

THE OGWEN VALLEY MOUNTAIN
RESCUE ORGANISATION

43rd
ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR 2007

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Bryn Poeth, Capel Curig, Betws-y-Coed, Conwy LL24 0EU

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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 AGM 2007

Chairman's Foreword

It is hard to believe that over nine months have flown by and it is almost time for another AGM. Where does time go these days? I feel extremely honoured to have been entrusted with the Chairmanship of the Organisation. I am also very proud to be a member of such a hard working and friendly team of very individual people. The friendship and camaraderie must surely be hard to beat in 'normal' walks of life. Due to the nature of our chosen activities, be them climbing, walking, mountaineering etc. we are all very strong minded, outspoken people and many of us have knocked heads with each other a few times but when we are on a callout, all that is forgotten and the teamwork is a joy to behold.

There are many people we as a team need to send thanks to but most of all must be the long suffering friends and partners. Whilst we are out 'playing' on rescues they have to try and get back to sleep. Being woken up for a callout in the early hours does not just affect the team member but also most people in the house. Having to put up with missed dinner dates, the host disappearing from the dinner party, etc must be trying at the best of times. So a big thank you to all those that support the team members 'in the background'

It is really only since becoming Honorary Chairman that I have been privileged to see the hard work the committee members put in. There have been very few days when I have not had an email from a committee member keeping me informed of what they are doing. I think a lot of this goes unseen by the membership. The Committee only seems to hear from most of the membership when they want to complain. Having said that I feel most members do not join the team for adulation and recognition, just to go out and help people in distress in 'our' hills.

Anyway, enough of the sappy stuff, what have we achieved this year? It has been a busy but very enjoyable year.

Once again we are indebted to our support group 333 for the commitment and drive they have shown to supporting the team. I was fortunate to attend their AGM last year as one of the guest speakers and it was a pleasure to meet the many members that attended the evening. Without the help of 333 the team would be in a different position having to raise significantly more funds to keep the team running. Thank you to all members of 333. You are always welcome at base and I and all team members would be happy to see you.

As for callouts you will see from the enclosed Incident Report we have had a significant number of incidents. This is the second busiest year for the number of casualties assisted since the team started. The busiest year was in 1966 (according to the records) where we assisted 120 casualties but at the time the team covered a larger area including Snowdon. The reasons for callouts have changed little over the last few years.

One area that the Organisation has been looking at over the last few years is better use of IT to support operations. It has to be remembered that most team member want to be out on the hill during a callout and not stuck at base typing on a keyboard. So the adoption of computers has been

a slow process. One area we have seen progress in is with the tracking of our assets during a callout. We are implementing a system of GPS enabled radios that can pass their location back to Oggie Base to be displayed in real time on a digital mapping system. This should prove worthwhile during searches cutting down on the amount of radio chatter, "Where are you?" won't be needed anymore as the base op will know. Once started the system is pretty much 'hands free' and just sits there and displays tracks of our teams out on the hill.

Significant improvements have been made to the systems we have at base. We have been banging head's for a long time with a certain 'phone provider who shall remain nameless, who promised to provide broadband to base. We are almost there and should soon see the reinstatement of our web cam and weather data being displayed on the teams website.

We are aiming to standardise our internal documentation on a single software suite so we can better share information around the team. The training logbook has been revamped and will undoubtedly serve as a good guide to trainees showing the range of skills they need to receive training in and team members as to what skills they might need to refresh.

Another huge commitment the team is making is to audit the organisation. It is easy to become complacent and think what a wonderful job we are doing. It is a big step to allow external auditors to go through our activities with a fine tooth comb and criticise (hopefully not too much), suggest improvements and hopefully point out our strengths. I hope the membership does not see this as threatening. We aim for the auditors to be experienced members of external teams which have a similar workload and operational profile to us. I feel the team can only improve through this exercise.

Russ Hore
Honorary Chairman 2007/8

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

Team Leader Report

Team Operations

Firstly some numbers; this year the Team has been very busy again with responses to 63 incidents, 24 standbys together with 38+ training events. This very high workload requires massive commitments from volunteers who also have families, day jobs and interests other than Mountain Rescue. We need to look carefully as to how this ever-increasing workload can be sustained whilst retaining the wonderful benefits of the volunteer rescuer ethos.

The type of incident remains broadly the same across a spectrum ranging from the usual unfortunate slips and slides, to canoeists stuck on rocks in the middle of raging rivers, to searches for vulnerable people “missing-from-home”, groups crag-fast on routes after dark etc. Almost all the incidents involving some injury are reported using mobile phones from the hill. Whilst mobile phones can have tremendous benefits, they can also be a source of real frustration for Teams when calls for assistance are received from people who really should be able to use basic skills and common-sense to resolve the situation. Mountain Rescue is not a free guiding service.

In about 35% of the incidents, the casualty had some form of injury and this year the team dealt with 3 fatalities. These tragic incidents were investigated in detail by the team in support of North Wales Police using the gold standard Fatal Incident Protocol. As a consequence, Team Leaders also gave evidence at 2 inquests. During these sad occasions, several Team Members have continued to provide temporary support to the families of the bereaved. This freely given caring response to the families is an important and under-valued aspect of the role of the Team, but has been greatly welcomed by those relatives.

The most bizarre incident was the callout to assist a group of “motorists” who decided that it would be a good idea to drive from Rowen to Aber via the old Roman Road at night in January rather than the more conventional A55. During this adventurous journey, their navigational abilities continued to fail them and their 3 cars ended up far from the rough track wedged up against a mountain wall having slid down steep grass slopes. The team recovered the sheepish motorists and local farmers had an opportunity to claim salvage on some cars.

In July, the Team was tasked to respond to a 999 call from a person claiming to be suffering from potentially fatal anaphylactic shock above the Lledr Valley, just before dark and unfortunately not knowing where he was located. This life-threatening condition required an urgent response by a lot of team members, leaving minimal rescue cover in the Ogwen Valley. After much hurried investigation and detective work in conjunction with the RAF helicopter, the person was located in a completely different place and was not suffering from any physical problem. It became evident that this person has a history of making hoax calls and we were his latest victims. This needless incident could easily have had disastrous consequences for people in genuine need of assistance at that time in the Ogwen area.

The new MountainSafe initiative is being actively supported by senior team members. This initiative will help train interested hill-goers in mountain safety, navigation etc., which hopefully will assist in making the mountains safer, and hence more enjoyable, for those people.

The welcome trend of working closely with other teams on operations is very positive and this level of mutual support delivers a greater quality of operation for the casualty by enabling more rescuers to be deployed on bigger incidents. The magnificent support from 22 Sqn RAF Valley continues to fundamentally improve the quality of rescue for our casualties. Our deep gratitude extends to the partner organisations for their tremendous support and generous co-operation.

Work continues to try to improve the linkages with the call-handlers and team at the North Wales Police 999 call centre. Better understanding of our mutual needs will help provide a faster and more efficient service for the casualties, especially in the initial tasking phase of the callout.

The specialist equipment used by the team expands to track the increasingly wide range of operations including water response, technical rope access, communications etc. To safely use this equipment, we have to train and be competent to use the kit in extreme conditions at day or night. This training is a vital part of the success of the team. External factors such as risks of litigation are shaping some of the Teams training activities especially helicopter training and potentially other areas of our regular activity.

It is especially encouraging to welcome strong new members to the Team. These new members bring fresh energy, enthusiasm, skills and ideas which will allow the Team to move forward and continue to deliver a quality service in the face of ever-increasing and diverse demands.

Thanks

The Team Leaders are exceptionally grateful for the continued commitment, dedication, support, never-ending flexibility and patience of the Team Members. Though this wonderful commitment, the Team will continue to deliver safe, successful and effective operations at any time of day or night, both in the mountains and non-mountain areas when requested by the Police.

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

INCIDENT REPORT

Again no dramatic increase in incidents but at 63 incidents the work load remains. With a mild winter the bulk of the work this year was in the four summer months of June to September. As usual Tryfan was the main area of action. The uninjured requiring assistance has unfortunately gone up again.

Incidents in which the major injury was:

Age distribution of those assisted was as follows: %

Most of the Not Recorded involved those taken direct to Hospital by helicopter or when assisting other teams when they recorded most details in their reports.

Incidents where we have worked with other teams or agencies:

Whereas at one time in the Teams' history it was the young who were most likely to provide us with our casualties, the figures have stood out their head with the ‘Golden Oldies’ now giving us more work in the old figures of the over 41 being put together it would now give us 39% of our rescued

people.

Neil Adam

Incident Narrative

January

1st 1345 hrs 2.75 hours Carnedd Llwelllyn.

Exhaustion and mild hypothermia Male 33 yrs.

The weather was cold, strong winds with wintry showers above 600 m. Snow was lying above 650 m. Two brothers set off from Trasbwl to try and follow a route up Llewellyn described in a recent Trail Magazine. They were wearing Synthetic shirts, shorts and had works waterproofs. They ate nothing on their climb and found it a hard scramble, when they were at the col between Pen yr Helgi Du and Llewellyn they decided to return but did not like the route they came up and dialled 999 for help. A party of two descending got the casualty into a bivy bag and got him warm and fed. They escorted the two down into Cwm Egiau and were met by Team members as they approached the Dam and escorted back to their vehicle.

12 Team members involved.

10th 0.36 hrs 3.5 hours Pen yr Ole Wen.

Displaced Patella (knee) Male 25 yrs.

A well equipped party were ascending Pen from Tal y Llyn Ogwen when one of them slipped in the wet conditions and dislocated his knee cap. After treatment he was able to hobble down with support and taken to hospital.

12 Team members involved.

13th 1450hrs 3.6 hours Conwy Falls

Stranded 3 Males (26, 35, 38 yrs).

Three canoeists missed the break out point above the Conwy Falls and were stranded in the gorge. The three were extracted and their canoes recovered later.

21 Team members involved plus the Fire Service.

26th 1700 hrs 7.5 hours Above the Idwal Slabs

Uninjured, cragfast 2 Males both 19 yrs.

The party were in the whole well equipped but failed to take a map with them. They set out at 1330hrs with about 4 hours of daylight to go up Seniors Ridge to Glyder Fawr. At about 580 m they became cragfast on very steep ground due to poor route finding and inexperience.

14 Team members involved.

February

10th 1404 hrs 1.5 hours Cwm Idwal

Knee Injury Female 55 yrs.

A couple were walking round Cwm Idwal when the wife slipped and damaged her knee. Their call for assistance went to the Ambulance Service who went to the Snack Bar and called for assistance. The team were called as was the Air Ambulance who nipped in under very low cloud and landed on and the lady was walked to the aircraft and flown out, the husband was walked down and directed to the Hospital.

19 Team members involved.

14th 1755 hrs 4 hours Llyn y Cwn above the Devils Kitchen.

No injuries, lost. 2 Males 63, 49yrs 2 Females 53, 48 yrs.

A group of friends who had some experience in the Lake District set out on a good days walk. They failed to get off the mountain before darkness and as they had no torches could not use their map

and compass to get off so made a 999 call. This call was cut off after the words “require mountain rescue” with no indication on party size, injuries or position. With a number of groups out and 22 Sqn and Police helicopter searching they were found by one of the ground parties and flown back to Base cold and extremely embarrassed. They will never go on the hill again without torches.
21 Team members involved.

17th 1245hrs 1.25 hours Base of Bristly Ridge
Pelvic injury Male 24 yrs.

A member of a RAF party slipped and damaged his pelvis, 22 Sqn was scrambled to assist and the team were asked to provide a back up in case of difficulties. 22 Sqn were successful and no assistance was required.

9 Team members involved.

18th 1709hrs 4 hours Atlantic Slabs, Cwm Graianog.
Badly bruised Male 19 yrs.

A group of four were out hunting rabbits. They went up the North side of the Atlantic Slabs and were coming down the South side of the slabs when one of them slipped and took a tumbling fall of about 90 ft. Two went for help and the other assisted the casualty to the lip of the Cwm. He was complaining of thirst and wanted to sleep. He was stretchered to the road. These were locals not mountaineers but knew the area.

19 Team members and RAF MRT Valley involved.

20th 1545hrs 2.3 hours. Below the Upper Western Gully Tryfan
Severe stomach cramps Female 24 yrs

After a day climbing on Tryfan she had a sudden onset of cramp near the summit. She was undergoing medical investigation for a possible inflamed gallbladder and had painkillers which she took. The situation had not improved and the leader called for assistance. 22 Sqn, Team members and the Party met near the base of the Upper Western Gully. She was evacuated by 22 sqn and the rest of the party walked off.

16 Team members involved plus 6 on standby.

22nd 1622 hrs 2.3hours Y Garn
Aggravation of previous back injury Female 24 yrs

Walking alone she slipped and had leg pain and was unable to make the road. The 999 call to NWP was cut off with vague details of a woman on Y Garn. The team were called, contact was made with her by mobile phone and a rough location indicated. A party was sent out and 22 Sqn asked to assist. They found her with the Oggie party close by. They evacuated her to Hospital.

17 Team members involved.

24th 2045 hrs 6 hours Afon Wen, Carneddau.
Very cold and exhaustion 3 Young males, 1 Male 21 yrs.

The conditions were continuous driving rain and very wet underfoot. A large party with 10 leaders? And about 20 lads set out from Ogwen to go over Pen yr Ole Wen, Carnedd Dafydd, Carnedd Llewelyn and to camp near Llyn Dulyn. There were no definite smaller parties. A small group of 4 got lost on Llewelyn and came down into Cwm Caseg to the sheep pens. Realising they had gone wrong they tried to retrace their route to the ridge but were suffering from the effects of the weather and pitched the tent (two man) which was full of water. The leader of this group called for Assistance. Found and taken to Base they were fed, warmed and bedded down for the night in Base. Next morning they were taken round to the Conwy Valley to meet up with the rest of their party (who had not reported that 4 of their group were adrift).

10 Team members and 5 RAF MR involved.

March

12th 1440 hrs 1 hour Bwlch y Ddeufaen area Carneddau

No injuries Male 13 yrs

He became separated from the rest of his school party in low cloud. He was found walking down the road to Rowen by a roadworker who informed the police. All safe and well.

8 Team members involved.

30th 1715 hrs 2.75 hours Moel Siabod.

Laceration to patella to expose bone Male 17 yrs

The party were descending from Moel Siabod towards Plas y Brennin when he slipped and lacerated his knee on rocks. The team were dispatched to the given location; but the party were higher up the hill. 22 Sqn airlifted some Team members to the scene and they assisted in moving the casualty to a suitable location for a lift. 22 Sqn then took the casualty to hospital while the team returned to base having checked the rest of the party were all right.

15 Team members involved.

April

5th 1310 hrs 3.5 hours. North Ridge Tryfan.

Cragfast, no injuries Male 50 yrs, 3 Females 48,13 &11 yrs.

A family party of four left the road at 1000 hrs to scramble the North Ridge. The children were having some difficulty with the rocky steps so they tried to find their way along the Eastern Traverse but the youngest was scared. They returned to the base of North Tower where the child would not go up or down, so they called for assistance. A party went up and extracted them from the mountain.

11 Team members involved.

28th 1600 hrs 13.5 hours Bethesda.

Missing from home Male 73 yrs.

The team were asked to assist in a search for a vulnerable missing person who was reported missing from home on the 27th April (last seen on the 26th). A concerned neighbour reported uncollected post. NWP searched his house and asked for a search including the Afon Casseg. The search continued on the morning of the 29th and the police called it off pending further investigation. Police found him two days later in Colwyn Bay.

21 Team members involved plus 9 members of SARDA.

May

5th 1530 hrs 1.5 hours ESE of Foel Goch

Suspected head and spinal injuries Male 56 yrs.

A paragliding group were flying near Foel Goch when one member crashed. The team were requested by 22 Sqn to assist with loading the casualty onto the stretcher. Members were flown to the site and the casualty was evacuated to hospital by air and the team members walked down.

5 Team members involved.

6th 1510 hrs 2.2 hours Path Ogwen Cottage to Llyn Bochlwyd

Displaced fracture of fibula Male 45 yrs

A well equipped party of two set off up Cwm Tryfan to continue up Bristly Ridge. The rocks were wet and after a heavy shower they decided to return to the A5 via Bochlwyd. He slipped on wet rocks near the junction with the Idwal path. A passer by raised the alarm at Ogwen. An unfortunate slip.

10 Team members involved, 10 on standby, plus 2 National Park wardens.

12th 1525 hrs 1.5 hours Bochllwyd Path.

Undisplaced fracture of ankle Male 49 yrs.

The party had set off at 1030 and ascended Tryfan. While descending Western Gully he slipped and injured his ankle. This was treated on scene by the casualty and his party (most of whom were Doctors?). They assisted him down until the pain was too much and they called for assistance. Members went up to the casualty and 22 Sqn who were training in the area evacuated him to the hospital.

9 Team members involved, 5 on standby.

12th 1800 hrs 2.5 hours 400 m above Milestone car park, Tryfan.

Fracture tib & fib Male 40 yrs.

The party had walked up Cwm Tryfan to Bwlch Tryfan and were returning down the western side of the mountain to the car park. He stepped into a hole and fell twisting his leg. He was treated, stretchered off to the road and taken to hospital by team ambulance.

12 Team members involved, 4 on standby and 4 members of Bolton MRT who were staying in base.

21st 1520 hrs 1.5 hours Castell y Gwynt, Glyders.

Fractured ankle Female 46 yrs.

She stumbled, tripped and twisted her ankle feeling it crack. Her companions strapped it up but she was unable to continue. She was evacuated by 22 Sqn.

6 Team members involved, 7 on standby.

26th 1100 hrs 3 hours Pinnacle Rib, East Face Tryfan.

Injuries to lower back and right femur Male 27 yrs.

A group of four were starting the first pitch when the leader fell at about 50 ft up with four runners in place. Unfortunately each runner pulled out one by one resulting in a tumbling fall down to Heather terrace at the start of the climb. 22 Sqn flew members to the accident site then evacuated the casualty to hospital while the rest of the party were escorted back to the road.

9 Team members involved and 2 on standby.

29th 1425 hrs 3 hours Mine north of Geirionydd.

Suspected head, arm and leg injuries Female 15 yrs

The family were scrambling up the stream bed, she was ahead of the party. Her father saw her enter the horizontal mine where she fell about 20 ft down a vertical shaft. Her father dragged her out of the partially flooded mine back to the river side. An incorrect location delayed finding her and the Police helicopter found the site. She was evacuated by police helicopter.

11 Team members involved.

June

1st 1900 hrs 2.3 hours North Ridge Tryfan above Milestone Buttress

Cragfast, no injuries Female 28 yrs, Male 27 yrs

The party of two left the road at 1215 hrs to ascend Tryfan up the North Ridge, then via the Eastern Traverse. They decided to descend on reaching steep ground around South Gully. Retracing their route they strayed too far to the west and ended up above Milestone Buttress where they became cragfast. They were located and extracted.

12 Team members involved and 6 on standby.

2nd 1055 hrs 4.6 hours Craig y Llyn, Cwm Llugwy.

Fatality Male 35 yrs.

The team of four were competing in the Welsh 1000m mountain race and cut a corner in descending from Carnedd Dafydd to Llugwy Reservoir. He slipped resulting in a tumbling fall of about 150

metres. He was evacuated by 22 Sqn. The Team carried out Fatal Incident Protocol. There had been some confusion with the initial call for a woman with a leg injury to a woman with a heart attack to a man falling and having a heart attack.

12 Team members involved 6 on standby plus 2 from Rossendale and Pendle MRT.

10th 1445 hrs 1.6 hours Top of Gribbin Ridge, Glyders.

Facial laceration, painful neck Female 41 yrs

Part of a large group, she fell on boulders near Castell y Gwynt was patched up and moved to the top of the Gribbin. Whilst here she felt faint and the party asked for assistance. Team members diverted from a walk and 22 Sqn were asked for assistance. They reached the scene first and evacuated the casualty to hospital. An unfortunate accident.

16 Team members involved.

16th 1911 hrs 10 hours East Face Tryfan.

Fatality Male 32

The couple and their dog had walked up Tryfan and were descending on the eastern side in the area of North Gully. They strayed northwards as the area they were in got steeper. They were within 30 ft of Heather Terrace when he went ahead to find the easiest route and slipped falling about 20-30 ft to the Terrace. His wife got to him and rang 999. He had stopped breathing and she was given Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation instruction by phone. Once Team members had arrived at the scene, the wife and dog were escorted to Oggie base and the casualty evacuated by guideline and stretcher carry.

9 Team members involved plus 9 Valley MRT(RAF).

22nd 1828 hrs Stand by

Team Leader contacted by Police - a report of flashing lights near the summit of Siabod from Dolwyddelan. The informant was contacted and it is thought that the 'lights' were the reflections of the sun on wet rocks. No reports of any person missing or late. No action taken.

1 Team member involved.

22nd 2215 hrs 3.5 hours Carnedd Llewelyn

Exhaustion/hypothermia 1 Male 44 yrs, 1Female 41 yrs, 2 separate parties.

The team were called out to assist a party near the summit of Llewelyn but on the way up came across another party of 8 who had also been attempting the 14 Peaks. One of their party was suffering from exhaustion/hypothermia and had decided to make their way down. They were near the road head at Llyn Lligwy and were brought down and the casualty sent to Ysbyty Gwynedd for assessment. The second party (4 people) were found and able to walk down slowly. One of them was exhausted. A wet, cold night not really suitable for finishing the walk.

14 Team members involved.

July

7th 1346 hrs 1.75 hours Stand by

A report (by a member of OVMRO) of shouts for help and whistles below him while walking from Llewelyn to 3185. A group of people below him were shouting 'Peter' and apparently looking for someone. The Team were deployed to Gerlan waterworks and the area was overflowed by 22 Sqn and the police helicopter who found no-one needing assistance. Incident closed. False alarm with good intent

14 Team members involved.

7th 1730 hrs 1.5 hours Near Llyn y Cwn

Ankle Injury 1 male 30 yrs

He slipped on damp rock and his ankle was caught between two rocks and twisted. They got to the

lake and dialled 999 for assistance. Team assembled at Base but he was quickly found and extracted by 22 Sqn. (After Xrays was confirmed as soft tissue injury)
18 Team members involved.

12th, 13th 1700 hrs 20.75 hours in total

Missing, Penmaenmawr area Male 24 yrs,

He left home at 1415hrs on 11th saying he was going for a walk. Was not in work on the 12th but was reported on Mountain Lane at 2000 hrs on 11th but had not come home. The Team were called at 1730 on the 12th to search the hills, rivers and woodland behind Penmaenmawr. OVMRO and other organisations searched that evening and all the next day. In the late afternoon a family friend said he had seen him on the evening of the 12th. Search called off and Police investigations continued. (Update on 16th from North Wales Police that he was found in Germany safe and well.)
23 Team members, 7 SARDA, 4 Global Rescue involved.

15th 1550 hrs 1 hour Tal y Waun Farm

Possible stroke Male 71 yrs

The party were out walking when the gentleman lost his balance and fell into a gorse bush. When they helped him out his speech was slurred so they slowly walked him to the farm. The Team were called as they could respond faster than the Ambulance service. He was treated then taken to Ysbyty Gwynedd by the Ambulance.

6 Team members involved.

19th 1800 hrs 35 min North Ridge, Tryfan

No injuries Female 50 yrs

She was walking with her dog when she became confused near the North Tower and called for assistance. In 30 min she had made contact with another group who sorted her out.

No OVMRO members on the hill. 2 Team members involved.

21st 0600 hrs 3.25 hours Carnedd Llewelyn

No injuries 2 Males (43 & 44 yrs)

Weather, rain and low cloud. They set off from the Conwy Valley at 1630 hrs on the 20th to walk the first part of the 3000ft peaks. They became lost in the area of Llewelyn and asked for help. They had a tent and food. A Team Leader spoke to them on their mobile and talked them down to Bethesda.

No OVMRO on the hill. 2 Team members involved.

22nd 2035 hrs 4 hours South of Dolwyddelan

Medical emergency Male 18yrs

He had set off from Dolwyddelan to visit a friend in Porthmadog and phoned to say he was suffering an anaphylactic reaction having fallen and hurt his hip. He said he had self administered 2 epipens and was having breathing difficulties. After a long search he was found by 22 Sqn less than 500 m from the village. No physical injury found at Ysbyty Gwynedd. Police investigating as he has a history of hoax calls.

21 Team members involved.

24th 1610 hrs 3 hours Moel Siabod

Head and minor limb injury Female 36 yrs

She was descending when she slipped on scree and hit her head. They called the ambulance who responded and thought she could walk down. The Team were then asked to assist and bring her off the hill to the ambulance.

19 involved.

27th 1130 hrs 1.75 hours S ridge of Pen yr Ole Wen

No injuries Male 54 yrs

A group of friends were ascending Pen when he decided to return to the road while his friends continued with their walk. On the way down he knocked his glasses off with his walking poles. He was very short sighted and could not find the glasses or continue the descent without them so called for help. He and the glasses (minus 1 lens) were found and escorted down to a hot chocolate at the Brewshack.

3 Team members involved.

27th 1350 hrs 2.25 hours Glyders (above Gribin Facet)

Epileptic attack while walking Male 39 yrs

He had surgery earlier in the year and had suffered several fits and was walking with his family from Bochlwyd to Idwal when he felt the attack coming on. They called the Coast Guard for assistance. This was transferred to the Team. Members were diverted to the incident and 22 Sqn who were in the area training diverted. More members were airlifted to the scene and he was taken to hospital by 22 Sqn.

16 Team members involved.

August

1st 1915 hrs 45 min North Ridge Tryfan

No injuries 2 males, 11 & 9 years

A family of four Dutch tourists decided to go up the North ridge of Tryfan but the parents decided to turn back, the two lads were ahead and went on. After waiting for an hour the father went up to try and find the boys. The anxious mother got some passers by to call for assistance. The Team were on a training exercise and were collecting information and preparing hill parties when they were spotted on the lower slopes coming down. Some climbers had found them and were escorting them down. No injuries luckily.

17 Team members involved.

19th 0800 hrs 1 hour Afon Lloer

No injury 2 males, 42 & 46 yrs

They had set off from Aber to walk the 14 Peaks over 2 days with 1 night's camp. At 2000hrs they camped at Ffynnon Lloer. The weather deteriorated and their tent collapsed at about 0300 hrs. They started to walk down to the A5 but became trapped between two streams in spate. 22 Sqn were able to pick them up and drop them at Base.

8 Team members involved.

20th & 21st 1600 hrs 27 hours total Conwy Falls

Fatal Male 9 yrs

The family group were walking on the path by the river when he slipped and went into the river which was in spate. A major search involving MRT's, RAF MRT, Fire Brigade, NWP, Ambulance, Police Diver unit, 22 Sqn, Helimed, NWP helo and civilian volunteers. The river and banks were searched until after dark and the search was resumed early the next day. He was recovered from a deep pool at 6 pm on the second day.

32 Team members involved.

20th 1730 hrs 4.5 hours North Ridge Tryfan

No injuries Party of 5, Mother & 4 Children, F46, F18, M16, F14, F13

They had ascended the north ridge of Tryfan and were coming down the South Ridge!! In actual fact they were returning down the North Ridge. In the region of North Tower they turned onto the West face and were trapped in a steep gully. 22 Sqn were released from the River Job to try and find them. After a false start in finding another family on South Ridge they found the missing party and

winched them out. Unfortunately, their rucksacs with their money, YHA Cards and bookings and car keys were left on the hill. Two members went up to try and find them but failed in the darkness. By the time they returned the family had been transported to the Youth Hostel who had been informed of the situation.

5 Team members involved.

21st 1020 hrs 1hour 10 min North Ridge Tryfan

Female 59 yrs

She was ascending the North Ridge with her husband when she slipped and fell a short distance onto an outstretched arm. Severe pain in the shoulder meant she could not walk down and they called for help. The Team were involved in the search in the River, some members came from there and others called out from home. 22 Sqn were also asked to help. They managed to winch her and transported her to Ysbyty Gwynedd.

9 Team members involved.

21st 1345 hrs 2hours Bristly Ridge

An informant phoned the police to report that a man in front of him on Bristly Ridge was stuck in a steep gully and needed help. Bad reception meant that it was difficult to get information. A party were airlifted to the top of Bristly Ridge and the Aircraft tried to search in the broken cloud.

Nothing Found. Later a person checked in with the National Park Warden to say that he had asked for help but was assisted by a passer by. Pity communications were not good enough to report that he had been extracted sooner.

5 Ogwen & 1 Llanberis MRT involved.

22nd 1500 hrs 5.75 hours West Face Tryfan

No injuries, cragfast

Male 28, Female 19 yrs

They planned to climb the North Ridge of Tryfan but did not know the route or where it started.

Having parked in the National Park walled car park they wandered up the Lower Western Gully until they could see the Cannon and decided to go up one of the gullies to try and reach it. It became steeper and slippery until they were stuck but managed to reach the mobile and call for help. North Wales Police helo managed to locate them but could do nothing about it. As the hill party were approaching, 22 Sqn arrived and needed them moved to a better location to winch them. They were secured then brought up the gully and out onto a more open area from where they were winched.

Very Lucky!

14 Team members involved.

September

2nd 1705 hrs 3hours 20 min Lower part of path from Llyn y Cwn to Gwastadnant

Fractured Ankle Male 62

A party was descending the path when he slipped and fell from a muddy path about 6 metres and was stopped by a fence otherwise he could have ended up in a waterfall!. Unable to walk with a fractured ankle his companions called for help. Llanberis MRT were busy and asked OVMRO to deal with this incident. Joined by two members of LIMRT he was evacuated the short distance to the road.

15 Team members involved.

3rd 1205 hrs 2hours 5 min East Ridge, Pen yr Ole Wen

Medical condition Female 31yrs

A known condition occasionally stops muscles working properly. What brought on the attack is not known but she was unable to move safely from the party's position. They phoned 999 and after discussions with them 22 Sqn were called and retrieved her to Oggie Base and lifted a small party to

escort her husband off the hill.

12 Team members involved.

6th 1920 hrs 2 hours 10 min Idwal Slabs
Cragfast Male 32, Female 32

They had finished the route on Idwal Slabs and on the walk off were intimidated by the descent into the gully and called for assistance. They set up an abseil and one got down onto the path. Another party arrived and assisted and retrieved the equipment for them. A team member walked up to meet them and check that all was well. They were escorted down to their car.

8 Team members involved.

17th 1630 hrs 1.25 hours Glyder Fawr
No injuries Male 26 yrs

Two friends walking the Glyderau got separated in the mist between Castell y Gwynt and Glyder Fawr. One waited at the summit for about 30 minutes and decided to make his way down keeping a lookout for his friend. Somewhere, he decided to phone for assistance. The friend turned up at Ogwen Tea shack having found his way to the Pen y Gwryd and had run round the road to Ogwen. Show off !!

3 Team members involved.

22nd 2310 hrs 3 hours Bochlwyd Stream, below the steep section
Dislocation of ac joint Female 38 yrs

The three women had walked the Glyderau and as it was late they decided to camp near the stream from Bochlwyd. The casualty was in one tent and her two companions in another. It was very windy. A gust took her and her tent rolling about 20 metres down hill injuring her shoulder. After some pain relief, she was able to walk down to the road and was taken to Ysbyty Gwynedd by Landrover.

15 Team members involved.

30th 1920 hrs 6 hours East Face Tryfan
No injuries, cragfast 2 Females 31, 47. 2 Males 34, 47.

The party were climbing Grooved Arete with only one leader. They said they were held up by a party in front of them and then struggled below the Haven only reaching it in the evening. The Leader took 45 min to climb the Knights Move but then returned to his companions. One of them phoned for help and the Team had to listen to them arguing as the leader said he did not need rescuing, the others rebelled and said they wanted help. (The party above them phoned the North Wales Police on hearing the arguments going on below them!) 22Sqn flew a party of 8 up to the top of the climb and went to another incident returning in time to lift the party and the Team down to Oddie Base.

19 Team members involved.

October

1st 1230 hrs 4.25 hours North Ridge Tryfan
Knee injury Male 47 yrs

He slipped and split his knee open and could not move. With bad weather and a possible long carry 22Sqn were requested together with Valley MRT. He was found, treated and was then able to walk down to a suitable winching point. His friend came down with the Team.

20 Team members and 11 RAF Valley MRT.

1st 1240hrs 4.25hours West Face Tryfan
Lost in cloud on steep ground Male 28yrs, Female 27 yrs

They became disorientated on steep ground with heavy cloud and went on to the west face. They phoned about 10 minutes after the previous incident. They were told that the other rescue was taking priority with an injury. They said they had walked past the other pair 10 minutes earlier and they were lower down than they thought. They were asked to try and make their way up to the others. They managed to do this and came down with the team.

20 Team members and 11 RAF Valley MRT.

21st 1340 hrs 4hours 40min Amphitheatre Buttress, Craig yr Isfa

Back spasm, re-occurrence of and old injury Male 49 yrs

They were climbing the 5th pitch when the back spasms meant the leader could not move. The second called for assistance. Members were flown onto the cliff to assist the winchman. The aircraft was able to fly the casualty to hospital but the Team members and the second had to complete the route and walk down.

15 Team members involved.

24th 1240 hrs 3 hours 20min The difficult step, Idwal Stream, Cwm Idwal

Suspected stroke, collapsed while walking Female 75yrs

The Team response was rapid as a member was walking close by. Assistance from 22 Sqn and a rapid evacuation to Ysbyty Gwynedd. Her husband was escorted off the hill.

12 Team members involved.

25th 0350 hrs 2 hours Ysbyty Gwynedd

Mild hypothermia 86 year old male

A patient was reported missing from one of the wards. SARDA and Ogwen were called. The team leader was assessing the situation but before a callout was instigated he was found by one of the SARDA dogs and treated in the A&E Dept for mild hypothermia.

1 member involved.

29th 1825 hrs 25 min N E Ridge of Y Garn

Reports of flashing lights.

North Wales Police asked the team to investigate reported lights on Y Garn. A team leader went up to Ogwen. A party of walkers were coming off Y Garn with torches. They arrived down without incident. No further action taken.

1 member involved.

30th 1750 hrs 1.5 hours Above Bron Heulog, Capel Curig

Benighted Male 55 yrs

He had set off in early afternoon to find a good viewpoint to paint Llyn Crafnant. On returning in failing light he became confused in the rocky bluffs below the Crimpiau and as darkness fell he became trapped between a stream and a cliff. He called his wife who told him to dial 999. His torch was spotted from the A5 and he was quickly found and extracted. Tea and warmth at Base soon revived his spirits.

7 Team members involved.

November

10th 1330 hrs 6 hours Wrinkled Slab, West Face Tryfan

No injuries 1 Male, 2 Females

They were from two parties. The two women were going up Tryfan and decided to turn back due to an old injury playing up. The man was almost abandoned by his party and tried to return to the road on his own and met up with the other two. They ended up stuck near the top of Wrinkled Slab on steep rock and heather. They called for help as they had dropped their sacks and were unable to move up or down. By now the mountain was in cloud and it was difficult to locate them due to their

total lack of awareness of Tryfan. A rather difficult extraction was completed in the dark. It is sad to see the disregard shown for the safety of the man by his party. 13 Team members involved.

21st 1625 hrs 4.5 hours Idwal Stream
Crag Fast - no injuries 3 Males (53,49,45)

A well equipped party set off from Gwen Gof Isaf to traverse the Glyderau. They went up the ridge to Llyn Caseg Ffriath and over Glyder Fach in reasonable weather. They became disorientated in the cloud between the Glyders and descended a fair way towards Pen y Pass before retracing their steps up to the Glyder Fawr area. Another mistake in navigation brought them into the steep ground to the south of the Idwal Stream. By now it was dark and they felt unable to come down and rang for assistance. As they had torches and a GPS it was straight forward to find them. 22 Sqn were on exercise in the area and had a recce of the site but due to poor flying conditions and the non-urgency of the situation they were not deployed.

22 Team members involved.

December

29th 1545 hrs 1 hour Penmachno Bridge, Conwy Falls

Canoeist stuck on rock in river. No injuries.

A canoeist missed the get out point and ended up on a rock in the middle of the river just below the Penmachno Bridge. The Team were alerted by the owner of the Conwy Falls Café and responded. On arrival it was found that another canoeist had assisted the stranded person to safety. No Action needed. It was later discovered that the Tram had rescued the same person from the same place nearly 12 months before.

14 Team members involved.

31st 1400 hrs 5.5 hours Southern slope of Moel Siabod
Fracture of mid-shaft right fibula Male 39yrs

A well equipped party of friends were descending to Dolwyddelan having traversed the mountain from Capel Curig. The casualty slipped on wet grass and injured his ankle. He took some ibuprofen and they tried to continue but had to ask for help. He was carried / sledged down to the vehicles in the Forestry and driven to Ysbyty Gwynedd. He did escape to be with his friends for midnight but needed surgery on his leg later.

21 Team members involved plus 1 Aberdovey O B team member.

Oggie 8 Challenge

On August 9th 2008 Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation is hosting "The Oggie 8 Challenge". A one day walk taking in the Carneddau, the Glyders, Y Garn and Tryfan, that's eight 3000ft tops in one hit. At over 16 miles it is for experienced walkers who through sponsorship will raise much needed funds for the team.

OVMRO are asking for those interested in a great days walking to contact us for details. Open to teams of 4-6 people, places are limited. This is to minimise our environmental impact.

So if you have ever enjoyed a day out in the Snowdonia mountains and fancy giving something

back get in touch now!

More details can be found on the OVMRO website:

http://www.ogwen-rescue.org.uk/oggie_8/index.php

I know it might seem like a long way off, but interest in the event is high and places are going quickly. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Dave Worrall

Equipment Officer's Report

Well that's another year zipped past and the end of my second back in the post. It's been another of much the same. It's quite a daunting realisation that Team Equipment Officers are ultimately responsible for basically every thing that's not human, that the team possesses!! Where that puts some of the Team members I haven't quite worked out yet. I am sure that a peg on the wall might suit some.

Obviously that would be a huge undertaking even for me. So I have to thank Paul Smith for dealing with the medical things and Comms equipment, Roger Jones for transport, Maggie Adam for Sticky bars and toilet rolls as well as the base bookings. The house committee for looking after the building. Also the Team members who pitch in and help with the general equipment. Nearly forgot that IT bod (Tim Radford) who looks after our growing computer, web cam empire and barely whimpers when faced with " why has this stopped working ?" , but was nearly driven into a straight jacket during his successful campaign to get us broad band connected.

We have purchased a few things this year notably we have completed our compliment of dry suits funded by the Chris Turnbull trust. The white water raft was also officially launched during this past year. We have also part financed a waterproof issue to Team Members. Half the Team chose Mountain Equipment Gortex and the other half Paramo. Big thanks to both of these companies for helping us out. I thought pop stars were fussy but Rescue team members and choice of waterproofs Hmm don't go there!

Whilst things are bobbing along nicely, we do have to look to the future. A big reason for this is the fact that a number of companies that we have purchased equipment from in the past have ceased trading, stopped making things we use, such as the Bell stretcher. So we have to think hard about what we will need, what we want it to do and where we are going to get it from. That I think will be a bigger task than we might imagine.

Kevin de Silva

TREASURER'S REPORT

At the first committee meeting for this financial year (2007) I reported the finances were very

promising and I had hopes that at the end of the year we might have reserves breaking one of those significant numbers. Within minutes the training officer put in a request for a substantial tranch of money to re-assess and audit our rope rescue skills. This was followed by a decision to issue team members with a new waterproof kit issue! The treasurer's dreams were immediately dashed and the thought of a new fund raising drive took its place.

It has turned out that the rope assessment has been booked for 2008 but the kit issue has been paid for, although it will not be distributed until early 2008. Thus the training will come out of next years budget that means this years accounts appear healthier than they may be this time next year!

A review of the year shows that most spending groups have been frugal and the treasurer thanks them for that. Savings were made on communications by more efficient use of SMS callouts and reducing the use of pagers as well as rationalising the telephone lines. Oxygen and Entenox supplies and some other first aid consumables are now being supplied by the ambulance service and Ysbyty Gwynedd thus saving that expenditure.

Early in the year we received a very generous donation. We were very grateful to receive it but I am sad to say it was a further contribution in memory of Dr. Jones from his mother. Every year it is my sad duty to record and send both condolences and thanks to loved ones who have kindly thought of us in their time of distress. This year it is a significantly longer list than usual but I am relieved to report that only two directly concerned us however, this is still two too many. I would also like to pay particular thanks to Mrs. Turnbull who has set up the Chris Turnbull memorial fund in memory of her son, the fund has purchased a rescue boat together with appropriate gear including wet suits, for us to operate in water environments which has significantly improved our ability to respond to such situations. Mrs. Parratt and family held an auction to raise funds for us as well as to set up a memorial fund in memory of Mr. Parratt.

I would like to mention one other person; Dai Rowlands was an old team member and was rescuing people from the days even before the team was formed. He was renowned for his incredible fitness and strength – 35 minutes up Tryfan and 12 minutes down I believe!

In Memory

Dr.Dafydd Arthur Jones	Chris Turnbull	Paul Richards
Paul Fergus	David Cook	David Hughes
Chris Parratt	Paul Poutney	Brian Seddon
Mr. James	Margaret Hayward	Sean Laxen

Dai Rowlands

I am glad to report that the 333-support group continues to be a major source of income, increasing year on year. I would particularly like to thank Allen Ince for his help with fundraising events and servicing most of our collecting boxes, aided and abetted by Mick Parsons. I also wish to thank Chris Lloyd for looking after the box at the Black Cat service station, which is our most prolific box. Significant contributions have also been received from the following collecting boxes:- The Brewshack : Bryn Bella : Aber Falls Hotel : Awesomewalls : Blacks Llandudno ; Cotswold : Cotswold Rock Bottom : Cunninghams : Eagles Penmachno : Griffin Inn : Joe Browns : Judges : Llandudno Leisure Centre : Outdoor Shop : Pinnacle Stores : Royal Oak : Shell Betws : Sunnies Shop : Trail & bike : Tyn-y-Coed

I also want to make special mention of Mrs. Doig and Country Cooks (on the A5) for their help, generosity and enthusiasm in raising funds. Yet again this year we have received inputs into our account, which we cannot trace. This is very embarrassing as we are unable to thank people for their contributions. There were inputs from the following people – I am sure these are subscriptions to our 333 Supporters Group but we have no contact details to send newsletters etc. to these people. If your name is in this list or you know anyone please contact me as soon as possible so they can be thanked and welcomed aboard!

Gwynfryn Jones : Mrs.Kavanagh : J.A.Thompson : M.I.Keegan : K.P.White : J.P.Bradwen :
D.R.Lewis : H.B.Smith

Another significant input to the funds was from the Inland Revenue! After much effort I submitted a claim for Gift Aid for the years 2000 and 2001. I was amazed how efficient they were and how easy it was and furthermore they gave us interest on the claim!!! During the year Mick Parsons (shucks! I have mentioned him twice - hope the fame does not go to his head!) and a friend Frank Gordon have done a lot more work on Gift Aid and I expect to submit another claim soon and hope the tax man is in a good mood and will be as co-operative and generous with interest as he was last time. Donations via our "On Line" facility on our web site have produced a significant income – thanks to the web 'teckies' Russ Hore, Tim Radford for maintaining this facility.

Before I close I do wish to express a 'catch all' to everyone else who has given of their time and/or cash to support the team I regret time and space does not allow me to thank so many, so please, please accept a big thank-you if you have helped.

We are currently in the 10th anniversary year of 333 and amongst the events planned we hope to organise "The Oggie Eight Mountain Event". From the treasurers point of view this is potentially a very good source of revenue from sponsorship of the entering teams – so if you are approached by someone with a sponsorship form please be generous!

Base is in reasonably good shape these days but the track is in very bad condition so I hope we might be able to afford the necessary work to put it in good shape in time for us to welcome guests who might visit the special events for the 75th anniversary of Mountain Rescue in England and Wales planned for early summer.

My last comment is reserved for a small topic, which I have been muttering about for some time. Fred South (one of the first members of 333) has donated money for us to have a bench to sit on outside base when we get those quiet sunny summer days..... Thanks Fred!

Finally my thanks also to Barry Buels of Fraser Wood, accountants for their help producing the accounts.

Bill Dean

Training Officer's Report

Another busy year training! In fact the team has completed 500 person training sessions in the period between January 2007 to February 2008! I was advised to 'delegate training responsibilities' when I first took on the role as Training Coordinator in 2007. I have attempted to follow this advice in delivering the training programme in conjunction with a core belief that our strength as rescuers lies in the fact that we are 'Mountaineers conducting Mountain Rescue' and that training should be guided by operational requirements. The following report is a summary of the Team's training in 2007 and the plans for 2008.

OVMRO has for several years adopted a system of highlighting Core Skill areas for Training and Operations. Casualty Care training was one of the first Core Skills to use the 'Three Level' approach i.e. Basic, Intermediate and Advanced levels of training. This approach has now been adopted as the model for other Core Skills e.g. Technical Rope Rescue and Swift Water Rescue.

With the OVMRO Training and Events Calendar for 2007 and 08 I have attempted to again set aside the 'First Sunday of each Month' as key training dates for the Team and would urge Team members to support these training events by attending and offering assistance where possible. I plan to further update the Training and Events Calendar quarterly by email, however all the dates can also be viewed on the OVMRO website.

The Wednesday Evening Training schedule has been extended in 2007 / 08, with a varied and detailed programme of events running parallel and in support of the key weekend training dates, many thanks to Jed Stone for continuing to organise these events.

The Casualty Care Group, coordinated by Paul Smith and Pauline Hallett, has continued to provide regular Weekend and modular Wednesday evening training sessions. These sessions cover both the mandatory first aid training and additional Cas Care training, further supporting the ECRM Intermediate and Advanced courses provided in conjunction with Clive Hughes and Marion Waters.

The Technical Rope Rescue (TRR) Working Group, led by Al Read, has planned training to maximise the skills required at Level One (Operator) and Level Two (Technician). Summer 2008 is scheduled for Kirk Mauthner's visit to Ogwen, when he will audit the Team's TRR capabilities and deliver six days of training. The training is planned as a one-day seminar for all members on the first Sunday in July, followed by a five-day course for approximately 15 candidates plus instructors. The TRWG is also striving to produce version two of the TRR 'Field Guide' for Kirk to review during his visit.

Swift Water Rescue Operations and Training have for some years been increasing in regularity. In fact, it has been stated that we currently respond to more water incidents than we do winter rescues! The Mountain Rescue Council for England and Wales has appointed its first 'Water Rescue Officer', tasked with consulting on Water Rescue. OVMRO is further developing its water rescue capability with the appointment of a Specialist Team member, Tim Vollum. OVMRO's Chris Onions has been supporting Tim by coordinating our water rescue training.

The Team currently has a healthy number of active Trainee Members at different stages in their traineeship. I am currently planning to run a spring and winter initial hill day for new trainees and would welcome any nominations from team members for selection.

OVMRO has again recently hosted the NWMRA “Intro Search and Rescue Skills” Training Course at Oggie base, many thanks to Al Read for organising this event. The Team has in recent months been further developing its links with the North Wales Fire Service Rope Rescue and Water Rescue teams and hopes to continue this valuable inter agency working in planned training exercises in 2008.

In 2007 the Team has run both a successful Winter Training Programme in Scotland and a new Summer Skills Course in the Lake District. Both training events are aimed at improving personal mountaineering skills as well as rescue skills, and have the added bonus of being excellent team building events. Similar events are planned for 2008.

Projects for 2008 include further discussion regarding the 'hot potato' of mandatory training of Core Skills and the development and evaluation of the electronic training data base and log book.

Many thanks to all the team members who have assisted me in the role as Training Officer in 2007, with especial thanks to Pauline and Roz for their patience and admin support and to the 2007 Committee for their support and encouragement.

Tim Bird

PRESS OFFICER'S REPORT

Throughout 2007 the name Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue has been appearing in the media. Hopefully, by maintaining this publicity, we may be getting the message across that people need to be suitably equipped to venture onto the hills. A mobile telephone is useful, but not the only piece of equipment that should be carried. Also, as a charity, we need donations from members of the public. We receive donations from all sorts of people, not just those whom we rescue. And we need those people to think Mountain Rescue.....Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue.

North Wales's regional daily newspaper, The Daily Post, has continually supported OVMRO throughout the year. Local weekly newspapers, like the North Wales Weekly News have also reported our activities. BBC Wales has sent its reporters to carry out interviews after rescues. And their reporter Roger Pinney volunteered to don a dry suit and buoyancy aid to join in with swift water rescue training (true dedication to the cause). The BBC Wales website is updated by Wena. I must thank her for chasing me for information.

Every year we have to deal with fatalities on the mountains and in the rivers. Thankfully, these cases are extremely rare bearing in mind the vast number of visitors we get every year. However, each incident is a tragedy for a family, relatives and friends. Beyond them though, this is news for the rest of the country. Tragedy sells newspapers and makes national TV.

Good news stories are more difficult to publicise, but a visit to 10 Downing Street by representatives of Welsh Mountain Rescue, the Mountain Safe training initiative set up by North Wales Police and the North Wales Mountain Rescue Association and Snowdonia National Park, and a summit marriage proposal (and acceptance) all received some column inches.

And to end on even better News, Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue received the Team Champions of the Year award at a prestigious evening event sponsored by Trinity Mirror Newspapers and Scottish Power. And we thank them and their North Wales Weekly News reporter, Samantha Castle for their support.

Chris Lloyd

Chris Lloyd

Communications Report

The theme for this year has been consolidation with some stepped improvements. The key points have been the completion of the analogue VHF repeater network for the entire North Wales region together with the allocation of more Airwave sets. These improvements have been primarily driven from the regional level and have only been possible through the wonderful support of North Wales Police and their comms team.

The advent of the repeater network has extended the communications coverage to at least 95% of the teams area. This fundamentally improves the operational efficiency and safety of our operations.

Aside from the Airwave radios and repeaters, a lot of steady and valuable background work has been done to improve the reliability and effectiveness of our teams radio network. This includes improving and optimising the microphones, vehicle radio sets and aerials etc. This essential work has been quietly and efficiently done mostly by Paul Smith; we owe him a big thank-you!

There is still a lot of work needed to take the comms network forward and this will include mobile talk-through repeaters and support for GPS tracking via new radios. This latter point may well further improve the operational efficiency of the Team.

We are very grateful to North Wales Police to fund and maintain the network and our comms equipment; on behalf of the Team, I want to express sincere gratitude for this continuing support. As with most Team activities, a number of people make the changes and I am very grateful yet again to Paul Smith for his never-failing attention to detail and covering the numerous issues that I still forget.

John Hulse

IT Group Report - 2008

We have made a lot of progress this year improving IT within the team. The main aim is to make improvements that are useful but transparent to team members. We may not have achieved that quite yet but I know when the remote mouse is working on the projector at least Jed will be happy.

Broadband

After considerable effort and frustration we have a broadband connection in base. There were a number of obstacles due to our distance from the exchange, a fault with out internal wiring and the remarkable incompetence of Orange customer support. All is now resolved and although the connection speed is low at about 256kbs it is a vast improvement on anything we have had before. If the connection drops due to power cuts or unplugging it can take quite a while to renegotiate so please be patient if this affects you.

Part of resolving the internal fault involved rationalising the phone lines and as a result we have removed two excess lines completely so now we just have the two main lines.

Website

The website continues to be a great success. In the next year we hope to redesign its look and feel and completely incorporate the 333 site within it.

Traditionally our biggest attraction is the webcam and I am glad to announce that this is back online – thanks to Paul, Mark E and Russ for helping with this. The original camera set-up used a dial-up internet connection to update the pictures to the website. This proved to be unreliable and resulted in frequent trips by Pete D to base to reset the connection – an onerous and impractical task. Eventually the camera, which did not belong to the team, was removed. The team now owns its own camera, which was installed by Paul on a cold, windy day, and the arrival of broadband has meant that we are back online. The picture quality has improved and is updated every minute. The camera has a wide angle lens and the view takes in Tryfan, Y Garn and the flanks of Pen Yr Ole Wen. At night you can just make out the light from Ogwen Cottage and that's about it. The lack of an automatic iris means that the picture can be over- or under- exposed at times depending on the quality of light and you may notice a black line on the skyline on clear days caused by the digitising process. The wide angle lens is currently taking in part of the camera housing – something we hope to resolve the next time someone fancies climbing on the roof.

WEB CAM PICTURE

As before we will be monitoring the pictures and any interesting scenes will be saved and placed on the archived pictures page:

http://www.ogwen-rescue.org.uk/oggi_cam/archive/index.php

The other popular feature was the weather station. This is still not active as many of the weather station parts need to be replaced. Mark W is currently investigating a source for affordable, robust monitoring equipment.

We are continually trying new ideas for the website and Russ has been experimenting with using Google Maps to show the position of incidents over the years. This has been helped considerably now that Google have improved the image quality for Snowdonia.

Another use of mapping can be seen via the [Microsoft Virtual Earth](#) link on the Oddie 8 page of the

website. Change the view to “Aerial” and click on the “Tour in 3D” link on the left side of the page to see an impressive virtual fly through of the route:

http://www.ogwen-rescue.org.uk/oggie_8/

Computers

At the moment there are two computers in base: one upstairs, which is used for administration and running presentations; and one in the ops room, which is for use by the base operator. We also have one laptop that is currently being used by the training officer. We are investigating an offer on some more laptops and hope to be able to provide one for each officer that has some sort of administrative role.

The computers and the new printer scanner are all linked via the network; the intention is for team documents to be stored in one place that is accessible from any computer on the network. We also have password-protected wireless coverage throughout the building as far as the garage for those that want to bring laptops.

Software

We have registered with the Charity Technology Exchange and this has enabled us to update our Microsoft Office software to the latest professional versions for all computers at a considerably reduced rate. A fantastic deal brokered by MREW means we have Memory Map coverage for the whole country at 1:25000 resolution.

The future

We have many ideas for improving IT in the coming year, including developing in-house software to help manage equipment (long-promised). Any ideas for other projects will be gratefully received.

My thanks go to all who have helped this year.

Tim Radford

Casualty Care Report

Another ‘normal’ year, with the team responding to a wide variety of incident types. The majority of these were non life-threatening injuries. There seem to be a growing number of casualties who need treating for varying degrees of dented pride, caused by their own poor planning, navigation and equipment getting them lost and cold in the cloud or darkness. On top of this we unfortunately have the few fatalities.

One rather unusual incident this year originated as a 999 call to the police, claiming the casualty was injured and also suffering a life threatening allergic reaction up in the hills. Obviously this demanded a very rapid response, which the team duly made. Only the casualty wasn't where he claimed (not that unusual) but he also wasn't making himself easy to find. After much searching by the police and RAF helicopters plus OVMRO ground teams, getting very concerned for his safety as time elapsed, he was located. It turned out to be a hoax call, one more to add to many this individual had made in the past. Looking back at our response it is good to know we had people with the level of training and suitable equipment and medication to deal with the incident had it been real.

For those with injuries, we currently have 6 advanced level and 10 intermediate level casualty care trained members and once again we have run 'mandatory' first aid training, such that all other team members are trained to a basic level. All of this is aimed at delivering a high level of care and suitable analgesia to our casualties so that they come off the hill in the best possible condition.

We have worked closely with the RAF Search & Rescue helicopter. On occasion it can be heartbreaking to have slogged uphill with all the gear, only to see the helicopter "snatch" the casualty. However, their attendance at an incident provides an improved response to the casualty, with many of the winchmen being trained to paramedic level and of course, they have much shorter evacuation times to hospital. Many thanks to the crews for their assistance, especially on those occasions when we get a lift up the hill !

At Ysbyty Gwynedd, the local hospital, our advanced members have been consolidating their skills doing observation sessions. We hope to extend our training at the hospital to take in more practical skills, which may be the subject of next years report. Our thanks to the staff for making us welcome and putting up with all our questions.

Thanks must also go to Clive Hughes who, after over 30 years with the team has handed the mantle of Casualty Care Representative on to me this year. This year also sees the take over of medical gas supply (Oxygen & Entonox) and first aid consumables by the ambulance service – many thanks to them for their co-operation and financial support in doing this.

As can be guessed, there is a lot of equipment to carry if we are to be "ready for anything" when we arrive on scene. As a result there is a push to find equipment which is as light, small and robust as possible for us to take on the hill. To this end, we have some new, small, light pulse oximeters to go with the advanced party and our next significant piece of equipment, currently being sought via the British Heart Foundation, will be an AED (automatic external defibrillator) sufficiently small and light to be easily taken on the hill.

Paul Smith
Casualty Care Representative

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

It was 4.30 p.m. on Saturday 27th October, 2007, when I walked into the Tyn y Coed Hotel in Capel Curig. I was there for the 10th AGM of the Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation Support Group, 333. I still found it hard to believe that 333 is ten years old. As each year passes I find it more difficult to write these inputs for the Annual Report, despite what some may say to the contrary, this is not because of my advancing years, but because I believe 333 continues in the vanguard of what a support group should be, and all the suitable adjectives have been used in the past.

I will start this report with the evening in question. The AGM was followed by a social evening; we had a superb buffet followed by presentations by two of the team members. Russ Hore, the Team Chairman, spoke on both his mountaineering past as well as his ventures into the underwater world around the globe. This was followed by John Evans giving an account of his life as a park warden in Alaska. Both presentations were accompanied with photographs that undoubtedly kept the audience spellbound. An invitation had gone out to HRH Prince William to attend, but unfortunately he had prior military commitments. Despite this I firmly believe that the evening was a fitting tribute to this landmark in the history of Treble Three.

For those who are members but still feel reluctant to join in the activities of 333, let me outline some of the events you missed over the past year.

GPS training day, first aid course, climbing course on a climbing wall, a basic caving day, numerous organised walks, ranging from a turkey and cobweb walk after Christmas to summer walks of varying types. Then there were social evenings such as a mulled wine and a mince pie evening, a bonfire and stew evening, a camping weekend in the Lake District. This is not everything, but I think you will agree that there is something for everyone. So folks, remember these are organised for you, the team wants to show you that they appreciate what you do for them; without you they definitely could not maintain the standard that the public expect, and which they undoubtedly achieve. I can assure 333 members that the team looks on you as an integral part of their operation and not just someone who gives money. Please check the web page and try to come along to your activities.

We still need more members, and I believe that the message we have to get across is that the team is not just a mountain rescue team but also a search and rescue team. Many of the incidents dealt with are for missing children, autistic children and adults, vulnerable despondent persons, and in these times of an aging population we are ever more called on to look for persons suffering from Alzheimer and other dementias. People are sometimes reluctant to give to mountain rescue because they feel such incidents may be self inflicted, but we must get the message across that we are increasingly dealing with non mountainous incidents, and we need the public's help to maintain our ability to respond to them.

Finally may I once again express my appreciation of the honour you have bestowed on me by appointing me as your Honorary Chairman over the past 10 years. Thanks to all the members of the committee, both past and present, and to the dedicated band who turn up at all our fund raising efforts, for without them 333 would no longer continue to be, what I consider to be, the epitome of excellence and a shining example of how a support group should function.

Clive Swombow
Honorary Chairman 333

Location of Collection Boxes

Many thanks to those who empty the boxes, both Team and 333.

A long night out

SMS Alert – “Call Out Hill Walker Lost on the Glyders, Attend Mountain Rescue Base ASAP”

Half an hour later I was in Cwm Idwal, battling against driving rain and gale force winds, part of a small party tasked with searching for the missing walker on the Glyders. Other small groups of rescuers were also following similar ‘corridor routes’ working along paths and ridges towards the last known location of the casualty.

This was a modern classic Call Out, a dropped 999 call from a mobile phone, resulting in the Mountain Rescue Team searching at night, in a winter storm working on minimal information about the number of casualties, injuries and location. On my MRT radio, I could hear that other rescuers were also struggling against the conditions, one being somersaulted by a strong gust of wind.

I knew the area well, however the visibility and conditions were so poor I had to concentrate hard on my navigation, drawing on many years of experience and training. My map was cut down, laminated and gripped in my gloved hand with my thumb indicating our current location. My compass was larks footed to my jacket, ready for use to measure a distance or calculate a bearing.

Fighting our way against the weather up the Devil’s Kitchen route, we stopped briefly in the relative calm of a large boulder before topping out on to the exposed plateaux and into the full force of the gale. Hunkered down we shared some chocolate, an anecdote and discussed our plan of action.

From Mountain Rescue statistics, I was aware that navigation errors contributed to many Mountain Incidents and I knew that tonight I had to get my ‘navs’ right to safeguard the rescuers and to maximise our chances of quickly finding the casualty safe and well.

I calculated 4 simple waypoints from the map, grid references were called out and checked and working together as a team, I plotted them on the map and into my GPS. A quick radio call to base to confirm our location and intentions, clothing layers adjusted, we moved off. Concentrating hard we navigated our route, over snowfields and onto the summit of Glyder Fawr. The GPS was a useful navigational aid but was taken to its electronic limits by the cold and rain causing it to turn off periodically, confirming to me the necessity of carrying a map and compass and knowledge of how to use them.

From the summit we navigated on pacings and bearings to the last known coordinates of the casualty, my GPS and pacings agreed we had 50 metres to run...

“Oggie Base, Oggie Base from Oggie 241 - Over”

“Oggie 241 from Oggie Base go ahead - Over”

“Oggie Base from 241, casualty located safe and well, stand by for sit rep and our intentions - Over”

Ten minutes later we emerged from the warm fug of the group shelter, a warm drink, Mars bar and extra layer for our new friend.

“210 degrees magnetic, 450m, over the boulder field to the summit” I had planned our route back in the calm of the shelter and memorised the first two legs using the three ‘D’s; Direction, Distance and Description of the ground. Back into the storm and a careful descent led us back to base for a well earned supper of hot tea and bacon sandwiches with our new friend sharing the story of his days adventures and making the call home to share his good news.

Tim Bird

In Memory of Sean Laxen

Sean was the eldest child of Linda and Richard.

He showed courage, determination and spirit to overcome his first few weeks of life and developed into a happy, playful and adoring child.

He had a special bond with his younger brother Scott that was a pleasure to see, and people would always comment on how alike they were – “Are they twins? They’re like two peas in a pod.”

With encouragement from both his mother and father both boys individually developed wide interests and skills, enjoying the glorious Norfolk beaches, countryside walks, cycle rides and nature.

Other interests included music and both Sean and Scott took a shine to their parents favourites including Status Quo and the Beatles (he especially liked the ‘Yellow Submarine’ video).

Both developed a keen interest in typical ‘boy’ activities including steam trains, construction vehicles and aeroplanes.

Sean had a dream of flying in a helicopter. His particular interests were with animals of which dinosaurs were his favourites – being able to draw and name them all. He showed initiative in

wanting to work with animals or be a cook on a steam railway.

More recently a fascination of Sean's was the story of the Titanic, having seen parts of the movie. He was always questioning why it happened and was recently given a construction model by a church friend, which we were going to build when he was a little older. However, his summer compromise was a DIY wooden and plastic model made with his father and brother, whilst building a garden fence, which he was looking forward to painting.

Sean had a loving tendency towards other people – during this holiday he bought his younger brother a toy train using all of his holiday money. He also loved dressing up – especially as Captain Hook and Harry Potter.

Coming from Norfolk both Sean and Scott had grown-up with water and as all children, were fascinated with it. As parents we constantly instilled the dangers and taught them to respect water. Although Sean has tragically left us he has given us nine of the most wonderful years parents and a brother could have ever wanted, leaving us with treasured memories that will be with us forever.

He leaves an unfillable gap with close and extended family and all friends in Horsham and Aylsham. He will take all of them with him in his heart as he is now at peace.

Mum, Dad and Scott and all who knew Sean have him in their hearts forever and he will never leave them.

The family would like to extend their eternal gratitude to all those who helped in the search and would like to thank them for bringing their son back to them, although their courageous efforts could not have brought him back to life.

They would also like to thank staff at the accommodation that was arranged for them, for their assistance during their time there.

Richard Laxen

Sean died following a tragic accident on the 20th August, He fell into the river near Conway Falls, Betws y Coed whilst out walking with his mother and brother Scott.

The family requested at Sean's funeral in Horsford, Norwich, Norfolk that all who wished to send flowers should instead make a donation which would be given to the Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Team who spent much effort in searching for Sean and assisted in the recovery of his body.

Donations received have been over £2,000. The family were overwhelmed by the generosity of all and thank them warmly, and ask all who knew Sean to remember his cheekiness, continual happiness and always ready smile.

Recruitment

I was staying in the Lake District recently and happened to pick up a copy of the local paper, the Westmorland Gazette. Somewhat to my surprise the headline on the front page was about Mountain Rescue. "Mountain Rescue faces recruitment crisis". First of all to find such an article on the front page was a shock, but the Lake District teams struggling to attract new recruits seemed

unthinkable. The more I read the article the more I understood the predicament facing the teams in this area. What's more many of the problems outlined and the difficulties facing team members were very similar to problems the teams in North Wales are facing.

Putting aside the obvious attention grabbing headlines of "inexperienced walkers caught in blizzard conditions" or whatever the paper decides shows the walking public in the least favourable light, the first message is clear. Some teams are facing a huge increase in the number of rescues they are called out to. As we all know, much of this is attributable to the mobile phone and the ease with which people can summon assistance. Whether all the calls are justified is a very debatable point and we can probably all cite instances where rescue teams have been called out to incidents where, if they had been capable, a little self-help could have saved the day. None the less, we have all taken part in rescues where the justification for calling out a team is tenuous to say the least. Let's be honest though, things aren't going to change in a hurry and education of Joe Public is a slow process. So for the time being, we have to accept that we will be called out more frequently than in the past.

The Lake District faces other problems as well, and it was noted in the article that young people are finding it increasingly difficult to buy property in and around central Lakeland. Therefore, this generation are not as available to become new team members and are finding themselves squeezed out into the margins. This has not become a problem to the same extent in North Wales as yet, although clearly the signs are there. One of the biggest problems, highlighted by the article is that employers are becoming hardened to the sympathetic response they used to give when team members asked for time to attend rescues.

Gone are the days when it was ok to disappear out of the door with a jaunty "see you tomorrow". These days' economic pressures on employers mean that they demand their pound of flesh. Many of us feel that it is no longer possible to leave work without serious consideration regarding our future employment. Just how much is the modern employer prepared to put up with in terms of unscheduled short notice absence and further more do we really think that in the current economic climate it is likely that we will be paid for these absences? However the paper pointed out that it is not only the workplace where this pressure exists. Families and partners must also be considered. If there have been a number of rescues during a particular period, how fair is it to request time from your nearest and dearest to attend training events. If you have an answer to this predicament, can you please contact me.

Each year for Ogwen team we managed to attract between 2-4 new members. Not all of those who start the process will make it through to full team members, although we seriously hope that they will. We give new team members every encouragement to "make it" and make sure they don't set themselves impossible hurdles to clamber over. However, we are all conscious that as a group we are getting older and that it is imperative that we attract new young blood.

So are the problems facing the Lake District teams unique or are we potentially facing the same difficulties in North Wales? The reality is whilst we are not yet facing "melt down" the issue of team membership is one that requires our attention. The Lake District response to the problem of team member availability on rescues seems to be more inter team co-operation. They have a system where should one of the teams be called out; team leaders from other areas also receive an informative message. It would appear that joint operations and multi team callouts are becoming a more common place. So, is this the way that North Wales will go. We already know that a strong link is forged between Llanberis and Aberglasyn teams, so we need to be honest with ourselves and ask the question "how often do we feel undermanned on a rescue?" The response to this question will dictate are future actions.

My intention in writing this article is to provide debate and hopefully encourage those who read it to consider the situation. We are not at crisis point at this moment in time, but sticking out heads in the sand will not help. Our ability to be able to respond to call outs in the future will depend on the decisions we make in the next couple of years. As always, the future is an unknown destination and we travel towards it with interest and hope.

Dave Worrall

Mount Aspiring NZ

Eons ago when I first went to university at Aberystwyth I thought I needed to take up some sort of sport. I had done my best to avoid any sort of games even to the extent of organizing dental appointments instead of games. Since football and rugby were out of the question the mountaineering club 'stall' caught my attention at the 'freshers' introduction meeting. The next weekend I found myself on a coach on the way to the Ogwen valley in Snowdonia. We stayed in 'Nellie's' barn sleeping on the straw.

The next day we walked up hill for what seemed an eternity, we reached a col, then it was precariously down the other side. We were now at the start of the rock climbing route known as Amphitheatre buttress, Craig-yr-Isfa. I had a new pair of boots, which had cost me £7. But these had commando rubber soles, the latest thing and were replacing tricooney nailed boots. We had 120ft. hawser laid Viking nylon rope between 3 of us and I think the leader had 3 similar rope slings. We thought we were lucky, as nylon ropes were the new 'wonder' things replacing hemp ropes. Thus I was introduced to rock climbing and mountaineering. It was a very long climb followed by a longer 'walk off' which at times was more airy than the climb. There were, I think another three groups on the same climb so it was already quite late when we finished the climb. It was now that I met the infamous Pete Hancock. His reputation had already preceded him. He decided the entire group should finish the day in true mountaineering fashion, which meant we would climb another three peaks before descending to the valley. After the third summit, Pen-yr-Ole-Wen the inevitable happened, it went dark and of course we had no torches and certainly most of us had no idea where we were.

We got down and made it in time for a good student piss-up in the Douglas, Bethesda. Pints were 1/8d. (8p) and until just a few years ago the Douglas were still selling pints in Pounds Shillings and Pence but now £2/9/8 (£2.49p.). So back to my story and Pete Hancock, we kept in touch over the years despite him emigrating to the 'colonies' to make his fortune. A few years ago he said he wanted to climb Mount Aspiring in New Zealand. I was interested but other things got in the way, however after many changes etc. we agreed to make a date for February 2006.

As time got closer further problems developed but finally we found some other climbers to join us and we were set. Pete had found two N.Z. climbers from the N.Z. Alpine Club and I had arranged to meet a friend Tim (who I met at Coventry stamp auctions) who together with his girl friend were on a yearlong world tour and happened to be arriving in N.Z. the same day I planned to arrive.

My journey first took me to Sydney to see my son Raymond. I had planed two days with him but as it happened my arrival coincided with him moving house and I spent almost all the time helping him. All we managed was a short visit to Bondi beach, but how disappointing. It was small, we have many better beaches in Wales and where were all those beautiful bodies?

The next afternoon I arrived in Christchurch, the intention was for me to organize a hire car and wait for Tim and Nikki. However everyone else from the flight had similar ideas of car hire. Zilch. Not a car to hire, someone even offered to sell his or her car to me. I persisted with all the car rental

phone numbers in the book. To this day I am convinced I dialled a wrong number however a lady answered and gave me the same old story about no cars available but as she nattered on a bit she suddenly said a car had just returned and I could have it. I jumped at the offer but then we realised she was down town. I was at the airport and she was closing in less than an hour.

My heart sank but she took pity on me and persuaded her boss to come to the airport and pick me up so all could be sorted before closing time and I could get back to pick up Tim and Nikki. Wonderful, we had wheels and I was able to pick them up. Tim phoned to say there was a flight problem, but they still hope to arrive that evening. Fortunately they did but now where were we going to stay for the night. I had to drive so Nikki was an Angel on the mobile phone but every number she rang said Christchurch was full. She tried further afield and finally we got a place for the three of us in a dormitory somewhere outside Christchurch.

It was ideal, cheap and cheerful. Next day we continued to drive to Wanaka where we found another suitable backpackers hostel and nice pie and cake shop!! We booked in with the Park authority and awaited contact from Peter Hancock and his friends. They arrived sometime later and stayed at a friend's house. There was hope for the flight onto the mountain next morning but as we awoke the mist was down no chance! We wandered up a minor peak near the town and visited the pie and ice cream shop! For the next couple of days this became a routine apart from some climbing on local crags. On the third morning there was hope again so we drove the 40 km to the farmer who had the helicopter but he was away with other customers in Queenstown! We waited and later he returned, sniffed the weather and said get in!

Tim and I flew first, a good flight and we were dropped off at Bevan Col. As the chopper flew back there was a superb feeling of quietness and isolation suddenly finding ourselves high on the mountain. It seemed like no time before Pete, Ian and Dave arrived. We soon put on our crampons and set out across the glacier, we could see the Colin Todd Hut in the far distance perched on Ship Owners ridge above the glacier. It was an easy glacier juts a few OK crevasses then quite a steep ascent on good hard snow to the hut. This was Tim's first real experience of front point cramponing and use of an axe on steep snow. He did very well despite his concern about the gaping open crevasse below if he made a mistake!! He took it cool and thought we were at the limit of climbing unroped.

Soon the angle eased and in minutes we were in the Hut, first to arrive and choice of mattresses! Super, we had been concerned as the hut can get busy and here is only room for a few people. We realised it was only mid afternoon so we took the opportunity to explore the first part of the route, up the Ship Owners ridge above us and then onto the mountain itself. The recci was a great idea as the route finding was very problematic and proved invaluable when we came to do it for real two days later, in the dark. At the top the route moves onto snow then ahead we could see a tower which looked difficult, followed by a long narrow ridge then onto the main cliff which we knew would be very difficult to route find. Above it the angle eased and would be easier route finding straight to the top, but very exposed!

We returned to the hut, cooked a good meal and greeted the new arrivals, just a comfortable hut full. There were a couple of climbers like us and a guide with his client. The next day dawned but I don't think we even opened an eye as we could hear the storm raging outside!! Apart from a mad dash when the call of nature could be held no longer, we did not venture out of the hut all day. It was my 65th birthday! Tim magically pulled out a cake from his rucksack, specially sent up by Nikki. I cut it into enough pieces for a mouthful each, that was the highlight of the day!

Next morning did break clear and relatively calm. We set out before dawn and I was pleased I had no difficulty leading the party up the ridge and on to the snow. We got to the tower and I found

myself still leading, it was turned by a narrow ledge then there was a deep down step covered in a thin layer of verglass. I called for a rope and as usual this took some time. I made the awkward step down then up a little. The others followed and at that point Ian took the lead. At this point the guide and his client passed us in the rope confusion. The ridge I was now standing on was very narrow, sheer on both sides. It was blowing a mightily cold wind. I was cold and concerned. It was still dark and head torches did not beam far, but the route ahead looked much more of the same or worse. Dave who was now ahead called for the rope again as he had encountered another descent step with ice and we were nowhere near the serious difficult area we knew was to come. I weighed up the situation and felt I had an escape route from here back with just one rope length. All my instincts told me it was time to call it a day.

I told Tim and the others. Dave shouted back to us that he too was unhappy. Pete and Dave however decided to continue and offered Tim to join them but he decided to join Ian and we retreated. As we got back onto the relative safety of the snow the dawn opened. We could just make out the figures of the Guide now on the difficult section. We watched and it seemed an age before Pete and Dave made any noticeable progress. Then we lost sight of them. We thought of a nearby peak, went part way then decided to give this a miss also. So it was back to the hut. Later in the day we thought about trying Bevan peak, near the landing site. We crossed the glacier again and started up but as we did not have a rope with us it became another abort. However from here we could see people on Aspiring, we were sure the guide and his client had summited and were on their way back. It looked like Pete and Dave had been joined by the other two people from the hut and were battling their way up the snow above the difficult section.

After we had been back at the hut for some time the guide and his client returned. They had indeed made it but only just as conditions had seriously deteriorated and the guide would have turned back except he had an exceptional client. They had passed our friends and warned them of the conditions. It was some hours later; after it had gone dark we spotted a light high above the hut. It still took a very long time before 4 very happy but very knackered people entered the hut. They had made it! There had been no standing on the summit, just clinging onto ice axes and one quick photo. The decent also proved interesting when Dave nearly lost one of his crampons but with help managed to get it back on. Despite all this they said the worst was the descent of the ridge to the hut, as they could not find the route in the dark. After some food they slept well! The next day was the walk out from the hut to the valley. The first section to Bevan col was now easy then followed a delightful section of good steep snow, ideal for crampons. There were magnificent views in all directions but ahead only the peaks of summits appeared above a thick blanket of mist. We were aware that the descent would have some problems, after the snow section we needed to find a gully and part way down there would be a couple of anchor points for an abseil. As we entered the thick mist it became cold and difficult to find the vague track.

Fortunately the mist lessened and we were relieved to realise we were still on track. We found the gully and began descending. Tim was leading and I was next. After a while I began to think this was getting serious, I looked above me and saw I was already below the first abseil anchor point. At the same time Tim stopped having the same thoughts as me! The others were able to get out the ropes and send them down to us, the rest was easy once the ropes were sorted out! Soon we were in the bottom of the valley and thought it was nearly all over, how wrong could we have been!

The track was almost none existent and from time to time we clambered up and down and alongside the steep riverbank. Later when the track became more defined it still entailed clambering up and over tree roots and boulders. In short it was horrible. Even at the end when we could see the hut and it looked only across a grassy field the track turned back and took a detour for another 20 minutes. With the extra heavy pack we were well and truly exhausted by the time we arrived at Aspiring Hut but delighted to see Nikki and Pete's partner Pat who had walked in to greet us and bring food for a

very nice meal. The next day was a two hour walk back to the road head and then within an hour we were at the pie and ice cream shop.

I was now ahead of schedule and had to decide what to do for the next few days. Tim, Nikki and I decided to drive down to Queenstown, the adrenaline junky capital of the world! The Go-cart track at the top of the hill above the town was interesting but then Tim decided he had to try to Bungee Swing. A huge piece of elastic rope which catapults you seemingly out over the lake way below, then jolts back and forth until it comes to a stop. I watched with awe as he swung out, this was a different type of bungee jump. Then foolishly I thought I might just manage this bungee rather than the standard bungee drop, even though people around us said they thought the swing to be more exhilarating.

So it was, a short time later I found myself in the harness. The self-launch was unusual. First the normal bungee rope was pulled horizontal to another platform then, when attached I had to slide down a diagonal wire until fully suspended in space, then the scary bit, I had to pull my own lynch pin! On the count of three I was catapulted forwards and downwards then as the rope reached its elastic limit I was tugged back. This was repeated about 10 times until almost a stop whence I was hauled back up to the ordinary bungee launch platform.

Recovering with a coffee afterwards I noticed that Nikki had been missing for while, when she came back she had a smile on her face and gave me an envelope "Birthday present from her and Tim" she said. I opened it and found a ticket for a tandem paraglide! Unfortunately the weather had changed on the mountain we were on but we were taken to another mountain top where I was strapped in to a giant 'nappy' and told to start running down the steep slope, in a few seconds the world went very quite, we were launched into the air and began to soar like a bird, gently moving around up and down in the air currents

The flight lasted about 15 minutes descending slowly at times towards the valley floor but occasionally swooping down in a spiral very rapidly, unfortunately this action made me feel rather air-sick which took the edge off the experience.

Nonetheless I was very grateful to Nikki and Tim for their present, I had thought about it for years but never plucked up enough courage to do either of the things I had done today! The next couple of days were relatively tame, we drove to the bottom of South island and then to Dunedin. From there it was all the way home, I think one of the longest, almost non-stop journeys you can make in the world.

We drove from Dunedin to Christchurch where I said goodbye to Tim and Nikki who continued on their world trip for the next 8 months! Then it was a flight to Sydney, Bangkok and London with just a couple of hours at each stop. As I left Tim he said they expected to be in Nepal in September, what about joining him for a trek to Everest and climb a peak?

Bill Dean

Greenland

We left the UK on 12th May 2007 flying to Reykjavik via Keflavik airport. We met another expedition at Reykjavik City airport who were sharing the Twin Otter costs with our expedition and then took a further short flight to Akureyri where we stayed overnight night after a splendid Pizza in the local Italian restaurant. By the morning it was snowing and Gerwyn had his duvet on, in the guesthouse!

We took a taxi back to the airport and then sat and watched the rain falling from the overcast sky. At 10:00 we were called forward and boarded the Ski-Equipped Twin Otter for the flight to Constable Punt (CP) with good weather reports giving us the ideal opportunity and possibility of getting all the way to Dronning Louise Land. The Twin Otters are flown by vision (VFR), not instruments, so having good weather was critical. Whilst flying to CP we could see the extent of the sea ice; it was frozen much further south than observed on Russ's first trip in 1998.

After a two and a half hour flight we had a short fuel stop at CP where we were reunited with the rest of our kit, most of which had been shipped out a month before. We were planning to sort our kit here and leave that which we did not need in the mountains to be collected on our return. However, the pilots were keen to head north as soon as possible so we ended up carrying all our kit, including town clothes for the duration of the trip!

After this brief stop at CP we headed north to Daneborg, a 1hr 50min flight. Here we had another brief stop whilst the plane was refuelled by the pilots and the SIRIUS Dog Patrol Officers checked all our permits, weapons, ammunition, and safety equipment. The fjord was frozen and it was getting much colder.

SIRIUS is a defence unit, comprising 14 soldiers, that was created in 1950 under administration of the Danish Defence Command. In 1994 it was placed under control of the Admiral Danish Fleet. SIRIUS patrols the world's biggest National Park with an operation area of 160,000 km² (about three times the size of Denmark). Their roles are

- a) To maintain Danish sovereignty in North and North East Greenland
- a) Police authority the Northeast Greenland National Park, which is the world's largest.
- b) Conduct military surveillance over 160,000 km² by dog sledge.

Early in the fall, the sled teams build their own sledges and fabricate all the bags and boxes, which are being used on the sled journey. When there is sufficient snow, or when fjord ice is thick enough, training trips are conducted. Real patrol journeys start in early November. An average day's march is approximately 30 km, but these vary greatly depending upon conditions. Primarily the patrol overnights in tents, but there are 65 huts maintained for SIRIUS use.

When we arrived a patrol was just on its way back in. They had left only two people at the base and as they do not get many visitors they were more than happy to stand around and chat to us. They had recently had a polar bear around the camp and had to shoo it away. They did say we should not see anywhere we were going.

We then continued on the final flight to reach DLL. To reach the Southern end of the range took approximately 1hr 20m. We had requested the Twin Otter to land at 75° 57' 59.23" N, 25° 8' 16.30" W with the intention of exploring the area to the South East of here but after much circling the pilot told us he could not land due to extensive blue ice and crevasse fields. He flew North West searching for a safe landing area and after what appeared to be a couple of miles flying in ever increasing circles, we were finally dropped at 76° 11' 24.55" N, 26° 32' 49.73" W some 33 miles away from our intended landing point.

Figure 1 - The aircraft prepares to leave

We estimated that to get to our intended drop off point would take 5-6 days skiing given the large loads we had been forced to bring from CP, and the terrain, which we suspected would be blue ice and crevassed. This meant that we had to reconsider our plans as it was unrealistic to head South East for possibly 6 days before then heading back North to our pick up point. Whether we could make it to the pick up point in 3 weeks time was a serious consideration. Therefore we reluctantly changed our plans and decided to head North, following the edge of the icecap to reach our intended pick up point at 76° 28' 8.64" N, 26° 11' 36.48" W. The majority of the peaks that lay between us and our pick up point were unclimbed but still within the DLL area; they were not, however, part of the 'Fairytale Peaks' and this was a real blow so early on in the expedition. Common sense prevailed; the 'Fairytale' would have to remain so and we would head North into other uncharted areas.

Our main aim was to climb peaks (first ascents) and search for meteorites deposited on blue ice fields. We therefore intended to have relatively short sledge-pulling days between camps where we would climb nearby peaks and look for suitable meteorite stranding areas.

The first thing we noticed was how bitterly cold it was and that there was a constant and incessant wind coming off the icecap (a katabatic wind). Russ remarked on how different the climate was to that he had experienced in Southern Greenland in 1998. There they had to ski and climb at night as it was too hot during the day. This was not going to be a problem for us. There were only two days throughout the entire month we were there that were without any wind. The weather was generally good with only two days of very slight snowfall. The surface was generally good for skiing albeit with extensive sastrugi and some large areas of hard blue ice, most of which could be bypassed. In several areas there were large crevasses but these were mostly easy to spot and work around.

For the first few days we stayed at the landing zone and took time to sort kit and investigate the peaks around us. During this shake down period Gerwyn had his first attempt at skiing in the Arctic. We skied off South from camp and after only 10 minutes Gerwyn's ski binding fractured. Undaunted, Gerwyn strapped the binding up with cable ties and carried on like this for the rest of the trip. We only changed the cable ties twice after that. This was a good test of morale and ingenuity for the group. We faced what could have been a major problem and dealt with it successfully with a minimum of fuss.

West of the camp was a large easy looking peak, which we thought would be a good 'warm-up'. One of the problems with estimating distances is the very clear air and also the fact that there is nothing to give any scale. So judging distances is very hard. Russ asked Tim and Gerwyn to estimate how long it would take to ski to this peak. Both said 10 minutes. Russ estimated 20. It took us 90.

Figure 2 - Camp 1 with Penderyn in the background

Beneath the East face was a frozen pond of hard blue ice. We skirted round to the South and made a simple ascent with but breathtaking views out onto the icecap. On the ridge we found what looked like fossilized ferns. These were later identified as manganese intrusions into a thin bedding plane. The summit was very windy and very cold. We stopped a short while for photos then headed back down the ridge. As it was Russ's birthday we initially called this peak "Birthday Peak". After the celebrations back at camp we renamed it Penderyn. (For those that don't know, Penderyn is a single malt Welsh Whiskey which is rather nice.)

After a few days we decided it was time to move on. We had an enormous amount of kit and only three pulks (sledges). We managed to get it all to fit in, on and around the pulks and set off North planning around a 5 mile trip. The wind had picked up and there was a ground blizzard over 8 feet deep. After 2.5 miles Russ could see Gerwyn in the distance standing by his sledge, trying to keep warm by rubbing his hands up and down inside his jacket. When we regrouped we crouched down behind the pulks and sheltered – it was bitterly cold and we were tired. As we had no idea what we were going to meet further on we decided to stop and build an emergency camp for the night.

The morning gave us better weather so we moved on. The ground was fairly good for pulling pulks apart from the large areas of sastrugi breaking the momentum. Tim was in front and we watched him disappear over a small rise towards what he thought would be a good, sheltered campsite behind a small rocky outcrop. A few minutes later he came back, dropped his pulk and waited for us. A few minutes skiing past where we regrouped was an awesome sight.

Figure 3 - The cwm behind Camp 3

The small rocky outcrop was not as it had seemed. We were on a plateau which joined the top of a huge cwm with steep cliffs either side dropping down to a frozen blue lake. We could see huge ranges of mountains to the North for miles and miles. This was camp 3. We planned to stay for a few days so set about building a good camp for two tents. The slight slope meant we had to dig two platforms to give level bases for the tents and this took quite a while. The snow walls alone took up over 1000 hand cut snow blocks. I think we all welcomed food and bed that night.

Strange word that, 'Night'. As we were so far north, over 670 miles north of the Arctic Circle, we had 24 hour sunlight. The sun never dipped less than 40 degrees above the horizon; having said that, sleep never seemed to be a problem.

Figure 4 - Perpetual daylight

We spent a few days at this camp and climbed 5 peaks: Copa Rhosyn, Y Lliwedd, Carnedd Môr Ladron (a shapely peak just west of camp, initially named Pirate Peak due to a vision of a skull formed from snow and rock high on the face), Cornucopia and the diminutive lump Foel Fras. Far to the South we could see the Fairy Tale peaks. Just by the camp was a fantastic looking triangular peak. We skied down the glacier to find a suitable access point. This was a snow slope that led up into the rocks. This quickly led us to the ridge and a nice scramble to the summit reminiscent of the Eastern ridge of Crib Goch in Snowdonia. The camp looked tiny, way below. The views again were fantastic. We dropped down off the ridge to follow it to the next peak. On

this ridge Russ thought he found a possible meteorite but bowed to Tim's better experience. It was just a lump of iron rich rock, which inspired the ridge name "Iron Rock Ridge". To gain the ridge back to camp was interesting with steep loose scree mingled with large boulders.

Over the next few days we moved camp and climbed more peaks. Tim and Gerwyn climbed a peak a few miles from camp, naming it The Staircase (Yr Esgair) due to the shape of the Eastern ridge of which the upper part was comprised of fantastic slabs – evenly spaced – just like a staircase.

Figure 5 - Gerwyn on the summit of Yr Esgair

It was time to move on. The pick up point was still a long way away and we had no idea if we would be able to reach it easily or have to traverse many miles to bypass glaciers etc. So we packed the sledges again and skied off.

We were now passing through the area visited by the 2000 expedition and recognized the peaks they had climbed. To get to our intended camp we had to cross a large blue ice field. We adopted differing techniques. Russ remembers, "I did not want to take my skis off so slowly slid, mostly out of control, across the hard blue ice. At times I could see the pulk sliding sideways threatening to overtake me. My best plan was to ski from snow patch to snow patch where I could stop and recompose myself. I looked round at one point to watch Tim slide straight for a snow patch at speed. When he hit it, the pulk pushed him over and he ended up face flat in the hard snow with the pulk almost on top of him, much to the amusement of all".

After the ice we plodded on but as the ground was rising we ended up making a camp in the

middle of the glacier. Gerwyn and Tim climbed a peak near camp with a splendid snow ridge naming it Bryn Poeth (Warm Hill in Welsh) as they found it surprisingly hot work sheltered from the wind and in full sun. In Gerwyn and Tim can be seen as dark specs on the snow to right of the rock edge. The descent was via the rock slope to the left.

Figure 6 - Bryn Poeth

Russ meanwhile skied over to a peak that we expected had been climbed in 2000. To be alone in the quiet and enormity of the Arctic is a fantastic experience. He watched them top out and headed back to camp. The next day Gerwyn and Russ climbed the peak Russ had visited the previous day. Around its base was a huge wind scour, probably over 150 feet high with fantastic patterns in the snow. The ascent was simple enough but the rock was amazing with fossilized sea bed amongst a jumble of boulders. They sat for a while on the summit and sheltered from the wind which they could be heard hitting the face below.

When they arrived back in camp Tim had made an impressive start building an igloo. We all carried on with it but did not manage to complete it with snow blocks in time for a much needed dinner and decided to cover the remaining hole with a small flysheet. This made a huge difference to camp life. We could sit out of the wind inside and cook our meals then eat them in comfort. Tim made a window with frozen water from a pan lid, and life was good.

We planned three more camps to the pickup point. The move from camp 4 to camp 5 was a long haul and hot work. We aimed for a ridge that extended westward towards the icecap and it never seemed to get any closer. When we finally arrived it was in a superb location with stunning views onto the icecap and to the North. The snow was superb for cutting blocks and Gerwyn was on fine form with some huge blocks coming out of the quarry. After setting up camp we skied up onto a low ridge behind camp to get our first glimpse of Budolfi Isstrøm, the huge glacier that flows West / East across the lower part of DLL. Our initial plan was to ski up this from the Fairy

Tale Peaks to the pickup point. We could also see the pickup point in the distance. The views were breathtaking. That evening was very pleasant indeed. The wind stopped and for the first time we could spread our sleeping bags out to air. We discovered a new drink – Christmas Tea – a mixture of lemon tea and orange isotonic drink that proved to be a great favourite. As we lay down to sleep in the hush of the arctic Tim commented “at last a night with no wind”. What a mistake that was! Within seconds of finishing the sentence the wind whipped up and we experienced the worst night yet.

We had made plans to ascend a peak near camp for Gerwyn’s birthday but the next day dawned windy and cold. We even had to build a new loo as the old one filled with spindrift. This was a day for reading, playing cards, eating and sleeping.

From the camp we could see the way ahead passed between two peaks that had been climbed by one of the previous expeditions. Between the peaks was another blue ice field, this time uphill. This was a long cold day of pulk pulling. We crossed Budolfi Isstrøm with a constant wind and spindrift from the icecap. The blue ice was not as bad as expected but we did switch to crampons for the steeper section into our proposed camp. The plan for the morning was to climb the two peaks either side of camp and then head for the pickup point. We attacked the first peak, Falkonner Klippen, by two routes. Russ scrambled up a rotten broken rock ridge and Tim and Gerwyn took a more direct route up an ice gully. From the top of the gully it was a simple scramble to the summit with possibly the best views we had; South to the landing zone far in the distance, East to numerous peaks, West out onto the icecap and North to the pickup point. We used an Abalakov belay to secure the descent down the ice gully and skied and fell (Sorry Tim) back into camp.

Gerwyn and Tim set off for the other peak whilst Russ made tracks for the pickup point and hopefully our final camp. The sastrugi were pretty bad making slow going but he finally arrived close to the GPS points we had been aiming for. The snow was very poor for block cutting with a much layered structure. Russ managed to chop up a large lump of sastrugi and built a small wall to shelter the tent.

Whilst boiling water his foot popped through a hole in the snow about 12 inches across. The hole disappeared into a dark blue chamber and it appeared that the camp was on top of a crevasse. So when Gerwyn and Tim arrived we gingerly moved camp. Snow conditions were still poor but we eventually managed to protect the camp with our customary walls.

It was now Thursday 31st May and we were expecting to be picked up on Monday 4th June. There were many unclimbed peaks around us so potentially plenty to keep us busy. The camp was exposed with nothing but icecap to the West whereas the view to the East looked straight down Budolfi Isstrøm.

On the way in to Camp 7 we passed a tempting ridge onto a small peak. Gerwyn and Russ set off the next day to attempt it whilst Tim skied off towards the icecap to look for meteorites. The ridge was easy to attain and the skis were left just below it. The ridge soon reared up into a steep section, possibly Gr. III, and Gerwyn did a fine lead with one piece of gear. This landed them on another level section of very sharp ridge with steep drop offs on either side. After this there was a

pleasant rock scramble to the summit. This was such a satisfying route we named it “DB Ridge”. An abseil off a double Abalakov thread and dodgy ice screw saw us back on safe ground - a fantastic route.

Whilst Gerwyn and Russ were on the summit the other group could be seen skiing east from the icecap towards our camp. Due to the terrain they could not see our camp and stopped just over a mile away. We moved camp the next day to join them and created our last camp 7C (or Camp 8 depending on who you talk to). The leader of the other group, Nigel Edwards, had regular contact with the Twin Otter crew back in Iceland. The Twin Otter had intended to come in early due to a forecasted weather front. When it pulled out of the hanger its nose wheel steering didn't. The delay fixing this meant they could not fly to Greenland for the onward flight to recover us. Gerwyn was “really” disappointed with this so had to console himself with climbing more peaks, a “real blow”.

The other group were not as happy as Gerwyn with the delay. We found out later that they had told their employer that they would only be away for two weeks, planning to ‘phone up after two weeks and say the plane could not get in for a week, thus giving them the three weeks the trip was planned for. Now they had to call back and say it would be four weeks.

The Twin Otter could not fly on Tuesday due to the weather front. On the Wednesday it flew to Constable Pynt but was told it would not be able to land at Daneborg, the next landing strip North, due to weather. On the Thursday it flew to Daneborg but sustained a puncture on landing. As we were expecting to be picked up we had stripped the camp and were standing around hopefully watching the perfectly blue sky for a ‘plane. No such luck and we had to remake camp. Another Twin Otter had to fly from Iceland with spares and engineers to fit the tire. By this time some of the food was running low and Tim – a strict vegetarian – was down to his last few cup-a-soups. We woke on Friday and Nigel told us the plane was on its way, so we stripped camp once again and watched the blue sky yet again. We finally spotted the ‘plane approaching up Budolfi Isstrøm. We had marked a landing strip with bamboo canes and after one circuit they made a positive if bumpy landing. Another group piled off the plane planning to climb in this area and then move north. They were slightly disappointed that we had climbed most peaks in sight due to our enforced stay.

We quickly unloaded their kit and loaded ours. The take off was smooth with good views of the peaks we had climbed. The rest of the trip back to Iceland was uneventful. We refuelled at Daneborg, had a brew at Constable Pynt and flew back to Isafjordur on the North West coast of Iceland. Here we met another expedition that was flying in to another area further south. As they were not sure if they were getting skins for their skis we lent them ours. We heard later that when they landed in the area they were to explore, the Twin Otter got stuck in the snow and they spent the next two days digging it out before it could get back to Iceland. Frissi, the owner of the Twin Otters said “Next year, we do not fly into the mountains”. I think he had had a bad week. Russ recently discovered that three members of this group work in the same building he is currently working in. We each knew nothing of the others trip. It's a small World.

After a few hours we took a scheduled flight back to Reykjavik. After a quick shower and change of clothes we headed down town for the delights of Reykjavik - pizza or pasta for most of us

with very expensive local lager, but well worth it. We returned to the UK on Saturday 9th June safe and well having experienced Greenland's remotest beauty and its harshness.
Russ Hore, Gerwyn Lloyd, Tim Radford

The Road to IKAR 2007, Pontresina, Switzerland

The first interest in what went on at the IKAR meeting came about when some of the team visited Croatia in 2002 and met up with the rescue team from Split. The question was asked, why the OVMRO was not represented at IKAR. The answer was that we had no idea of what IKAR was about. It turned out that the Split Team had four or more members and observers who attended each year.

Sometime after our visit to Split, Dave Jones Pen called me to ask if I could go up to Aviemore to the IKAR meeting, and meet up with some of the Split Team and others we had met in Croatia. So two hours later, with bag packed we were on our way to Scotland. The conversation went along the lines of 'Dave, where is this meeting being held?' 'Not sure.' he replied 'Some hotel or other'. On entering Aviemore, the flags were out and the signs told us that the venue was the Hilton at Coylumbridge.

With no booking, we walked into the reception and were greeted by a member of the Mountain Rescue of Scotland. 'Do you have a booking?' he asked 'Nope' was our reply, 'but can we register as observers and day delegates?' So for £25, plus £15 for breakfast, we were in.

The sleeping accommodation was up to the usual Ogwen standard – the back of the Davy's van on the Hilton car park. This was our first encounter with IKAR. So what is IKAR? It is the International Commission for Alpine Rescue and is made up of the four commissions: Terrestrial, Avalanche, Air Rescue and Medical. Mountain Rescue England & Wales became members sometime in the 1980's and at the present time has three delegates who cover the Medical and Terrestrial Commissions.

For the last two years, Kevin and I have gone as observers. As we have no voting rights on IKAR politics, we have more time to see the trade stands and meet with other MR teams from all over the northern hemisphere.

This year in particular, we wanted to see the man from Teromart regarding a tripod which he lent us last year and which we managed to break during trials. He was very good about it and offered to manufacture one more suited to our needs.

The first day of conference was an all day workshop on the Corvatsch Glacier at 3,197 metres, looking at the various types of rescue equipment and the use of Dynema ropes. It was very much a hands-on day.

Most lectures started at 8.30hrs and ran on to 16.30hrs with a break for lunch. The topics were related to incidents and rescues over the previous year.

The other outdoor workshop was at night, which showed the versatility of their small helicopters, the use of high powered lights for search and rescue, the value of fluorescent markings on clothing and the various types of head lights. Afterwards we headed for the Alpen Hut and supper with schnapps from the Split boys and 'Black Death' from the Swedish contingent. A good night was had by all.

The question is, 'Is the IKAR meeting an expensive talking shop?' I think not. It is good to see what other teams are doing, what new developments there are and how we at Ogwen compare with the rest. The world is small in MR and I do think that we are singing of the same hymn sheet as the rest. Should Wales have their own delegates at IKAR, or leave it in the hands of the others across Offa's Dyke? That is the question.

I would like to thank Dave Jones, Pen for the use of his 'camperlance' or van as it is otherwise

known, as at the time I had no suitable transport and the thought of travelling 2,400 miles in Kevin's van over the high Alp passes without power steering was not an option. As for Kevin and his PASSPORT – that I think is for another day!

As the 2008 meeting is at Chamonix, hosted by the Gendarmerie Rescue Service for the Haute-Savoie, maybe some more of the team may like to attend and perhaps look at some external funding for the trip?

Roger Jones