to the

roadside, find a telephone kiosk or flag down a friendly motorist before summoning help, followed by the comparatively long period for Team members to assemble before deployment to the hill. There would remain the question of finding the casualty, or correct casualty, based on the informant's details of the incident site and their potential navigational errors in foul conditions. Nowadays we increasingly have available mobile phones allowing us to talk directly with the casualty or colleague, and GPS to afford accurate location. This, together with our Team member alert system dramatically reduces our incident-site location / arrival time.

Another major factor to assist in earlier access time is the development of smaller and lighter equipment. The early days involved the carrying of the single Thomas Stretcher, interesting in steep gullies, developing onto the split-Thomas and the folding MacInnes stretcher. We progressed to our own in-house developed Oggi-stretcher, a 5 component unit, which proved particularly useful in the terrain we cover, it is now considered for re-development. The Bell stretcher has served us well and we are awaiting delivery of the new lightweight model. Other major factors in the lightweight theme are the Oxygen and Entenox cylinders which are now in lightweight alloy, plus we retain 1ltr carbon fibre cylinders to be deployed when necessary with the advanced hill party. So critical is our approach to equipment weight and size that we are changing from the hard plastic hand-suction units to smaller and lighter components, which naturally have improved suction capabilities.

We have witnessed an enormous change in the 'customer expectation'. Gone (thankfully) is the old adage of the mountaineer 'carrying his own dead', to the confident expectation that 'professional' assistance is promptly available. It is very encouraging to witness the Team member responding to this increasing demand upon their skills and the necessary training for skill and knowledge retention. It has remained our principle of training that it must be of a level that we can attain during instruction, but more importantly that we can readily retain such skill and knowledge by reasonable practice schedules.

The terrain and environmental conditions will often prevail to create a wide gap between what is the gold standard of casualty care treatment and what is actually possible in inhospitable terrain / environment. In such circumstances it will be the continual training, and skill, of the provider that will hopefully allow judicious casualty management.

The mountain rescue doctor is an elusive beast. We have been fortunate in our 40 year history to have had the assistance of dedicated doctors who have guided and trained us in the necessary skills. It is therefore appropriate to consider the words of our current Team doctor, Marion Waters:-

"Serendipity was responsible for my involvement in Mountain Rescue. The Ogwen Team were assisting the Countess of Chester Hospital's Children's Safety Day and let slip that they were looking for help in identifying appropriate training at an advanced level. Together with some like-minded colleagues, we agreed to look into the provision of a course but then realised that it would be difficult to provide a course at an advanced level, without knowing what lay in between that and the basic one-day course. Thus, we were talked into writing and running what has become known as the Emergency Care for Mountain Rescue Intermediate and Advanced Level courses.

My previous experience in pre-hospital care did not equip me for working in a mountain environment. The deal struck that the Team would teach me about their environment if I helped them with the training. This was at some personal cost as I had to overcome my fear of heights!

The Course aims to follow the approach used by other providers of pre-hospital care and continued into the hospital environment. The Advanced Trauma Life Support Course arrived in the UK from the USA in 1989 and revolutionised the in-hospital approach, one which looked for and treated life-threatening injuries first while upholding the principle of "do no further harm". The introduction of this approach was new to mountain rescue as well but meant that there is now continuity of approach and care from the hill to the paramedic or aircraft winchman, the A&E department and followed into the hospital.

Running the first course was an education to the Faculty, as well as to the candidates. We found an open, friendly, enthusiastic, outrageously cheeky tribal community. The different tribes (Teams) sat in different areas of the room. However, the introduction of small group and scenario-based teaching necessitated everyone working together, giving the opportunity to learn from each other. This interactive approach seemed to be appreciated. One example of the success of this approach

has been with respect to the giving of analgesia. Candidates on ECMR courses have to practice giving intramuscular injections of saline (not Morphine) to each other. The increased confidence gained by this has resulted in more casualties receiving pain relief out on the hill.

North Wales appeared to have an isolationist approach to training. In fact, this seemed to be the case across the UK until recently. Different Teams in different areas have developed different courses and we all felt possessive of our hard work. However, each of the courses followed the same curriculum so it was decided two or so years ago to adopt a common assessment process, the MRC exam. The ECMR course uses this at the Intermediate level and supplements it at Advanced level with a more advanced paper. Thus, the standard of training in Wales as assessed by the exam is of a similar standard to everywhere else in the UK. This National Benchmarking process has been of benefit to the MRC Insurers who provide casualty care insurance cover.

The primary and secondary survey approach to casualty assessment and packaging meant that some long cherished concepts had to go. Two particular battles have been, firstly, the belief that the casualty should be carried on the injured side! Anyone who has broken a rib would, I am sure, never agree to be carried on the injured side – if they didn't have a pneumothorax before they started, I am sure they would by the time they arrived at the bottom of the hill. The second is that the hypothermic casualty should be warmed up on the hill. Considering the amount of heat and time it takes to defrost a 1lb pack of frozen peas in a saucepan, it seems ambitious to consider achieving warming a whole person who is severely hypothermic. This is not to disregard the hugely beneficial effect of shelter, warm drinks and food, even warm inspired air on the less severely hypothermic casualty.

There is an increased expectation of anyone who is known to provide casualty care, for example, the ability to have and use a defibrillator. Although it has been acknowledged that it is unlikely to ever be used successfully on the hill (due to the time delays involved), the ruling that every blue light vehicle should carry an AED (automated external defibrillator) has meant that most of the Team have now been trained in its use. Another new piece of equipment used by the Advanced Care Providers is the Laryngeal mask airway. This was introduced after two long and difficult casualty carry-offs for patients who have a compromised airway. The fact that a call for help is often made from a

mobile phone means that the Team can meet a casualty who, in days gone by, would have been found dead but are now found alive and critically ill or injured. Live training is provided in a hospital setting on the use of LMAs which now has to be maintained. As with any other new piece of equipment, initial training has to be followed by recertification training at annual intervals. These are just two examples of new equipment and techniques which cannot be considered as "Gucci skills" alone as they bring an ongoing responsibility to remain competent in their use.

Casualty care is no longer a passing hobby but demands a significant personal commitment to training and knowledge maintenance over and above the existing commitment to the Team. My view of the future includes acknowledgement of the responsibility involved to maintain and improve personal skills and knowledge. In the background, the spectre of medical-legal requirements lurks and increased acknowledgement of health and safety standards and legislation. I am sure we all hope that the letter of the Law does not encroach too closely into the attractive isolation of a mountain environment."

Included in her passage is reference to our Intermediate and Advanced level courses. Eight Team members are currently trained to the Advanced level, they provide a rota during the busiest periods, such as weekends and bank holidays. When on duty, they will remain at or within 15 minutes of our base, ready to respond in the event of an incident. Approximately 50% of our Team members are trained to Intermediate level or higher. All other members are required to attain training in scene safety awareness; basic life support techniques; haemorrhage control; Oxygen administration; information transfer.

The next 40 years? To hope that those who follow will devotedly progress from the sound platform now in place, that provides a progressive pathway of casualty care training for all to the highest available level in our voluntary field of operation.

Clive Hughes

## **Forty Years of History - OVMRO A snapshot**

Please note that this does not set out to be a definitive history of the Team and does not constitute an official comment.

### **1965**

From the minutes of the Mountaineering Club of North Wales AGM 20<sup>th</sup> February 1965. "Motion that the Club accept the invitation of the Ogwen Valley Mountain School to assist in the formation of an Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation". Proposed Ron James and seconded by Miss B Lunt, carried unanimously.

The Team held its first meeting on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March 1965 at Ogwen Cottage. Antony Mason was elected Chairman and Miss B Lunt was elected as Secretary. At the second meeting of the Committee, it was announced that it had been recognised by the Mountain Rescue Council and was registered as a charity.

### **1966**

A report appeared in the Times of a rescue carried out by the Team. The accident happened when four climbers were tackling the Munich climb said to be the most difficult in Snowdonia. "It would appear that Mr Drewe lost his hand hold on the rock face", said the Coroner. The Ogwen Valley Rescue Team climbed 400 feet up a gulley to reach Mr Drewe and he was lowered on a stretcher. He died from injuries before an ambulance reached the hospital at Bangor 10 miles away.

The first AGM was held on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> February 1966. At this meeting a Team leader said that "the aim was to ensure that throughout the year, at every weekend, competent rescuers were available to help those injured". The Team also introduced collection boxes in the local area. There was a suggestion that the Team acquire luminous jackets (this was to be a re-occurring theme at meetings). The need for transport was also raised this year but was deferred, as no money was available. The Team ended that year in debt due to the need to purchase equipment.

### **1967**

WD and HO Wills, part of the Imperial Tobacco Company, sponsored an early film of the Team. The company also provided new PYE Bantam radios for the Team and paid a small fee to those who participated. The

film was shown on Whit Monday (unfortunately none of the Committee managed to see it).

A first mention is made of the Bell stretcher being demonstrated to Team members. Early reports of the use of the Whirlwind helicopter in rescues is noted.

In this year Dr Iuean Jones ran his first Mountain Rescue First Aid course, validated by the St Johns Ambulance Brigade. These courses became famous for the detailed injuries shown on the accompanying slides.

In checking the incident reports for that year it was noted that four of the accidents listed were on climbs, Javalin Gully, Rowan route, Holly Tree Wall and Great Gully. Very few of the modern rescues are due to climbing incidents.

## **1968**

On the 29<sup>th</sup> September, the Team were called to assist in the search for a Cesna 310 aircraft and its pilot, a Mr R S Ducker. The first of a number of aircraft related incidents.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> May, Dr A S G Jones became Honorary Chairman of the Organisation. He was to stay in this post for 25 years and was the Teams longest serving Chairman. His contribution to the Team over the years has been enormous.

R James gave details of the first Welsh Open Ski Championship to be held on Foel Grach on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **1969**

The Team carried out a rescue on Pen yr Ole Wen. The party had got into difficulty on a gully in the Braich Ty Du area. The rescue involved 3 Teams, took 12 hours at night in the severest weather conditions and climbing terrain yet experienced during a rescue. A 1500ft tragsitz lower was needed to reach easy ground.

Some of the comments in the rescue reports at the time provide interesting reading. "Use of a rope would probably have prevented this Accident". "Fell 400ft while learning to glissade. Did not know how to brake". " Yet another case of inexperienced party, inexpertly led and ill

equipped". " Yet another case of poor quality boots". "2<sup>nd</sup> runner held momentarily, 1<sup>st</sup> failed straight away". " Scrambling solo on the east face of Tryfan is not the place for a middle age walker". " As an example of incompetent leadership this takes some beating. The leader did not even know the name of the cliff". "One should not dispense with the rope until off the cliff". In these days of political correctness our comments are more carefully considered, more is the pity.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> August the Team were approached by the BBC to make a film on Lliwedd. The program was called Birds Eye View and the Team were given £15 for their participation.

### **1970**

In the minutes mention, is made of insurance for Team members. KC Gordon was to respond to a Cockermouth MRT questionnaire. Insurance was later provided through the MRC with the premium being £1.50 for a £1000 death or permanent disability payment.

The collection of stamps to raise funds for the Team was started, a practice, which carries on to the present day. Bill Dean has been associated with this effort for many years.

Cloth badges were purchased for Team members to sew onto rucsacs or various bits of kit. Some are still to be seen.

### **1971**

Late in this year there was a change in the insurance arrangements with this now being dealt with by the Gwynedd Police. This meant more admin for rescues as the names of people on rescues needed to be recorded.

A first aid kit was put in the refuge hut on Foel Grach.

The Chairman's Annual Report stated there was some concern about the lack of general mountaineering activities on the part of some Team members, a reasonable standard of fitness, mental and physical, is essential.

On 10 December KC Gordon reported to Committee on a battery powered electrically heated waistcoat at a cost of £40. It was agreed that we should keep an eye on its development.



## **1972**

The famous metal badge was designed for the Team by Ron Williams. Its issue was to be strictly controlled and it has become a highly prized symbol. The criteria for the badge was that the applicant had been a Team member for 2 years and attended 20 rescues.

Mention is also made in the December minutes of an Annual report and Team Newsletter. These were to become an important part of our communication with the general public.

Team leader quote "The equipment and dress was more suitable for a minnow catching expedition on a canal. He was very lucky to survive uninjured".

## **1973**

In the Easter of this year, a group of 4 school boys were taking part in their Duke of Edinburgh Gold expedition. The party left Capel Curig on Friday bound for Foel Grach. Things didn't go well. The weather was poor that day with strong winds, rain and hail. One of the party became hypothermic and the party camped short of their objective and checkpoint. On the Saturday, the assessors started checking the planned route. At 1545 on the Sunday the Team was alerted to the missing boys. On Monday a full-scale search took place on the Carneddau with "whiteout" conditions prevailing. On Tuesday, the Team again had an early start, however conditions improved and a helicopter was called in to assist. At 11.45 the helicopter found the boys and returned with them to base. Over 17 voluntary and service rescue Teams were involved. In these days of mobile phones, one wonders whether such a prolonged rescue would occur today.

Another notable rescue from this year was the search for Peter Dimond. He was reported missing on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November. Over the following 3 days the Team searched for the missing walker. He was not found until 7<sup>th</sup> April 1974. At the inquest on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1974 evidence was given that Dimond had taken a very considerable overdose of barbiturates. A verdict of suicide was handed down.

The Drapers Company became Honorary Members of Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation. This has been a long and important

relationship for the Team and the Drapers Company is still a strong supporter of the Team.

The Team up until this point had been using a garage in the grounds of Ogwen Cottage for its stores and base. This was far from being ideal and the Team decided to set up a fund raising scheme to either purchase or construct a properly designed base. Before making it to a permanent base, it also had use of a caravan.

## **1974**

This year was notable for the start of the process of acquiring Bryn Poeth as the Teams base. On the 31<sup>st</sup> July the minutes state that a long discussion took place regarding the proposed base at Bryn Poeth. Pete Jardine related all the facts from the inception of the project. The planning application proved to be a difficult process.

During the AGM Ken McCoy raised a question. "Would the organisation state its position with regard to applications for membership from women". The Chairman stated that any application received would be considered on the basis of the ability of the person, regardless of sex."

Much of the early rescues involved climbers who either got stuck or became benighted. On the 9<sup>th</sup> March the Team were called out to 3 separate incidents on the one day. The first occurred in the gully to the East of Bristly Ridge, with a female sustaining a severe sprain of the left ankle. The second was a male with fractures to the front and base of the skull, which occurred on the western side of Tryfan. The third was a female who slipped and fell in Cwm Cywion and suffered severe bruising all over. Thankfully, the Team were supported by 22 Squadron who evacuated the casualties to hospital. None the less a hectic couple of the hours for the Team in winter conditions.

This was also the year the First Raft race was organised, a suggestion put forward by Maggie Adam.

## **1975**

The re-occurring theme of commitment to the Team was again raised and it was suggested that " the organisation hold a minimum of four exercises each year, and that Team members must attend at least two practices to remain members".

With the on going planning application for Bryn Poeth still not resolved, the Team were struggling with where to keep the equipment. Redevelopments at Ogwen Cottage meant a move from the garage to a generator shed at Idwal Cottage, the Youth Hostel. Over the years the Team has had some interesting "bases".

The comments from the incident reports often make interesting reading. "The casualty jammed his knee in the crack of Chimney route. He was unable to free himself and asked for assistance from an instructor. The instructor failing to free the knee called at Ogwen Cottage for more assistance and equipment. The casualty was extracted in the dark by covering the knee with margarine then with the use of prussics hosting the casualty upwards and out of his predicament".

The newsletter reported the death of Bill Galston, who had been a Team member for many years. Whilst training for the 14 peaks race he tripped and fell on the north ridge of Crib Goch.

## **1976**

The following incident was both tragic and a reminder of how things have changed over the years. Undoubtedly the incident would have been treated differently had it occurred today.

"He said he wanted to go for a swim but was told not to do so as the water would be too cold. Near Llyn Bochlywd (at over 1800 feet) he broke away from the rear of the party and entered the water. He was heard to shout for help but none of the party could reach him. During the initial investigation a helicopter from C flight 22 Squadron said that the body was visible in the water. Later in the evening a Police diving Team recovered the body and the Rescue Team carried the body to Ogwen."

Chief Inspector Gwyn Pritchard was pleased to inform the Team that a set of keys was available at Bangor Police station for the new road from Helyg to Ffynnon Llugwy (known to the Team as Macs Highway).

At the Committee meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> September, the Chairman announced that he had "the pleasure of announcing formally that the appeal for the new base had been upheld unconditionally". The National Trust, subject to a favourable lease, was willing to do all they could to assist in fitting out and improving Bryn Poeth.

The duty Team leader link rota was also set up in this year, a tradition that continues today and a system quite distinct from other Teams. Ogwen has a number of Team leaders who share the role, as opposed to other Teams who have a Team leader and deputies.

The Wessex helicopter also came into service. This was considered a major step forward in capacity and capability.

### **1977**

On the 26<sup>th</sup> November, Isobel Lindsay (a Team member and wife of John Lindsay) was tragically killed in an accident on the back wall of Cwm Lloer. She slipped and fell down a steep snow slope. A sad day for the Team.

The first lease for Bryn Poeth was signed and with the anticipation of occupying the building a base rota was agreed. It was stated that base should be manned every weekend from 0900 Saturday to Sunday until the operator retires to the pub in the evening. Later versions of the base operators role may have removed this last instruction.

On Monday the 27<sup>th</sup> June HRH Prince Charles attended base. He was due to fly in to Oggie Base in one of the aircraft of the Royal Flight but weather dictated otherwise.

The incident report also contains the following extract. 30<sup>th</sup> April, a young male sustains a fracture of the right tibia. He was hang gliding. The Team leader, KC Gordon notes that it was "The first of what I suspect will be many in forth coming years as this sport becomes more popular".

### **1978**

The acquisition of a new base meant a lot of work as the building certainly needed renovation. The minutes are full of requests for prices for work (leaking roofs, electricity etc).

Dafydd Wigley (MP for Caernarfon) was to ask the Secretary of State for Wales what grants he has given towards the work of Mountain Rescue in each of the past four years, and what proposal he has for increasing these sums. The reply from Barry Jones states, My right Hon and learned Friend makes no grants towards the work of Mountain Rescue.

A letter was received from Gwen Moffat regarding an incident involving Mrs Cotchin. " I would like to add my own appreciation. Mrs Cotchin is a friend of mine and until you are involved in an accident to your companion (as opposed to approaching a casualty on the hill who is a stranger) you can have no idea of the sense of deliverance experienced when the Team starts to arrive".

"There was a gap in my knowledge of which I was unaware until Sunday. I knew that rescuers had qualities of skill, compassion and presence of mind, and that a good Team was welded into an efficient unit, but to appreciate the results of that to the full you have to be on the other side of the fence: To know how the survivors mind works while he is waiting. Now that I know, I hope that I have conveyed to you something of my gratitude."

### **1979**

During the course of its history the Team has been called out to a number of incidents involving aircraft. On the 9<sup>th</sup> June, the Team was called out to attend an incident involving a twin engine Cessna aircraft on the summit of Moel Siabod. The plane was found by a passing walker and as the aircraft had been missing for 36 hours, the precise time of the incident was not known. The Team helped to recover 6 bodies.

The Team decided on a policy of not issuing the names of those involved in rescues to the press. Despite modern communication and our efforts to contact people, hearing of an accident that has happened to a friend or a relative over the news is not the best way of being informed. The Team maintains this principle.

Even in these early days mention of helicopter practice would bolster the number of attendees at a practice. The comments in the newsletter state "low and behold over 20 people turned up".

### **1980**

During the Committee meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> May, the decision was taken not to take on any more probationary members. The Team at this time had 40 Team members on the "A" list. This was considered more than sufficient. This decision was later amended to state "except in exceptional circumstances".

The minutes also note that heated discussions took place on dogs being brought into base. It was decided that only search dogs should be allowed on Bryn Poeth land and that they should be on a lead.

Ken McCoy retired as Team leader, a well liked and respected Team member.

On the equipment front the MacInnes stretcher had fallen into disrepair and it was decided to replace it with the Split Thomas stretcher.

## **1981**

The method of accepting probationers on to the Team was the source of much discussion this year. Existing established Team members were to take new recruits under their wing and help them develop rescue skills. The Team members acting as sponsors would know the strength and weaknesses of the probationary member.

The Team was allocated a new MR frequency for the radios. This was 86.3125. It is only in the last 6 months that the Teams radios have moved from this frequency on to high band.

The Team were called out to search for missing property. Two desensitising machines and loan record cards had been stolen from the UCNW Library. The items were recovered from the eastern shores of Llyn Ogwen. The ground conditions for the day were described as "water and soggy, soggy bog. Many swamped and mud filled wellies".

During the year the Team became involved in a number of searches away from the true mountain environment. One took place in Llangefni, one in Llanfairfechan and one at Rhos on Sea. The Teams' expertise in searching for missing people in the mountain environment was being transferred to different areas. Over the years the Police have called upon the Teams skills in managing searches in difficult terrain.

## **1982**

The Team had been attending Mountain Rescue Conference for a number of years but this year the format changed. This year the Conference was open to all those interested including the ordinary Team member. Instead of the conventional concept of everyone sitting in one room listening to the same speaker, the format was changed to one of workshop type sessions.

Similarly, within the Team, there was a growing dissatisfaction with some of the equipment available to rescue Teams. Ideas were beginning to surface about the Team making some of its own equipment. Equipment was becoming a major source of discussion.

At Committee Dave Salter demonstrated a British Telecom Radio Pager, which were in use in the Peaks and the Lake District. However at this time they were not considered to be cost effective.

In January 22 Squadron were assisting in the rescue of a fallen climber on Central Gully of Glyder Fach. The incident report states it was " a very fine bit of flying when wind speeds were recorded as 60 knots". It would be impossible to over state how invaluable 22 Squadron have been in assisting the Team over the years. The lot of the casualty has also benefited from the brave flying of the "paraffin budgie".

### **1983**

Stuart Dethick was busy designing a new type of descender for use with the stretchers. The figure of 8 device was putting too much of a twist into the rescue ropes.

The Team also introduced the radio call signs of OGGIE 200 and upwards. Team leaders were allocated the numbers 201 to 209 and ordinary Team members were to use OGGIE210 and upwards, depending on the order they went out on a callout.

The decision to change the administration of the Team was taken this year, "all officers be elected annually", (Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer), "the Equipment officer become an elected officer and that four members be elected".

Ron James was made an Honorary member of the Team. I think it would be fair to say that Ron was the Teams' founding father.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> June the Team was alerted by a group descending Caseg Ffraith of cries for help. These cries emanated from the East Face of Tryfan. C flight 22 Squadron flew a search pattern across the east face, nothing was found apart from 3 goats. A precautionary search but not the last time the Team would be called out because of animals.

The AGM this year was a heated affair with some harsh words being expressed. Looking back on these things it is possible that the event

grew out of all proportion. Controversy is something that all Teams will at some stage be faced with especially when you have so many strong characters coming together in one organisation.

## **1984**

The famous white stick was awarded to John Banks. This award is only made to those who have demonstrated exceptional navigation skills (or possibly the opposite).

The decision was taken that Team members should only be allowed to be members of one rescue organisation. Membership of two Teams would not be allowed.

During Committee it was "pointed out that the fabric of Bryn Poeth was beginning to look tacky to say the least". It was decided to approach the National Trust "to see what could be done to give Bryn Poeth a face lift and perhaps improve the track".

From the incident reports: Persistent reports of a flashing light on the hillside required investigation (Conwy Mountain). The source was identified as an orange road works beacon. It was retrieved and extinguished.

## **1985**

Minutes record that a practice had been organised for the 9<sup>th</sup> June. This practice was to familiarise the Team with the new Seaking helicopter.

The use of Oxygen and Entanox is frequently discussed; there is an agreement with the Health Authority to refill the bottles. However, there are a number of technical problems, which the Team will need to resolve.

A prototype manpack stretcher is shown to the Team and it is agreed to take this stretcher to MRC Conference. The infancy of the Oggie Stretcher.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> November discussion took place on the possible renovation of Bryn Poeth. A comment from one Team member was that the cold and the damp in the building made it just as likely that a casualty would go down with hypothermia inside the building as outside on the hill!



The first operational use of the autolock descender system for lowering the stretcher took place on Gribin Facet. It was very effective.

Pete Evans was awarded the Joe Hero award. Pete used to write strong letters to the committee with Joe Hero as his nom de plumb. It is now given in exceptional circumstances to those deserving recognition for their efforts.

## **1986**

A sub Committee was set up to look at the renovation of Bryn Poeth. It was stated that the National Trust had no money available for maintenance. The minutes of 11<sup>th</sup> July record that a specific donation was received to go to the Bryn Poeth renovation fund.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of January the Team were called out to an incident. Two young climbers had set off to do a route on Ysgolion Duon. It was reported that by midday they were some 200-300 ft up the route. An avalanche was reported on an adjacent route. Voices were heard in the mist after this avalanche. They were reported overdue and a search operation was commenced shortly after midnight. The bodies were found by the search dogs at around 0900 hours. A long and arduous night on the hill with a sad outcome.

Due to difficulties with the Police Insurance Policy the Team would no longer accept probationary members under the age of 18.

The Prototype stretcher is demonstrated in Tin Can Gulley to critical acclaim. This stretcher was to become a mainstay of the Team's rescue equipment and is still very much in use today.

## **1987**

OVMRO had its AGM on the 14<sup>th</sup> March. The meeting had just received the Chairmen's report when the meeting had to be adjourned. The Team had been called out to an injured climber at the bottom of Western Gully, Ysgolion Duon. The AGM was later held on the 18<sup>th</sup> April.

There was much activity regarding base, with equipment and documents being packed up and moved to alternative accommodation. Ron Williams was to look into the possibility of a Portakabin whilst the renovations took place. The Plans were sent to the National Trust for

approval and were then to go on for Planning Permission. The Team were then to seek estimates for the work.

Minutes of a meeting late in the year indicate a request for training on white water rescues. This seems to have come from an incident involving fast flowing water. A group had been camping on the west bank of Afon Anafon. Overnight the weather deteriorated and the party tried to cross the stream back to their vehicle. Unfortunately, one of the party attempted to cross the stream but as it was in flood he was swept away.

### **1988**

The importance for Team members to attend specialist training is recognised when the Team agree to send two members on a search management course in South Wales. Mention is also made of information sent through on an American course on "rigging for rescue". Fund raising for base was gathering momentum with the Sports Council pledging £10,000 to the appeal. The indications were that the Team would need £50,000 for the project.

The 14<sup>th</sup> October minutes note that "Discussion has started with the Police re the RL. This was a vehicle that could be used as a mobile operations centre and was being considered for temporary use by the Team. "The Police RL Bedford will be given to the Team for the period of Base renovation".

The Team was involved in the search for Anna Humphries at Penley, Clwyd. The search went on for over 10 days with the Team playing an active role in co-ordinating the search as well as being out in the field.

A young child of 6 was "stuck with fright " on the North Ridge of Tryfan. With little equipment he was also very cold. The method of evacuation was to stuff him into a Rucsac and carry him down.

In February the Team was involved with an incident on the Conwy Falls. Some canoeists had overshot the break out point and had been swept close to the dangerous falls. With the flood water rising, the Team carried out this technical rescue from a road bridge. Film of the rescue was shown on the BBC programme 999.

## **1989**

In April work on the renovation of Bryn Poeth finally began. It also signalled the start of Bedford RL as a temporary operations room. The minutes for the year are full of reports on the progress of the building work and the specification of slates to sanitary ware. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> December, Bryn Poeth in its renovated state was finally handed over to the Team.

Membership ID cards were proposed, particularly when the Team was involved in searches where they needed to identify themselves.

The question of Team leader training and selection was brought up. A proposal document was circulated and a number of criteria were discussed regarding potential future Team leaders. A re-occurring theme in the Teams' history.

On 1<sup>st</sup> November the Team were called out to one of the more unusual incidents. At 1400 on the summit of Tryfan, two people were struck by lightning. Both survived but the Team was involved in a long carry out from the summit to the road. 25 Team members plus RAF Valley Team and the Search and Rescue Dog Association (SARDA) took part in the rescue.

## **1990**

The Team was 25 years old and was celebrating its Silver Jubilee. Robin Trangmar produced a special Silver Jubilee Newsletter.

Bob Borradaile of the Master of the Drapers Company officially opened Bryn Poeth on 12<sup>th</sup> May. A great day in the History of the Team.

Modern FM radios were to be issued to the Team. The old Dymar radios and AM kit were to be returned to the Police. On the 16<sup>th</sup> March, the radio officer stated that "we were operational on FM and that the new handsets were in the stores".

Dr ASG Jones had served the Team as Chairman for many years, this year Roger Jones became Chairman of the Team.

An order was placed this year for six pagers. These were to be used to call out Team members and their effectiveness was to be monitored.

The Team were involved in a search for an Alzheimer's sufferer on Anglesey. Having spent two nights out, her condition was of concern but it was later thought that she had deliberately avoided being found. She was eventually found less than 2 miles from her home.

## **1991**

Despite initial difficulties the Team were issued with keys for Eigiau and Melynlllyn. This was despite an incident with a RAF Land Rover, which the Team had to rescue, and the concerns of the National Park over the suitability of the Team as key holders.

The system of Team members acting as sponsor for probationary members was deemed to be failing and a training group was to be set up with a Training Officer. In the future they would look after prospective Team members.

Team members took part in a sponsored 14 Peaks event on the 15<sup>th</sup> June. Those taking part should have known better, it was a long day with some Team members showing the sort of navigational ability needed to attain the white stick award.

The Committee had decided to issue personal radio call signs to Team members.

Once again a Team member asked if a box of Mars Bars could be available at base. The issue of food at base could be likened to re-inventing the wheel.

Due to a lack of winter conditions in North Wales, the training sub group put forward a suggestion of a training weekend in Scotland for the following February. Winters weren't what they used to be.

## **1992**

It is always a major concern when children are reported missing near water. A small child under 3 was reported missing close to the Ogwen River at 22.00. An overnight search of the banks was conducted but it was only at 7.20 that she was spotted on a small hill close to Penrhyn Quarry by the helicopter. She was none the worse for her night outside.

In May the Team were called out to recover Robin Wood. Another walker who had become lost in the Braich Ty Du area of Pen yr Ole Wen

came across the body of Mr Wood who had been missing since October 91, a period of 7 months. The Team found the body on Thursday night but waited for day light on Friday to carry out the recovery.

"This is your Life", On 18<sup>th</sup> October long time Chairman of the Team, Dr Tony Jones was surprised by Michael Aspel emerging from a helicopter to present the Red Book. Team members attended the programme recording in Manchester. A well kept secret.

Much was happening on the training front with proposals for a training log in order that skills were kept up to date. John Hulse was also co-opted onto Committee as "Training Co-ordinator". The need for better organised training was gathering momentum.

### **1993**

Not for the first time, the Team considers purchasing fluorescent vests to help identify Team members on the hill. Vests were obtained to trial what would be the best design.

22 Squadron C Flight lost one of the Wessex Helicopters in a tragic incident. 3 Venture scouts out in the helicopter died when the aircraft plunged into the waters of Llyn Padarn.

Legal advice was sought as to whether the Team could be sued for negligence. Was it possible that individuals may take action against the Team for injuries that could have been prevented? This was in response to a directive from the European Union.

The Team obtained a re-chargeable torch for evaluation on its effectiveness. These torches are an integral part of our kit now. The Team also looked into the purchase of a cellular phone for the cost of £99.

During the Scottish training weekend in the Cairngorms, Team members became involved in a 3 day search for 3 members of the same family. The bodies were eventually recovered from the Coire Lochan area.

The Team decides to appoint a Press Officer to control the flow of information to the media.

## **1994**

At the March AGM, a working party presented a revised version of the Teams constitution. Not necessarily one of the more exciting parts of Team history but a valuable piece of work from those involved.

A Three Peaks walk (Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon) was organised by the Team. Put together by Davey Pen and Paul Henshall, this was judged an outstanding success by all concerned, particularly Davey Pens entrance to the accommodation at 3 am on the night prior to the start of the walk.

The go ahead was given to acquire a suitable vehicle for the Team. This was likely to be a Land Rover.

An elected Training Officer, John Hulse was appointed to the Committee. Prior to this the post had been co-opted but the level of work and importance decreed it should become an elected post.

Over the years and particularly when there is the change in hour from British Summer time to GMT, a re-occurring theme presents itself. Team members will have lost count of the number of times we have been called out due to the lack of a torch. This vital piece of equipment, if carried by all hill walkers would have saved the Team being called out on numerous occasions.

## **1995**

In the New Years Honours list, Tony Jones is awarded the MBE. A long overdue recognition.

In February the Team took possession of a 110 Land Rover. This was purchased from the Land Rover company and fitted out by Conwy Land Rover. Grants from the Sports Council, a donation from the Drapers Company and fund raising helped raised the money.

For the first time it was decided to issue kit to Team members. This first allowance was for a helmet, harness and first aid kit.

The six events rule came into being, where each Team member had to take part in six activities over the course of the year in order to maintain membership. The aim was to ensure that Team members were up to date on training and skills.

A man and his dog went soloing in Central Trident Gully on Carnedd Dafydd. On a grade 3 snow and ice route the dog baulked at the cornice and knocked off the climber. He fell some 600ft and fractured four ribs, the dog was uninjured.

Huw Rogers, a Team member, died this year in a road traffic accident whilst biking. Although only with us a short time he was greatly missed by all.

Now we had a vehicle, the question of where to keep it became crucial. A garage was proposed.

## **1996**

Fund raising began in earnest for a garage plus conversion of the loft space to a quiet room. The National Lottery had been approached and various fund raising efforts were underway.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> December, a major incident took place in Cwm Lloer. In winter conditions, one of a party descending back into the Cwm, slipped and knocked off members of his party. Several slid a considerable distance and were badly injured. One of the party died. It took the combined forces of OVMRO, Llanberis Team and 22 Squadron to evacuate the casualties.

Not for the first time, a proposal was put forward for a "friends of OVMRO" group.

The Team establishes a presence on the World Wide Web. Thanks to Russ Hore and Al Read for this pioneering work.

The Countess of Chester Hospital invite the Team to a fete. This association with the hospital and its staff is to be of major importance.

On June 8<sup>th</sup> the Wessex was finally replaced by the Seaking helicopter. The Seaking had a greater capacity but would it be as good in the mountain environment?

## **1997**

The end of an era, Dennis and Ann Johnston retired from running the Brew Shack (Ogwen Falls Tea Bar). The Teams history is tied up with the Brew Shack and the support of Dennis and Anne.

The Team finally established a support group "333". Amongst its first members were Dennis and Ann Johnston and Anne Ellis. By the end of the year it had over 100 members.

Anne Ellis performed the opening ceremony for the new garage by cutting the ribbon on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> May.

Casualty Care skills took on a new dimension with the help of Marion Waters from the Countess of Chester Hospital.

The Rt Hon William Hague, then Secretary of State for Wales came to base. He had requested to go on the hill with some Team members and later in the day went to Ysbyty Gwynedd to open the new helicopter pad.

## **1998**

In May, the Team were involved in another aircraft crash. This incident took place on the South Peak of Tryfan. The aircraft struck the peak and the two males on board died instantly. The efforts of two Team members, Pete Gadd and Dave Williams, to recover the bodies from the wreckage was to later earn the Team National recognition.

The Team undertook an external audit to look at all aspects of the Teams operations. It was believed that this was the first time a British Mountain Rescue Team had asked for critical evaluation of its operations. Dave Till and Keith Morgan of Langdale and Ambleside and Dave Williams of Snowdonia National Park Ranger Service kindly carried out the assessment.

Discussions began on acquiring a new Team vehicle. One that was specifically designed for the Teams needs.

In October, 333 held its first AGM.

The question of insurance for Team members is raised following an incident when a Team member from Glossop MRT died of a heart attack.



It was discovered that insurance for members of Mountain Rescue Teams was poor and needed improvement to cover training events.

An invitation was received from Split MRT of Croatia, for Team members to attend in February 1999.

## **1999**

333 are now organising events for its members and the first Great Oggie Bike Ride takes place. This was a circumnavigation of the Glyders followed by the compulsory barbecue.

Chris Lloyd produced "The Rule Book". This was a summary of all the rules and regulations the Team had put together over the years. Time has shown that the Team often re-invents the wheel.

Kevin De Silva applies to go on a Canadian rope rescue course. This is the start of the Teams involvement in Rigging for Rescue.

The Team are approached by the BBC, who wish to make a documentary about the Team.

On Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July, the Chief Constable Michael Argent makes a presentation to OVMRO, Llanberis MRT, National Park Wardens, Royal Air Force MRT and 22 Squadron RAF Valley. They all receive the "Chief Constables Commendation". This is in connection with the Aircraft crash on Tryfan.

The Team first aiders were asked to place themselves on a rota similar to the Team leaders. An advanced first aider would be available at short notice.

Discussions were held regarding the issue of waterproofs to Team members. An offer had been received from Vango and was under consideration.

A party of nine school girls taking part in their Duke of Edinburgh Gold expedition were brought down from near Craig yr Ysfa. There was snow cover and the weather was poor. The use of mobile phones to call out the Team is now becoming increasingly common. It will mean the Team is called out sooner to incidents and also that extended searches become less likely.

## **2000**

During the course of this year the Team was to have Alexis, Catrin and Mair watching our every move. The BBC documentary was shown on 12<sup>th</sup> September and was considered a great success. Fly on the wall documentaries are not always so complimentary.

Thanks to HM Bennett and Dennis Hobbs in particular, this year saw Safeway, Welsh Lamb and Beef and Bennetts, come together with a sponsorship deal which would allow us to purchase a new Land Rover. This vehicle was to be capable of taking the new Bell Stretcher.

An incident on Little Tryfan occurred when members of a Scout Group were struck by dislodged rocks. One of the scouts died during the incident and the subsequent investigation changed forever the way the Team was to deal with fatalities on the hill.

In October a couple set out to climb on Idwal Slabs. On Sunday they began their climb but were very slow. They were benighted and on the Monday decided to down climb the route. By dusk they were still 200ft above the ground. They were again benighted. On Tuesday, the male down climbed the rest of the route and raised the alarm. It had taken 39 hours to climb "Hope", probably a record.

The Team organised a 14 Peaks event in June of this year. A very successful event, which was to raise money for the windows at Bryn Poeth.

At the AGM there was a proposal to increase the 6 event rule to 12 events.

## **2001**

From the sponsorship deal with Safeway, Welsh Lamb and Beef and Bennetts, the Team held a launch for the new vehicle. The Team was now in possession of two vehicles. This launch at base was fortunate in that it occurred just before the countryside was shut down because of foot and mouth.

No incidents were recorded during February, March and April due to the outbreak. It was a difficult time for many in area.

At the AGM the nine event rule was introduced. This was to prove difficult to implement as foot and mouth had reduced the number of call

outs and the Team had decided to limit the use of base and consequently training events were limited.

Due to poor weather a group took shelter in the mines near Gerionydd. The leader stood by the entrance. Three of the group decided to explore further into the mine but did not have torches. One fell 8 metres down an open shaft. The Team were called to provide technical assistance to lift the injured person out.

In the same month the Team were called to assist a mountain biker whose wheel came off. He went over the handlebars. Surprisingly few incidents have occurred with the mountain biking fraternity.

## **2002**

Few would have believed that getting new windows for base would prove to be so difficult and fraught with setbacks. Because of the age and nature of the building, PVC windows were not allowed and windows with a hardwood finish were considered unacceptable. The search for softwood double glazed windows, which satisfied the National Trust, was long and difficult.

The Raft Race was resurrected after a gap of many years.

Despite efforts to sell the 110 Land Rover, no prospective buyers were forthcoming and it was decided to keep both vehicles. This proved to be a sound decision and gave the Team much more flexibility.

A school party of 2 teachers and 24 pupils got into difficulties in the Aber Falls area. What was originally a trip to view the falls escalated into a major incident when the party split up and began to extend the walk into the little Aber Falls. Pupils became stuck on ledges on the cliffs by the falls. Two fell some distance with one fracturing his skull. Aber Falls has been the location of some serious accidents over the years.

On July 27<sup>th</sup> the Deputy Chief Constable, Bill Brereton presented the Team with the Humane Society Award. This was in recognition of the Teams assistance during an incident on Bristly Ridge. Andrew McClusky, a 19 year old student, fell on the ridge and was assisted by staff and pupils of Wellington School, Somerset.

## **2003**

Plans were put in place to replace the 110 Land Rover with a new 130 vehicle. The need for two vehicles had been well established by now.

In August a new use was found for the Bell Stretcher. Its pack frame was used to rescue an Airedale dog called Feathers from the summit of Pen yr Ole Wen. Due to the extremely hot weather, the dog was severely dehydrated and had to be carried off the hill. She was lighter and more co-operative than some of our casualties.

Dennis Johnston, a long time supporter of the Team and a major character in the Ogwen valley died this year. A great loss.

The Fatal incident protocol, the way in which we deal with casualties on the hill was established with a number of training courses being run.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> July, the Team was called out to search for a missing aircraft. It was located near to Elidir Fawr and miraculously the pilot had survived the crash. A very lucky man.

There is much discussion about the forthcoming change to the radios. We are going to change from low band to high band. It will also open up the number of channels available to us.

At the AGM, it becomes compulsory for Team members to attend basic first aid training, at least once a year. In a Team, which is proud of its first aid skill, one wonders why it took so long?

## **2004**

As this is the Annual report for the year 2004 you can look at the officers reports and the incident report to discover what went on in this year.