

THE OGWEN VALLEY MOUNTAIN
RESCUE ORGANISATION

45th
ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR 2009

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

Edited by Dave and Jo Worrall

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

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Croeso i Adroddiad Blynyddol Sefydliad Achub Mynydd Dyffryn Ogwen (OVMRO) ar gyfer 2009.

Dyma fy mlwyddyn gyntaf fel cadeirydd ac yr wyf yn ei chyfrif yn fraint fawr i ddal y swydd hon. Yn fuan ar ôl imi gymryd y swydd, derbyniais yr alwad ffôn y byddwn i gyd yn ei hofni. Lladdwyd un o aelodau ein tîm, John Evans, mewn damwain ym mwllch Llanberis. Ddeuddydd wedyn bu trasiedi arall, a chlywsom fod aelod arall o'r tîm ers tro byd, Mick Parsons, wedi marw o salwch ar ei wyliau yn yr Alban. Yn aelod hynod brofiadol o'r tîm, yr oedd John yn uchel ei barch a phob amser yn barod ei gyngor. Aelod pryfoclyd, gweithgar oedd Mick, a ni fyddai bywyd byth yn ddiflas yn ei gwmni ef. Cymeriadau gwahanol iawn oeddent, ond byddai'r ddau'n cyfrannu'n enfawr i'r tîm. Byddwn ni i gyd yn gweld eu colled, a bydd ein meddyliau gyda'r teuluoedd a'u ffrindiau.

Bydd rhai ohonoch, efallai, yn darllen ein hadroddiad am y tro cyntaf, a heb fod yn sicr pa beth 'rydym yn ei wneud. Mae OVMRO yn grwp o wirfoddolwyr gyda'r nod o helpu pobl mewn cyfyngder mewn mannau anodd mynd atynt. Yr un fath â'r holl dimau achub mynydd eraill, byddwn ar gael 24 awr y dydd, 365 o ddyddiau'r flwyddyn, er y bydd yr oriau pan fydd aelod unigol ar gael yn gallu amrywio. Cyd-weithiwn yn agos â'r heddlu, y Llu Awyr a'r gwasanaethau tân ac ambiwlans, gan ategu'r gwaith ardderchog a wneir ganddynt hwy â'n medrau arbenigol pan fo angen.

Mae ystod ein medrau wedi ehangu fel nad yw 'achub mynydd' yn ddisgrifiad digonol o'n gwaith. Bydd llawer o'n galwadau'n golygu achub pobl sydd ar goll neu wedi cael anaf yn y mynyddoedd; er hynny byddwn hefyd yn archwilio dyfroedd cyflym ac yn achub pobl ohonynt; a phob hyn a hyn, yn anffodus, gelwir arnom i nôl cyrff o fannau anodd eu cyrraedd, heb fod o anghenraid yn y mynyddoedd.

Mae bod yn aelod o'r tîm yn rhoi boddhad, ond mae'n mynd â llawer o amser. Mae gennym i gyd ymrwymadau eraill, i'n gwaith cyflog ac i'n teuluoedd, ac eto llwydda'r tîm i ymateb yn brydlon i bob galwad. Ni ddaw galwad byth ar adeg gyfleus, felly ceir bob amser straen ychwanegol wrth drefnu pethau gyda'ch cyflogwr neu'ch teulu, wrth drefnu cludiant neu ofal plant, wrth ddod o hyd i offer addas ar gyfer y mynyddoedd ac wrth feddwl pa beth 'rydych chi wedi'i anghofio wrth ichi yrru i ateb galwad arall eto fyth. A bu cymaint ohonynt. O bell ffordd, 2009 fu'r flwyddyn brysuraf yn hanes y tîm, gyda 133 o alwadau wedi'u cofnodi ar wefan y tîm. Y flwyddyn brysuraf cyn hynny oedd 2008, gyda 76 o alwadau, ac ymddangosai hynny'n nifer fawr ar y pryd. Ar gyfartaledd eleni cafwyd mwy nag un alwad bob yn dridiau, ond wrth gwrs nid oedden nhw ddim wedi'u gwasgaru'n gyson, ac enghraifft dda o hyn oedd y 6ed o Fehefin. "Y Diwrnod Hwyafl" yw enw aelodau'r tîm ar y diwrnod hwnnw; bu'n rhaid inni wynebu nifer fawr o alwadau o ganlyniad i'r tywydd trybeilig yn ystod y ras fil metr flynyddol. Yn swyddogol, cofnodwyd chwe galwad, ond bu'n fwy tebyg i ddeg digwyddiad gwahanol yn ystod y dydd, wedi'u gwasgaru dros holl gadwyn y Carneddau.

Ambell dro bydd y tîm yn gweithio y tu allan i'r ardal. Yn gynnar eleni, cawsom alwad i helpu timau achub o Iwerddon i ddod o hyd i ddau ddringwr ar goll adeg eira trwchus ym mynyddoedd Wicklow. Dyna ichi olygfa: bu hofrenyddion Gwylwyr Glannau Iwerddon, yr Awyrlu Brenhinol a Lluoedd Amddiffyn Iwerddon i gyd wrthi, ynghyd â channoedd o bobl o dimau achub mynydd a'r fyddin yn chwilio'r mynydd.

Er mwyn cadw ein medrau, mae gennym raglen hyfforddi gynhwysfawr iawn. Ceir diwrnod llawn y dydd Sul cyntaf o bob mis, sesiynau dwy awr bob nos Fercher, a chyrisiau megis cymorth cyntaf, achub technegol, achub mewn dyfroedd cyflym ac mewn rheoli chwiliad, sy'n parhau am nifer o ddyddiau. Ar ben hyn, ceir y gweinyddu. Ceir gweithgorau ar gyfer y gwahanol fedrau gweithredol, pwyllgor sy'n ymdrin â rhedeg y tîm o ddydd i ddydd a grwp y ty sy'n gofalu am

adeiladwaith yr adeilad. Mae gennym gryn dipyn o offer y mae angen ei gynnal a chadw, cerbydau i'w cadw'n barod i redeg, systemau TG a gwefan i'w datblygu, swyddogion y wasg ar gyfer y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg; mae'r rhestr mor hir fel bod gan y rhan fwyaf o aelodau'r tîm, heblaw eu hymrwymiaidau i hyfforddiant a galwadau, o leiaf un ddyletswydd arall i'w gyflawni.

Er hynny, down o hyd i amser i ymlacio a mwynhau ein hunain, a chafwyd nifer o ddigwyddiadau cymdeithasol yn ystod y flwyddyn. Yr oedd y sesiwn ffaglau a thân gwyllt, noson tân gwyllt, yn arbennig o ddifyr, a bu'n gefndir anarferol ar gyfer y grwp a gâi ei achub o uwchben Cwm Tryfan ar y pryd, a gafodd olygfa ardderchog o'r sioe. Tybed beth a aeth trwy eu meddyliau.

Bydd aelodau'r tîm yn disgwyl y cinio flynyddol, fis Mawrth, gyda phleser ac arswyd ill dau, gan mai dyma'r achlysur pan ddyfernir gwobrau am bethau megis mynd ar gyfeiliorn, anghaffael wrth yrru a'u tebyg. Nid oes gennyf yr un syniad pa beth a ddaw i'r amlwg eleni, ond mae un cynnig rhagorol yn haeddu sylw cyn y gwobrwyo. Llwyddodd un o'n haelodau, ni chrybwyllir mo'i enw, i yrru un o gerbydau'r tîm yn erbyn coeden; neu efallai mai wal ydoedd, neu i'r ffos, ond yn bendant 'roedd yn rhywbeth. Ni fyddai cymaint o hynny o ymateb fel arfer, ond 'roedd ar ei ffordd i gwrs gyrru dros sawl diwrnod gyda'r heddlu er mwyn dysgu bod yn hyfforddwr gyrru'r tîm. Ni allaf ond dychmygu'r hwyl ym mhencadlys yr heddlu pan gawsant yr alwad yn egluro pam yr oedd yn hwyr ar ei ddiwrnod cyntaf.

Eleni tîm Dyffryn Ogwen a fydd yn croesawu achlysur pwysig ar ran corff cyd-drefnu achub mynydd yng Nghymru a Lloegr. Yr ydym o hyd wrthi'n trefnu'r manylion, ond mae'n addo bod yn ddiwrnod diddorol. Yn ogystal, 'rydym yn ystyried adfer ein ras rafftiau achlysurol, sydd bob amser yn ddifyr, er yn wlyb. Unwaith eto, hefyd, byddwn yn cynnal ein prif ddigwyddiad codi arian, Tro Wyth Copa Ogwen (Oggie 8 Challenge) – tro o gwmpas wyth prif gopa ein hardal. Bu nifer da yn cymryd rhan yn ras 2008, gyda'r tywydd bendigedig yn sicrhau diwrnod difyr a llwyddiannus

Wrth imi ddirwyn y rhagair hwn i ben, hoffwn ddiolch i bawb sydd wedi helpu'r tîm yn ystod y flwyddyn. Wrth gwrs, dyna aelodau'r tîm eu hunain, ond diolchwn hefyd i'r holl wasanaethau brys sy'n gweithio gyda ni, gan gynnwys aelodau timau cyfagos. Mae 333, ein grwp cefnogi, yn parhau i wneud gwaith aruthrol wrth godi arian i'r tîm a chawn gefnogaeth ardderchog gan Betty Williams, ein haelod seneddol lleol, hefyd. 'Rydym yn ddiolchgar hefyd i dirfeddianwyr yr ardal am eu cefnogaeth a'u goddefgarwch.

Yn olaf, mae'r tîm yn awyddus iawn i gydnabod y ffaith ein bod ni'n gweithredu yng nghanol y fro Gymraeg, a llynedd fe fabwysiadwyd polisi dwyieithog. Rhan o'r polisi hwn yw cynhyrchu'r rhagair hwn yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg.

Gobeithio y mwynhewch yr adroddiad hwn.

Tim Radford
Cadeirydd Mygedol

Welcome to the Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation (OVMRO) Annual Report for 2009.

This is my first year as Chair and I consider it a great honour to hold this position. Shortly after taking the post I received the call that we all dread. One of our Team members, John Evans, had been involved in a fatal accident in the Llanberis pass. Two days later further tragedy was to strike as we heard the news that another long-standing Team member, Mick Parsons, had died as a result

of illness while on holiday in Scotland. John was a hugely experienced and well-respected member of the Team who was always willing to offer advice. Mick was a cheeky, hard-working member and there was never a dull moment when he was around. They were very different characters, but both were enormous contributors to the Team. We will all miss them, and our thoughts are with their families and friends.

Some of you may be reading our report for the first time and are wondering what we do. OVMRO is a group of volunteers who aim to help people in distress in difficult-to-reach areas. We, like all other mountain rescue teams, are available 24 hours a day 365 days a year, although individual member's availability can vary. We work closely with the Police, the RAF and Fire and Ambulance services and supplement the excellent work already done by these agencies with our specialist skills as needed.

Our range of skills has increased such that the tag mountain rescue does not really cover what we do. Although many of our incidents do involve rescuing lost or injured people in mountainous environments, we also perform searches and swift-water rescue; and sadly, occasionally we are called upon to recover bodies from difficult-to-reach areas not necessarily in a mountain environment.

Being a member of the Team is rewarding but very time-consuming. We all have other commitments to work or families, yet the Team still manages a timely response to all incidents. Callouts never come at convenient times, so there is always the added stress of negotiating with an employer or family, arranging transport or childcare, finding suitable hill kit and wondering what you have forgotten as you drive to yet another incident. And what a lot of incidents there have been. 2009 was easily the busiest year in the Team's history with 133 callouts recorded on the Team website. The next busiest year had been 2008 with 76 and at the time that seemed like a lot. The year's tally averaged out at more than one incident every three days, but of course they weren't evenly spread, and June 6th was a good example of this. Known as "The Longest Day" among Team members, we were faced with multiple incidents as a result of horrendous weather during the annual 1000 metres race. Officially recorded as 6 callouts, there were more like 10 separate incidents during the day spread over the whole range of the Carneddau.

Occasionally the Team works outside of area. Early on in the year we were called to assist Irish Rescue teams locate two climbers lost in deep snow conditions in the Wicklow Mountains. That was a sight to see: helicopters from the Irish coastguard, RAF and Irish Defence Force were all operating, with literally hundreds of mountain rescue and army personnel scouring the mountain.

In order to maintain our skills we have a very comprehensive training program. There are full days on the first Sunday of every month, two-hour sessions every Wednesday evening, and multi-day courses such as first aid, technical rescue, swift-water rescue and search management. On top of this is the administration. There are working groups for the various operational skills, a committee that handles day-to-day running of the Team and a house group that looks after the fabric of the building. We have a substantial amount of equipment that needs maintaining, vehicles to be kept in running order, IT systems and a website to develop, press officers for both English and Welsh, the list goes on; such that, in addition to the commitments to training and callouts, most Team members have at least one other duty to perform.

But we do find time to relax and enjoy ourselves, and there have been various social events throughout the year. The bonfire night flares and fireworks session was particularly entertaining and provided an unusual backdrop for the party who were being rescued from above Cwm Tryfan at the time, in full view of the pyrotechnic display. I wonder what they thought about it all.

The annual dinner in March is looked forward to and dreaded in equal measure by Team members, as this is when awards for such things as navigational mishaps, driving hiccups and the like are dished out. I have no idea what will feature this year but one sterling attempt does merit a pre-awards mention. One of our members, who shall remain nameless, managed to drive a Team vehicle into a tree; or maybe it was a wall, or a ditch; but it was definitely a something. This would provoke limited reaction normally, but he was on his way to a multi-day police driving course to learn to become a Team driving instructor! I can only imagine the amusement at police headquarters when they got the call explaining why he was late for the first day.

This year the Team will be hosting a major event on behalf of the coordinating body of mountain rescue in England and Wales. Details are still being worked out at the moment but it promises to be an interesting day. In addition, we are looking at reviving our occasional raft race, always an amusing, if wet, event. We will also once again be holding our major fund-raising event the Oggie 8 Challenge – a walk around the 8 major peaks of our area. The 2009 event was well attended and the glorious weather ensured that it was an enjoyable and successful day.

As I bring this foreword to a close I would like to thank everyone who has helped the Team throughout the year. Of course there are the Team members themselves, but in addition thanks go to all the emergency services that we work with, including our colleagues in the neighbouring teams. Our support group 333 continue to do fantastic work raising funds for the Team and we also have excellent support from Betty Williams our local MP. We are also grateful to local landowners for their support and understanding.

Finally, the Team is keen to recognise the fact that we operate within the heart of the Welsh community and last year adopted a bi-lingual policy. Part of this policy is to produce the foreword in both English and Welsh.

I hope you enjoy the report.

Tim Radford
Honorary Chairman

Team Leaders Report

I am sure that a re-occurring theme for this year will be the high level of incidents that the Team has been involved in. However from the Team Leaders perspective, there have been a number of issues and activities this year which are worthy of comment. I would particularly like to bring to light those subjects, which are very much the realm of the Team Leaders and not part of the general Team activity.

First of all, there is a tool that the Team Leaders have utilised on a number of occasions this year and that is Conference Calls. We have used these in the past but this year I believe they were more prominent and of great value to us. Sadly, one of the prominent occasions when this was needed was following the death of John Evans. A SMS text message was put out to the Team Leader group requesting an urgent conference call. It was only when the call began that we were informed that John had died. In itself this was difficult to deal with but we realised that the Team Leaders needed to think about how to inform the rest of the team and John's friends. We all felt that rather than people hear through the grape vine that we should contact people directly and let them know what had happened. So through that sad night the Team Leaders and the Chairman phoned all the Team members and Friends to personally tell them of the events.

Later in the year, we used the conference call system to discuss our response to a request for assistance in the Lake District. A request had come via the Police for help searching for people following the Cocker mouth floods, and as the decision to deploy Team members needed to be swift, a conference call was used to allow us to discuss the matter.

Although not strictly part of the time period for this report, the winter snows, which devastated the country in early January, again meant that the only way to discuss our response was to hold a conference call. We had been contacted by the Welsh Ambulance service to see if we could provide 4x4 vehicles/ambulances to access homes where the normal ambulances couldn't get. First of all we had to physically dig our vehicles out from Oggie Base as the track was pretty impassable. Once this had been sorted out we were happy to assist the Ambulance service with transporting people to hospital. Due to the weather conditions alone, we could not have discussed and planned this activity any other way except via the Conference Call. I believe it will be a very valuable tool for us this next year as well.

Clearly, the major topic this year has been the unprecedented number of incidents. The final tally for the year was 133, which is an astonishing number and doesn't include a number of instances where the Team Leaders have investigated an incident, which has turned out to be a false alarm, or of a minor nature.

I think the jury is still out as to why there has been a sudden increase in the number of incidents but for whatever reason, it has put an enormous strain on the Team's resources. The sheer number of incidents plus the training, which is essential to maintain skill level, has resulted in fatigue. The Team Leader group is very conscious of the fantastic commitment members make and we would like to thank you all for your unstinting support this year.

One of the consequences of the increase in numbers has been the need to call in other teams to assist us in rescues. Our neighbouring team in Llanberis, have themselves seen a huge increase in call outs and it would be unrealistic to think that they would also have the capacity to assist us. This is not to say that they wouldn't be willing and that we haven't called them. Certainly we have worked with them on rescues this last year.

We have also called on the services of North East Wales Search and Rescue Team (NEWSAR), RAF Valley MRT, South Snowdonia, Glossop and Edale (forgive me if I have missed any). And it was as a result of working with NEWSAR that we started to talk with them about a closer collaboration. Discussions are currently underway but we would really like to form a closer working link with NEWSAR for the future. They are a fine bunch of people, willing to help out and we look forward to working with them.

One of the peculiarities about Ogwen Team is that it has a number of Team Leaders. Now the title doesn't really matter that much, in effect we have a number of individuals who have the experience and skills to organise and run a rescue. They are the ones who ultimately have the responsibility for the operation. As with all things Ogwen, we try to ensure that fresh blood is brought into the organisation and this is just as essential at the Team Leader level.

This year we have had a new intake of Trainee Team Leaders. They have shadowed the existing Team Leaders, organised complex training events and generally worked hard to develop their abilities. This has been a long hard year for them and they are to be commended for the effort they have put in. At the AGM they will know the result of all their efforts when the Team members have their final say as to whether the Trainees become Team Leaders. They don't need luck because they have all put the work in. By the time you read this, the decision will have been made. The review and ratification of Team Leaders at 3-year intervals is a process unique to OVMRO and I think it makes us a stronger team.

So it has been an eventful year and for me as an individual there is one day that I shall not forget in a long while. It has now passed into legend and is referred to as the "Longest day". You will find the statistics for this rescue or should I say rescues in the incident report. It was the day that the annual Welsh 1000m Race was held and it turned into a disaster. Peculiarly for a rescue, the first call came in at 10 o'clock and after that it just didn't seem to stop. One incident after another followed during the day and at one point it seemed as though we were trying to deal with 10 separate incidents. Paul and I must have looked punch drunk as the race and its participants inundated us with rescue after rescue.

Team members were scattered across the Carneddau to try and locate missing race participants. Police, Ambulance and RAF helicopters were deployed to try and recover individuals, SARDA and other teams were asked to provide support. Concerns for the welfare of individuals who were cold, wet and exhausted kept us looking. Often we could speak to casualties on the phone but struggled to find them on the hill. The day went on and on, and night turned into the next day. Eventually everybody was recovered from the hill and thankfully we could go home to bed and rest.

It has been one of those years, when looking back you cannot help but be proud of an organisation whose members have given so much. The Team and everybody associated with the organisation (partners, 333, supporters etc) really have gone the extra mile (and then a bit more) to make sure that each and every casualty had the best treatment and service we could possibly give them. So give yourselves a pat on the back. This year will be one we won't forget in a hurry.

Dave Worrall
Team Leader

Incident Report 2009

Last year I said that there was a large jump in the workload of the team. This report sees another with the incidents going through the roof from 81 to 133. Again a spread throughout the year with the quietest month being April with 6 and three months tying at the top with 16 incidents June, August and October. Tryfan had the highest number of incidents with 36 with a massive jump in the number on the Carneddau with 30. The lost stolen and strayed almost doubled to 67.

Incidents in which the major injury was:

Age distribution of those assisted was as follows: %

Some of the non-recorded were taken direct to the hospital by 22 Sqn or recorded by another Team we were called to assist.

Incidents where we worked with other teams or agencies:

Our thanks go to the other organisations that came to our assistance when called upon, while we have always tried to respond to calls for assistance from other organisations. Over the year there was an average of just over 11 members responded to each incident making up a total of 1467 responses to the call out system.

A breakdown of the areas we operated in last year was: -

Neil Adam

JANUARY

2nd 1615 hrs 1.5 hours Behind Bryn Poeth

Female 30 yrs Fractured ankle

A large group of friends was returning to the road when she slipped on a tongue of ice. Both OVMRO and Wales Ambulance Service (WAS) were alerted. An Ambulance was passing Base and so stopped and the personnel went up to the casualty, treated and waited for the team to evacuate her. 12 Team members involved.

3rd. 1700 hrs 4 hours Lower slopes of Yr Elen

Male 54 yrs Fractured ankle

A well equipped group was descending Yr Elen when he slipped on ice. He was carried/sledged to the road head. The team was requested to transport him to the hospital in the Land Rover.

14 Team members involved.

3rd 1840 hrs 6 hours Idwal Slabs Walk Off

2 Males 22 yrs & 23 yrs No injuries

The pair took 6 hours to complete the Ordinary Route on the slabs and finished in the dark. They were unwilling or unable to complete the walk off and called for help. They were able climbers on indoor walls but this was their first venture into the outdoors and their lack of mountaineering experience was the key cause of the incident.

9 Team members involved.

8th 1135 hrs 1 hour Idwal Staircase

Male 50 yrs Head lacerations.

Solo ice climbing on Idwal Staircase when he slipped and fell about 20 meters. A passerby treated the scalp wounds and called for assistance. OVMRO and Helemed responded. The casualty was walked to the helicopter for evacuation. 22 Sqn were also training in the area and offered assistance.

13 Team members & 1 Llanberis MRT involved.

10th 1340 hrs 7 hours Nr Garnedd Fach (Between Pen yr Ole Wen and Carnedd Dafydd)

Female 45 yrs Fracture/dislocation of elbow

The well equipped group were making their way from Carnedd Dafydd to Pen yr Ole Wen when she was blown over into rocks and another member of the group then landed on top of her. One group set off and assistance was requested from 22 Sqn. With winds of 109 mph at the site they were unable to reach the location but dropped a group on the route up. With the very high winds the evacuation was very slow and the casualty could not be carried on the stretcher and walked down with support after being given pain relief and being splinted. Several rescuers were blown off their feet and sustained minor injuries.

26 Team members involved plus 5 members Valley MRT.

10th 1809 hrs 8.5 hours PYG track (below Zig Zag gables)

2 males both 27 yrs Arm, leg and head injuries

They had climbed Clogwyn y Person and were descending the PYG track when one was blown off and fell approx 70 meters. The other was preparing to descend to his companion when he also slipped and fell near to his friend. Llanberis had a number of jobs on and requested assistance. A combined team went up and 2 members roped down, treated the casualties who were then raised back to the path and walked off. Several MRT blown over and injured.

27 LLMRT, 5 OVMRO, 8 Aberglaslyn MRT, 7 Valley MRT. Involved.

18th 1420 hrs 2.5 hours Above Milestone Buttress

Male 23, Female 20 yrs No injuries.

An inexperienced party of two decided to climb Tryfan with no idea of what they were doing. They followed another party up the North Ridge until they lost contact with them and became lost. They tried to descend but strayed onto the broken ground above the Milestone Buttress and ended up on a ledge too afraid to move up or down. They were contacted by the team on their mobile but had no idea where they were and could not use their map. Spotters on the road managed to locate them with binoculars and guided the hill party in to them. They were walked off the hill.

19 Team members involved.

20th 1500 hrs 1.8 hours Glyder Fawr

2 females No injuries, .stuck on icy ridge

They phoned 999 to say they were stuck on icy ground. They had ice axes but could not move. The Team was activated when they rang 999 again to say their friends had found them and they could now move. The call out was canceled and they were asked to inform North Wales Police when they were off the mountain.

3 members involved.

FEBRUARY

1st 0940 hrs 4.8 hours Foel Grach

Male 47 yrs Bruising to face and ribs, blown over

A well equipped group had left Gerlan the previous day to walk over the Carneddau to bivy in the Cwm Dylan Bothy and return. Bad weather slowed their progress (conditions cloud, very windy, ice underfoot). They had only reached the region of the Foel Grach Hut when darkness fell and so they decided to stay there. Next morning they set off again and the Casualty was blown over after a short distance. They retreated to the shelter to assess his injuries. With facial and rib injuries they decided to ask for assistance. As a practice was just starting a large stretcher party was sent round to Melynlyn to walk in from there. Three members had a bumpy flight up to the ridge by 22 Sqn giving them a 10 minute walk in. Assessed and given pain relief the casualty was then able to walk out with assistance.

25 Team members involved.

7th 1620 hrs 3.75 hours Glyder Fach, Bristly Screes

Male 53 yrs Head lacerations and bruising.

Ground conditions snow and ice, Weather light snow with cloud on tops. A party of four had ascended Bristly Ridge and intended to go over the Glyderau and down past the Devil's Kitchen but with cloud on the tops and unsure of the route decided to descend the Screes. A more experienced member of the group descended with crampons and ice axe while his three friends followed with no winter equipment. A member of the team was on the ridge and she saw two of the party stuck on steep snow and the third member fall a considerable distance. With her companion she was able to rope the two stuck people to a safe position and then descended to the fallen man. He had head lacerations but was prepared to walk down with assistance after being patched up. He was transported to hospital for a check up and then discharged. A very lucky man.

8 Team members involved.

7th 1715 hrs 0.25 hours Bristly Ridge

Report of person or party stuck on ridge False alarm

The informant dialed 999 to report a sighting of lights on the ridge. These were seen to be moving but were monitored by members out on the next incident.

3 Team members involved.

7th 1750 hrs 2.75 hours Path by Idwal Slabs

Female 27 yrs Fractured ankle

She was descending the path by the Idwal Slabs and slipped on ice and fractured her ankle. Members were diverted from another call out. She was treated on scene and carried down to the Idwal Car Park to an awaiting Ambulance. An unfortunate incident as she had taken her crampons off only moments before as she was now on a good path.
22 Team members involved.

10th 0630 hrs 11.75 hours Wick low Mountains
2 male's 32 & 34 yrs Mild hypothermia.

The Team was asked to assist with the search for two missing climbers who had been out overnight on the Wicklow Mountains. Six were flown to Ireland with 10 Valley MRT . 6 others were at Valley for possible Airlift if needed. A multiagency search located them. Carried to below cloud level and airlifted to hospital.
13 Team members involved.

10th 2350 hrs 4.5 hours Devil's Kitchen area
Male 43 yrs, Female 53 yrs No injuries, lost in the dark

A well equipped couple set off at 11 am to climb Idwal Stream. It took longer than they expected and they chose to complete the route even though darkness was rapidly falling. They seemed unaware of escape routes. They arrived at the top in cloud, darkness and all paths covered in snow. They said they knew the area very well but were unable to find the path down past the Devil's Kitchen. At nearly midnight they called for help. They could not be reached by mobile so 2 parties set out. They were found by Llyn y Cwn and brought down to below the cloud line where they were picked up by 22 Sqn. and deposited at Base. Good equipment but lack of navigation skills.
7 Team members involved.

16th 1650 hrs 2 hours Carnedd Llewellyn
3 males no ages No injuries, lost in the cloud and snow

A group of three were looking for Foel Grach and became lost. They were contacted by phone and advised on potential routes off the mountain. Their progress was monitored by phone until they reached Gerlan.
10 Team members involved.

21st 1855 hrs 9.5 hours Bilberry Terrace, West Buttress, Lliwedd
3 Males 52, 24, 52 yrs Mild hypothermia

The party of three had a poor choice of route which was beyond their capabilities added to a late start (1300 hrs at start of climb). Poor gear (1 in appropriate footwear, only 30m of rope, 1 torch, clothing only just suitable). The leader went off route and although he claimed to be an E3 leader could not reverse to his companions and was stuck in a precarious position and the others could not assist him. A strong team of Llanberis, RAF MRT and Ogwen went up to the summit and a party abseiled down to the group who were then hauled up to the top to be walked off.
20 Llanberis, 10 RAF MRT, and 12 Ogwen Team members involved.

25th 0930 hrs 1.5 hours An island in the Afon Ogwen
North Wales Police (NWP) asked the Team to retrieve some articles from an island in the River Ogwen. This was carried out; the articles photographed, documented and handed over to NWP.
13 Team members involved.

28th 1905 hrs 7 hours 50 min Seniors Ridge, Glyder Fawr
School Party of 16 No injuries but cold

The party were on their way from Llyn y Cwn to summit Glyder Fawr when one started to struggle. One leader stayed with her while the rest went on. While on the summit the main party started

having problems with some sick and others feeling unwell. The leader of this group decided on a retreat down Seniors Ridge rather than the planned route. They were caught out by darkness and a shortage of torches. The two parties had never been in contact so 22 Sqn and Llanberis were asked to search the southern side of the Glyders. Ogwen found and escorted the main group off the hill while the other two were found in Cwm Ffynnon. No ages were noted of the parties.

11 Team members, 1 SARDA, Llanberis (no numbers) involved.

MARCH

5th 1300 hrs 2 hours 20 min Conwy Falls

Male 52 yrs Dislocated Shoulder

He was taking photographs standing close to the Falls when he slipped on damp rocks and dislocated his shoulder as he fell. He could not find an easy way up from the river so his wife returned to the Café to request help. He was given treatment and pain relief and was then able to walk out with assistance. He was taken to hospital by Team Landrover.

13 Team members involved.

6th 0530 hrs 2.5 hours Ty Coch, Rhiwddolion, Betws y Coed

Male Fatal.

NWP asked the Team to assist with the removal of a body from a property above Betws y Coed as they were unable to drive their vehicles to the house. The Team Landrover was able to access property and the body was removed and taken to Yspty Gwynedd. 12 Team members involved.

18th 1240 hrs 3 hours 50 min North Gully, East Face of Tryfan

Male 61yrs Cragfast, no injuries.

The Casualty, without any scrambling experience, walked from Capel Curig and ascended the North Ridge of Tryfan. When he got to the base of North Tower he decided to follow the Eastern Traverse and on reaching the crossing of North Gully he decided not to continue and decided to descend the Gully. He managed to descend most of the gully only to become cragfast just below the Cave Pitch and called for help. A small team was sent up and did a simple lower and pick-off to get him to the Heather Terrace from where he was walked off.

15 Team members involved.

21st 1645 hrs 2 hours Lower part of the North Ridge of Tryfan

Female 30 yrs Injury to lower leg

She was descending the North Ridge of Tryfan when she took a tumbling fall of about 30 ft. Pain in the lower leg stopped her walking off so they called for help. There was a team practice going on so a party was sent to retrieve her. She was treated and carried down to the road by stretcher. The hospital found soft tissue injury to the thigh.

26 Team members involved.

21st/22nd. 1700 hrs 18.5 hours Ty Coch (between Penmachno and Dolwyddelan)

Missing person, no injuries

The Casualty and her daughter were staying at a Riding stables with the daughter riding and the mother walking and bird watching. The mother failed to return from a walk on the Saturday morning. By mid afternoon they were concerned and went to look for her on horse and bicycles, when they found no trace they called NWP. An extensive search of the area was carried out throughout the night by Rescue Teams, Dog handlers and NWP helo. Next morning the search started early with more rescue teams and RAF Helo. In late morning her mobile was found and she was spotted in dense woodland and ground troops guided in to her. Cutting away branches she was walked out to the forestry road. She had lost her way and decided to crawl into the thick tree cover

to keep warm (dog also helped) and waited for help. She did not hear the search teams during the night.

28 Team members involved plus NWP and RAF Helicopters, SARDA, NEWSAR, SSSART.

28th 1405 hrs 3 hours Foel Goch slopes, Nant Ffrancon
Male 54 yrs Chest injury

A party of three was on the Fisherman's path when he slipped and fell injuring the side of his chest. They tried to get him down themselves but pain prevented further progress. They went to Hafod to raise the alarm. A member of the Buxton MRT was there and set off to assist while the Team was called. Due to the injuries 22 Sqn were requested and they evacuated him to Ysbyty Gwynedd.

15 Team members involved.

31st 2015 hrs 4.5 hours Carnedd Uchaf
1 Male, 1 Female (no ages given) No injuries

Two friends were crossing the Carneddau late in the evening. As they left Foel Grach for Carnedd Uchaf they lost the path and became disoriented in the fading light and cloud. They had torches but were unhappy so called for help. They were contacted by mobile and directed down to Bethesda. They were monitored until reaching the road.

12 Team members involved.

APRIL

2nd 1215 hrs 8.25 hours Near South Gully, Tryfan
Male 25 yrs Fatal

He left home on Sunday 29th March with the intention of walking in Snowdonia. He did not return home the following day and was reported missing to the Police on Wednesday. His friends arrived in Snowdonia on the Thursday morning and found his car in the Milestone car park and started searching on Tryfan and Bristly ridge area. NWP called the team to assist in the early afternoon. A full search was started and the body was spotted by Police helicopter on the east face of Tryfan. 22 Sqn lifted team members to near the scene where the Fatal Incident Protocol was carried out and he was evacuated to Ysbyty Gwynedd by RAF helicopter.

25 Team members involved

4th 1600 hrs 1.75 hours Moel Siabod Male No injuries

A group of 6 friends had camped near Llyn y Foel on the south side of Moel Siabod. They walked to the summit of Moel Siabod and then decided to take a short cut to the footpath below. One of the party got cragfast about 15 ft above the path and the others were unable to assist him. He was located and extracted.

14 Team members involved.

4th 2330 hrs 1 hour Glyderau
1 Male 35 yrs, 1 Female 31 yrs No injuries

An informant informed NWP that two of his friends were attempting the Welsh 3000's and should have been at Gwern Gof Isaf campsite at 2000 hrs and had not arrived by 2300. They had no mountain experience and were not well equipped. They arrived as the team were preparing for a search. They had totally overestimated their own capability and were much slower than they expected. 3 members had arrived when the stop call was sent out.

5th (Callout started 3rd at 1634 hrs. and finished at 1800 on 5th) Team involvement only on Sunday 5th Above the Ceiriog Valley Fatal

The Casualty had left home (to go to work) on Monday 30th March but went to Oswestry where he bought a number of items including a bottle of vodka. He drove to the Ceiriog Valley area where his car was found. His wife reported him missing to Dyfed Powys Police. On the 3rd April his wife

found the car and reported it to the police. NWP now involved and SARDA and NEWSAR were involved. Intensive searching was carried out on 3, 4, 5th April by teams from Newsar, Sarda, SSmrt, RAF MRT, OBSrt, OVRMO. 6 Team members involved

8th 1540 hrs 2 hours 10 min Little Tryfan descent

Male 49 yrs Fractured ankle

The Casualty was climbing on Little Tryfan with his 11 year old son and they were walking down the descent still in rock shoes when he slipped on wet grass and fractured his ankle. He was treated and carried down to the Farm. The son being a minor was also taken to the hospital by the ambulance.

15 Team members involved.

12th 1550 hrs 3 hours South Ridge Tryfan

Male 13 yrs Injury to right knee

A party of three Scout leaders and 2 scouts were descending the south Ridge of Tryfan when the casualty slipped and damaged his knee. The three leaders carried him down the South Ridge to within about 500 ft of the Bwlch. They were tiring and called for help. He was treated and carried down. 22 Sqn picked up the casualty from the grasslands east of Bochlwyd and flew him to hospital.

18 Team members involved.

MAY

2nd 1740 hrs 30 min Below summit of Tryfan

1 male and 1 female No injury

A party of two became stuck below the summit of Tryfan. The female was exhausted and both were poorly equipped. They had failed to find their way down after three attempts. A party was assembling when another phone call was received to say that they had met up with another group who were happy to bring them down.

9 Team members involved.

2nd 2055 hrs 0.5 hours East Face Tryfan

1 Female plus 3 others Overdue climbers

A man called to say his wife plus three had not returned from a days climbing on the East Face, Tryfan. He was concerned because they were not experienced climbers and normally she would phone home when they completed the route. The Team put on standby. She arrived home shortly afterwards. No action taken.

5 Team members involved.

9th 1850 hrs 4 hours Carnedd Uchaf and Aber Valleys

Missing Fell Runner No injuries

He was reported missing after checking through Carnedd Uchaf check point and not recorded on next check points. Weather was poor with poor visibility on the summits and in the Conwy Valley side. A Search was mounted and assistance given by NWP Helo until darkness fell. At about 2130 hrs he phoned from Tal y Bont and was safe and well. He was told to wait for the MRT to collect him but went to the Y Bedol pub and was taken home by NWP. He later said he had got completely lost in the visibility, did not know how to use a compass and his photocopied map (supplied by the race organisers had got wet and disintegrated. Better race management, equipment checks and clear briefings could have avoided this incident.

25 Team members involved.

17th 1520 hrs 1 hour 10 min Bristly Ridge

3 males (58,41,22) 2 Females (24, 13) No injuries.

This well equipped group of five was scrambling up Bristly Ridge, a route they had done before.

When they were on the route it started raining and the young girl began to have problems. They decided to ask for help at this stage. The team had set out on foot to reach them but 22 Sqn were already in the area and went straight in and snatched the whole party who were returned to Base for a warm up.

17 Team members involved.

19th 1540 hrs 2 hours Afon Ddu

Male 31 yrs Knee Injury

He slipped and damaged his knee whilst gorge scrambling. They called an ambulance who reached him but could not extract him and the Team was then called. He was extracted and carried the short distance to the ambulance.

10 Team members involved.

23rd 1600 hrs 1.5 hours Llyn Idwal

Male 21 yrs No injury, medical condition

The Team was contacted by the Welsh Ambulance Service to assist with the evacuation of a male who had been found fitting at the outflow of Llyn Idwal. A party was sent to assist the 2 Policemen, 1 Paramedic and 22 Sqn to treat the casualty. 22 Sqn evacuated him and the team walked down with the others.

6 Team members involved.

23rd 1740 hrs 3.5 hours Carneddau

Female 17 yrs Asthma attack

The Casualty was walking on the Carneddau with 6 other D of E students when she had an attack. She was placed in a tent and a call for help was made. They had little idea of where they were as there was intermittent cloud. NWP helicopter located them and flew a paramedic to the scene and evacuated the casualty. A PC was left at the scene to walk down with the group. The Team retrieved him and the group.

24 Team members involved.

25th 1530 hrs 4 hours Moel Siabod

2 Males (44 yrs, 14 yrs) 2 Females (36yrs, 12yrs) No Injuries

A totally unnecessary call out by a party of four lost on Moel Siabod in clear, dry, sunny conditions with 6 hours of daylight remaining. They parked in the Capel Curig area and walked up the East Ridge to the summit area. They came across a scrambling area and were advised to go round by a passer by. They could not follow the directions given by Base and came out at the forestry on the south side of Siabod. They had an old dog with them which was exhausted and could not explain why they had not retraced their route or walked down hill to the road and sorted themselves out.

9 Team members involved

26th 1710 hrs 2.25 hours Above Milestone Buttress, Tryfan

1 Female (no age), 2 males (15,13yrs)

This family group had ascended the North Ridge of Tryfan as far as the North Tower and decided to return down their route. They strayed onto the steep group above the Milestone Buttress. The mother rang the NWP for advice on a descent route. They were spotted from the road and it was decided to send a team up to escort them as they were on difficult ground. The elder son had an old knee injury which was strapped up and he was given pain relief to help him down.

5 Team members involved.

28th 1702 hrs 3.75 hours Glyder Fawr

Male 43 yrs Ankle injury

He was a leader with a youth group walking over the Glyderau from Bwlch Tryfan to the Devil's Kitchen. As they started the descent of Glyder Fach he tripped and damaged his ankle. He was located, treated and evacuated to hospital by 22 Sqn.

20 Team members involved.

JUNE

1st 1530 hrs 20 min Bristly Ridge

Male 22, Female 21 No injury, cragfast

The couple had walked from Pen y Pass to Bwlch Tryfan and up to the south summit of Tryfan and were attempting to ascend Bristly Ridge when they became stuck due to inexperience. They called NWP for help. 22 Sqn were operational on Snowdon and were diverted to this incident, retrieved them and dropped them at Oggie Base

2 Team members involved.

3rd 1600 hrs 30 mins West of Capel Curig

7 teenage army cadets Lost no injuries

A group of 7 cadets became lost in the forest west of Capel Curig. Although the Team was asked to assist, a local policeman soon had the situation under control and had rounded up the missing group and reunited them with their teacher.

2 Team members involved.

3rd 1600 hrs 2.25 hours Bochlwyd Female 17 yrs Ankle injury. .

This school group had traversed Tryfan and was descending the path from Bochlwyd to Ogwen when the casualty twisted her ankle. A passing team member asked the NWP to activate the Team but there was a delay due to poor communications within the control centre. The casualty was evacuated by stretcher to an ambulance at Ogwen Cottage.

20 Team members involved.

5th 1425 hrs 1.6 hours North Tower, North Ridge, Tryfan

2 Females No injury

A pair of females had ascended the North Ridge to the area of the North Tower. One of the pair had a panic attack and was unable to move up or down. They called for assistance. 1 team member and his dog walked up and put a confidence rope on the casualty and they walked down to Base.

3 Team members involved

5th 1640 hrs 4 hours Main Gully, Glyder Fach

2 females 46, 20 yrs No injuries.

A group of family and friends left Ogwen Car Park at 11 am to walk over the Glyderau from the Devil's Kitchen. They reached the Cantilever but in thick mist started down the Main Gully instead of the Bristly Screes. Realising the mistake they turned to ascend back to the summit but the casualty refused to move. One other party stayed with her while the rest of the party made their way down to Ogwen having alerted the Team. With the mist they were asked to blow whistles to assist locating them. These were heard by 2 climbers who roped them back up to the summit plateau where they were met by Team members.

11 Team members involved.

6th 1030 hrs 7.75 hours Rhaeder Fach, Aber

Male 55 yrs Mild Hypothermia

A runner in the Welsh 1000m Peaks Race. He was already wet before the race as his waterproofs were not waterproof. He followed other competitors up to the top of the waterfall and crossed the river "because the others were crossing". He then lost the other runners in the atrocious weather and realising that he was lost rang for assistance and sheltered in his bivy bag. He moved during the day but could not help in locating himself. He was found in the early evening and after hot drinks and warm clothing was able to walk down.

14 Team members involved.

6th 1110 hrs 14 hours 5 min Foel Fras
Male 31 yrs. Lost

Welsh 1000 Peak Racer. He had no mountain experience but was trying the Race with other members of his TA unit. But soon lost sight of them in the weather conditions. He did not find the first check point and got into his bivy shelter as he was lost, cold and wet. He contacted NWP for assistance. The only detail of his location was 'by a fence' Two teams searched for many hours and he was found at 2200 hrs and evacuated by 22 Sqn. to Oggie Base for a debrief.

18 OVMRO, 4 SARDA, 17 NEWSAR involved.

6th 1215 hrs 2.25 hours Between Carneddau Llewellyn and Dafydd. Female
28 yrs Hypothermia

Two walkers came upon the casualty (a runner in the Welsh 1000m peak Race) who was cold, exhausted and becoming unresponsive. While the team responded the cas was put in a cas shelter. When the Team members arrived she was able to walk slowly to Base. During the evacuation another 12 runners in various stages of mild hypothermia were collected and taken to safety.

7 Team members involved.

6th 1435 hrs 7 hours Carnedd Dafydd
Male 29 yrs Lost

Again Welsh 1000m Peak Competitor. He found Llewellyn and Dafydd but then got lost and phoned his wife at home to ask for help (TA again). He sheltered in his bivy bag. His wife contacted the Team for help. With a good description of his location, a small party was dispatched to bring him down. An extensive search did not find him and a second team was sent to assist. He then phoned to say he had returned to the stone circle on Dafydd. 22 Sqn evacuated him to Base.

7 Ogwen and 12 RAF MR Valley involved.

6th 1600 hrs 1.5 hours Gribbin Ridge
1 Female 53 yrs Mild hypothermia

A group of 5 people called for help from the top of the Gribbin Ridge as their Leader was cold and possibly hypothermic. Luckily a RAF helicopter from Chivenor was inbound to Oggie Base to help with multiple missing fell runners on the Carneddau. They picked up 2 Oggie Troops and hover taxied up to the Football Field in atrocious weather and waited there while the lads walked to the top of the ridge and walked the cas down to the aircraft.

7 Team members involved.

11th 1320 hrs 25 minutes North Gully, Tryfan
Party of 3 Cragfast No injuries

Assistance requested for a party of three in North Gully who were in difficulty as one of the party had 'vertigo'. As the Team were preparing, a second call was received to say that a Plas y Brennin instructor who was near by had gone to their assistance.

5 Team members involved.

13th 1225 hrs 4 hours 35 min Holly Tree Wall, Idwal
Male 62 yrs Ankle injury

Four very experienced climbers had completed Charity route on the Slabs and were starting the Original Route on Holly Tree Wall when the leader took a short fall. Having injured his ankle he was unable to continue the Climb. They considered abseiling him off but thought that asking for assistance would be wiser. He was treated by the Team and evacuated to the hospital by 22 Sqn. 15 Team members involved.

14th 2240 hrs 6.5 hours Afon Dylan, Carneddau

Male 60 yrs No injuries

He was attempting the 14 Peaks with his son (who dropped out at Ogwen) and arranged to meet at Traspwll at their car. He was reported overdue at 2240 hrs and the team was activated. Searches were started on the paths in the Dylan Area but he was found and evacuated by 22 Sqn to Traspwll. He had the incorrect map, had lost his compass, had an ineffective torch and the battery in his mobile was dead. He met other walkers on Drum at about 2330 hrs and was advised to follow the fence line to the Afon Dylan. He reached a point where he was unhappy to continue.

7 Team members involved.

21st 0010 hrs 5 hours 50 min Foel Grach and crags above Melynlllyn

2 parties Mild hypothermia

The Team was called for a party of 3 who had failed in an attempt on the 14 Peaks and had sheltered in the Refuge as they were tired and cold. They were located but as they were being escorted down the Team came across a party of 5 stuck on the crags above Melynlllyn. They were all safely returned to their cars.

4 Team members involved.

27th 1800 hrs 4 hours Charity Idwal Slabs

Male 20 yrs Knee injury

The leader was leading on the second pitch. When a short distance above the stance he fell and dislocated his kneecap. Another climber was asked to dial 999. The kneecap 'popped back' prior to the arrival of the Team. The leg was splinted and he was lowered off and carried to the Idwal car park where his party took him to the hospital.

19 Team members involved.

JULY

4th 1050hrs 4 hours West Face, Tryfan

2 males (22, 23) and 2 females (28, 23) Lost and cragfast

To celebrate one of the lads birthdays they decided to camp on the North Ridge of Tryfan. The weather was poor but the following morning they decided to continue up to the summit. They were soon cold, wet and then lost their way below the North Tower and strayed out onto the West Face until they were completely stuck. A small party of Team members located them and returned them to Oggie Base to warm up.

7 Team members involved.

4th 1140hrs 30 minutes Tryfan

Party of 9 school girls (No ages obtained) No injuries, lost in rain and cloud.

They were walking from Gwern Gof Isaf to Pen y Gwryd via Tryfan and the Glyders carrying full camping equipment when at some stage they decided they were lost and dialled 999. The Team Leader was about to call out the Team when their Teacher called North Wales Police (NWP) to say that he was taking control of the situation as the group had overreacted to the weather conditions.

1 Team member involved.

14th 1240hrs 2.5 hours North Ridge Tryfan

Female 19 yrs Panic Attack, no injuries

While attempting the North Ridge of Tryfan the female of a party of two suddenly became frightened, started having panic attacks and hyperventilating which resulted in her losing consciousness. From information given by the informant (casualty still unconscious) it was decided to call 22 Sqn. while a small party went to find them. Both arrived at the casualty at the same time. She was conscious and feeling a little better. They and the Team members were airlifted to Base. 4 Team members involved.

18th 1410hrs 3 hours Braich Ty Du cliffs
Male 48yrs Arm and Facial injury

The casualty slipped and fell about 25 ft whilst leading the first pitch of Decameron Rib (VS). During the fall he fractured his arm and nose. After treatment he was able to walk down with assistance (He and his climbing partner were doctors). Transported to Ysbyty Gwynedd in the Team Ambulance.

11 Team members involved.

20th 1500hrs 1 hour 20 min Western Gully, Tryfan
Female 16 yrs Graze on knee

The team were called out by NWP following a report of a 16 year old girl having fallen on Western Gully with a fractured femur. Due to the potential seriousness of the reported injury a helicopter was immediately requested, with the Team called for back up if required. She was airlifted to Ysbyty Gwynedd and discharged soon after with a graze on the knee. A panic call out which was not necessary.

17 Team members involved.

20th 1850hrs 1 hour 10 min Llyn Crafnant
Possible Cragfast, no one found

NWP asked the team to investigate a report of people stuck on a crag and not moving in the Llyn Crafnant area. A Team leader went to the area and concluded that the informant had probably mistaken climbers for cragfast people. A false alarm with good intent.

5 Team members involved.

25th 1230hrs 1 hour 10 min Idwal/Devil's Kitchen
Male 75 years Poss. MI (heart attack).

The gentleman was walking up towards the Devil's Kitchen when he felt unwell and had chest pain. His wife called for help and a small party was sent to the scene. When they arrived he insisted that he felt better and was able to walk back to the car park unaided. An Ambulance had been called and he agreed to be checked over by the Paramedic.

9 Team members involved.

25th 1420hrs 3 hours Between Glyder Fawr & Fach
Female 37 years Head laceration

While walking on the Glyders, she tripped and banged her head on a pointed rock, getting a deep laceration on her forehead. After a conversation with the Team Casualty Carer, she was happy to start walking off the mountain and a small party of the Team went to meet up with them. She was brought back to Base and advised to attend the local hospital.

9 Team members involved.

27th 1515hrs 4.5 hours Y Gully West Face Tryfan
Male 45 years & dog, stuck with a minor ankle injury.

One man and his dog set out to ascend Tryfan via Heather Terrace. At some point he strayed from the Terrace and climbed up to the North Ridge and strayed onto the West Face ending up very stuck

with an ankle injury. The initial location given suggested a simple rescue but it took time to find where he was and he was on more serious ground than he reported. 22 Sqn were asked to help. All went well until the dog escaped from the winching bag. The casualty was airlifted to Base while the Winchman and the Team found the dog. The Winchman returned to the aircraft and the dog was walked off by the ground troops and reunited with his owner at Base.

9 Team members involved.

31st 2255hrs 0.75 hours Northern Carneddau/ Aber Area

3 overdue (2 parties) no injuries

A man was doing the 3000's and left Ogwen at 1600 hrs but phoned later to say he was running late and would be at Aber at 2100hrs. He did not arrive so two friends (1 male and 1 female) set off up towards Llyn Anafon with no kit or torches. No one had returned to the car at Aber at 2250 hrs and the Team were alerted. They turned up as the Team were about to be activated.

2 Team members involved.

AUGUST

2nd 0055hrs 0.6 hours Northern Carneddau/Foel Grach Area

4 Persons. Lost at night but in good weather

The Leader made a 999 call to report that a group of four were lost on the Carneddau and wanted to know what to do. After questioning and confirmation of no injuries or medical conditions they were advised to use the full bivvy equipment they had with them to bivvy the four hours to daylight. Told to ring 999 if there was a problem. He really wanted to know the weather forecast to confirm they should bivvy. A good example of basic mountain skills being overtaken by the desire to use the mobile phone.

One Team member involved.

8th 1300hrs 2.75 hours Main Wall, Cynr Las, Llanberis Pass

Female 26 yrs Severe buttock lacerations

Llanberis MRT requested assistance for the evacuation of the fallen climber. As the Team were involved in the Oggie 8 event a small party were sent to assist. 22 Sqn managed to snatch the casualty.

6 Team members involved.

9th 1800hrs 1hour 50 min Below Braich Ty Du

Male 25 yrs Fractured ankle

The casualty slipped on a steep slope about 100m above the A5 in the Nant Ffrancon. Dialled 999 and the Ambulance responded. The crew ascended to his location but realised that they could not evacuate him so requested the assistance of the Team. The Team splinted and packaged the casualty and used a back rope to protect the carry to the waiting ambulance.

15 Team members involved.

14th 1500hrs 1 hour Grooved Arête, East Face Tryfan

1 male, 1 Female Cragfast, no injuries

The party of two had climbed Grooved Arête to the Knight's Move and decided to retreat. After abseiling one pitch they could not pull their ropes free and not being happy to continue the descent without ropes dialled 999. A small team were about to leave base when they phoned to say they were being helped by other climbers.

13 Team members involved.

16th 1350hrs 30 minutes Penmaen Bach

Male 12 years Lost, no injuries

While on a family walk the child became separated from the rest of the group. After looking for each other the father alerted the North Wales Police. A small party of Team members were

dispatched immediately with 3 SARDA dogs and the NWP helicopter. The casualty had managed to reach the family caravan at Dwygyfylchi and started to walk up the road towards the Sychnant Pass. He was picked up by a passing Police Car and reunited with his family.
19 Team members involved.

16th 2200hrs 1 hour Tryfan

Flashing Light report.

A flashing stationary light was reported on the East Face of Tryfan. Duty Team Leader put the Team on Standby and went to investigate. The lights on the mountain were turned off when a light was shone directly at them. It was concluded that help was not required. A false alarm with good intent.
3 Team members involved.

19th 1250hrs 6 hours Y Gully, West Face Tryfan

2 Females (39, 15) 2 Males (15,13) One with slight soft tissue injury to leg. Cragfast.

This family group with minimal equipment (including no whistle) set off up Tryfan by the path they could see up the North Ridge. The weather deteriorated to heavy rain and strong winds so the leader decided to head directly towards the Bochlwyd path they had seen from above. Unfortunately this led them onto steeper ground until they ended up totally stuck in Y Gully where the leader sustained a tumbling 5m fall. A Team member was quickly on scene and was able to secure them. 22 Sqn. made several attempts to reach them but were beaten back by the atrocious weather. The leader was extracted by ropes and then a Heli evac. The children were led back up the mountain to safe ground before being escorted back to Oggie Base. The leader had no mountain experience, limited equipment, inadequate clothing and no idea where they were on the mountain when she rang 999.
15 Team members involved.

22nd 2140hrs 0.75 hours Tryfan Lights reported, no injuries.

The informant called NWP to report seeing stationary lights on Tryfan. A Team leader went to the location on the road below the lights and shouted to them to see if they required assistance. No help was required. False alarm with good intent.

1 Team member involved.

24th 1535hrs 2.25 hours Betws y Coed

Female 56 yrs Ankle injury

This lady had slipped while walking along the river bank close to Betws y Coed and sustained an ankle injury. The Ambulance service were called initially but the crew realised they could not evacuate her without assistance. The Team attended and roped the stretcher to a point where the ambulance could be deployed.

14 Team members involved. 5 on standby.

25th 1825hrs 2.5 hours Carneddau, Clogwyn y Eryr

Female 39 yrs Fractured ankle

They had been to the top of Carnedd Llewellyn and were returning to the car at Trasbwl when not far from the track to Melynllyn she slipped and damaged her ankle. They tried to continue with assistance from her friend but it became too painful so rang for help. She was treated and carried to the Team vehicle and evacuated to Trasbwl.

10 Team members involved.

25th 1850hrs 1 hour Llyn Bochlwyd outflow

Shouts for help and reports of people waving. Nothing found.

NWP had a report of cries for help and people waving in the area of Bochlwyd waterfall. NWP helicopter and a ground party were sent to investigate but found nothing. No more cries were heard.
False alarm, good intent.

9 Team members involved.

27th 1820hrs 1 hour Moel Siabod
Male 19 yrs Lost, no injuries

A family group of 8 set out to climb Siabod by the East Ridge. The casualty was ahead of the main party as they approached the summit area and the cloud came down. When the rest reached the summit he was nowhere to be seen. They waited a short time and then split into two groups to come down 2 descent routes. One group reached their cars in Capel Curig and the other having got lost on the descent arrived at Plas y Brennin without finding him. The weather was now very wet and windy so they alerted the Police. The Team were gathering information from the group when the casualty turned up at a farm yard in Dolwyddelan safe but very wet. They were reunited with their cars.

7 Team members involved.

27th 1945hrs 1.75 hours South of Llyn Cowlyd
3 males and 2 females late teens Lost (reported 'frostbite')

A group of D of E students were reported as being lost near Llyn Cowlyd and that one of them may be suffering from frostbite. The Team were returning from the earlier callout and were deployed to both ends of Colwyd to search. The assessors had also realised they were overdue and had started searching. They found them near the Leat above the A5 and they were able to walk out without assistance.

15 Team members and 1 OB Wales member.

29th 1620hrs 1.25 hours Glyder Fach Main Face
Male 29 yrs Cragfast, no injuries

A solo walker had been up Glyder Fawr via the Kitchen and decided to go down the Gribin but went over Castell y Gwynt to Glyder Fach. After a talk with another walker he decided to descend on the North side of Glyder Fach and then contour around to the Gribin unaware of the serious ground he would have to go over. He descended the cliff until he could not move up or down. Climbers nearby advised him to remain where he was and they rang for help. Ground troops were deployed but luckily 22 Sqn were able to attend and winch him to safety.

20 Team members involved.

30th 1415hrs 1.75 hours Tryfan above Milestone Buttress
Male 30 yrs No injuries, stuck

A male walker was descending Tryfan by the North Ridge but strayed onto the west side and became stuck in the area above the Milestone Buttress. One Team member quickly reached him and walked him back to safety. A lack of confidence rather than truly stuck.

7 Team members involved.

30th 1540hrs 1 hour Tryfan
2 males 15 yrs & 12 yrs No injury, lost

A family group had ascended Tryfan via the North Ridge and the Eastern Traverse and were descending the same way. The weather was wet and misty. The two boys went ahead and the father was unable to locate them. Luckily the Team were in the area attending another incident and were able to round up the children and reunite them with their father. They were wearing Trainers and lightweight summer clothing.

7 Team members involved.

SEPTEMBER

5th 1330hrs 1 hour Moel Siabod

Flashing lights reported. No one found.

The informant was walking the hills between Llyn Crafnant and Capel Curig and reported seeing

stationary flashing lights on Moel Siabod ridge. 22 Sqn were due to be training in the area within the hour so they were asked to fly over the area. They searched the ridgeline but found no-one needing assistance. False alarm, good intent. 10 Team members involved plus 1 Glossop MRT.

6th 1555hrs 1 hour 5 minutes Overlapping Rib Route, East Face Tryfan
Cragfast, no injuries

Two climbers became stuck in worsening weather conditions. Luckily a large group of Team members were carrying out a rope rescue within 50m of them and heard their call for help. One Team member climbed across to them and lowered them to the Heather Terrace and then retrieved their rope. Good timing.

18 Team members involved plus 4 Glossop MRT.

9th 0850hrs 2 hours Woods near Betws y Coed
Male 35 yrs Fatality

NWP asked the Team to carry out a body recovery of a man who was found hanging near Betws y Coed. He was carried to the road and transferred to the Undertaker. Several Team members then assisted the police in locating and removing other property belonging to the casualty.

11 Team members involved.

19th 1140hrs 3 hours Cwm Llugwy
Male 57 yrs Cervical spine fractures

The casualty took a tumbling fall of about 50m while descending into Cwm Llugwy. Initially the Ambulance Service was called but the Air ambulance could not land near him so the Team were tasked to assist. The Team treated the casualty and loaded him onto a stretcher which was then winched aboard 22Sqn and flown to Ysbyty Gwynedd for treatment.

17 Team members involved.

(From hospital later, Casualty asked them to pass on how incredibly impressed he was with both MRT & RAF – said the teamwork (something he teaches professionally) is amongst the best he has ever seen.)

20th 1230hrs 0.5 hours Cwm Idwal
Male 42 yrs Scalp lacerations

He was crossing the Idwal Stream at the back of Cwm Idwal when he slipped and banged his head on a rock. He walked back to the car park and was directed to Oggie Base for treatment. His wounds were dressed and advised to go to Ysbyty Gwynedd for further treatment.

2 Team members involved.

21st 1845hrs 7.5 hours Glyder Fawr Main Face
Female 47yrs Multiple injuries - Fatal

A pair of climbers were on Central Arête Direct Route on Glyder Fawr main cliff and witnessed a female fall approximately 200m down the Gully adjacent to their route. They were unable to contact the emergency services until they had finished the route and descended to Cwm Idwal. Due to the serious nature of the ground several parties were immediately deployed and 22 Sqn were asked to help locate the casualty. She was dead when the first party reached her. A search was also made of the cliffs above her and the summit area as there may have been a companion. RAF Valley MRT assisted with the recovery to the road.

24 Team members involved plus 10 RAF Valley and 4 SARDA.

23rd 1144hrs 1.5 hours Marin Trail (above Betws y Coed)
Male 38 yrs Lacerations to leg

The team were called by North Wales Ambulance Service to assist in the evacuation of a mountain biker who had injured his leg.

9 Team members plus 8 Fire Service personnel who were on a training course in the area.

26th 1420hrs 1.5 hours Llyn Elsi

Female 60 yrs Wrist fracture

The casualty was walking near Llyn Elsi when she slipped on a wet rock and injured her wrist. Her friends decided that she needed assistance and called for help. She was recovered to the Team Land Rover and brought down to Betws y Coed to be taken to Ysbyty Gwynedd by her friends.

9 Team members involved.

OCTOBER

1st 1930hrs 3 hours Nant Ffrancon

Female 39 yrs Emotional distress & confusion

NWP asked for assistance to find a vulnerable person missing from home. It was thought she may be in the Nant Ffrancon Area. Police attended Base with information and assistance. Lights were reported in the area of Blaen Nant Farm and 22 Sqn were requested to search that area with the Night Vision Glasses. Before they were on site the farmer at Blaen Nant called to say a woman had called in the house and was still there. The Police from base went to the farm with a female team member and confirmed it was the missing person.

21 Team members involved and one SARDA.

2nd 1930hrs 2.25 hours Idwal Slabs

Male 24 yrs, Female 23 yrs Benighted, no injuries

The party of two started Ordinary Route on the Idwal Slabs late in the day (about 3 pm) and were then slow on the route due to the inexperience of one of them. They became stuck on the descent route and they did not have torches. A party was sent to their assistance with extra torches and escorted them off the hill. Poor planning caused this call-out.

7 Team members involved.

3rd 1205hrs 20 minutes Heather Terrace, Tryfan

Flares reported

The informant reported seeing several white flares above the East Face of Tryfan. The area was scanned through binoculars from Gwern Gof Uchaf but nothing was seen. As there were many people in that area it was decided to close the incident unless more information became available.

4 Team members involved.

4th 1255hrs 1.25 hours Glyder Fach

Female 55 yrs Fracture/dislocation ankle

This lady slipped and injured her ankle while walking through the boulders close to the summit of Glyder Fach. Due to the nature of the injury, probable dislocation, 22 Sqn were asked for assistance. The casualty was airlifted to hospital while the rest of her party walked down.

3 Team members involved.

4th 1525hrs 1 hour Glyder Fach

Female 29 yrs Minor foot injury

This incident happened only an hour after the previous one and at virtually the same location. The lady twisted her foot and felt unable to walk off the mountain. 22 Sqn were requested to assist due to the location and time of day. She was airlifted to hospital where she declined treatment as there was a long waiting time in the Emergency Dept. 3 Team members involved.

4th 1645hrs 2 hours 10 min Western Gully, Tryfan

Male 58 yrs Multiple injuries

The casualty was descending Western Gully with his dog when he took a 50 ft. tumbling fall.

Luckily a group below him heard the fall and immediately went to his assistance. The initial report

was that the man had been unconscious but was coming round, therefore 22 Sqn. were requested and a hasty First Aid Party was sent to his location. The winch man and Ogwen troops assessed him (multiple spinal fractures, skull #, facial #, clavicle #, rib #) treated with collar and vac mat and immediately evacuated to hospital. The dog was brought off the hill.
20 Team members involved.

6th 1320hrs 4 hours On ridge north of Pen yr Ole Wen

Male 29 Female 23 No injuries – lost and cold

The couple rang to report that they were wet and cold somewhere near the summit of Pen. On talking to them it became apparent that they were just lacking confidence to navigate themselves off the hill although they were well equipped. Two Team members gave them directions to follow and kept in contact until the pair were safely off the mountain.

3 Team members involved.

10th 1600hrs 2.25 hours Descent Path from Western Gully, Tryfan

Fracture Fibula, sprained ankle and thumb

While the group were descending the path the casualty slipped and injured his knee and ankle. He tried to continue but had to stop due to pain. He was treated for his injuries and carried to the A5. His family transported him to Ysbyty Gwynedd.

19 Team members involved.

13th 0900hrs 13 hours Llandudno

Male 79 yrs Missing from Hotel

This elderly gentleman had been staying at a hotel in Llandudno for a few days when he was reported missing. SARDA and OVMRO were tasked to search the Great Orme and the Little Orme. The Coastguard / Lifeboat searched the base of the sea cliffs and the RAF & NWP helicopters searched the whole area from the air. The casualty was not found and the Police called off the search until further information was available.

8 Team members involved plus 6 SARDA, 6 NEWSAR.

13th 1600hrs 4 hours North Ridge Tryfan

3 males early 30's Stuck on flat section of ridge, no injuries

A group of three friends set off at 11 am to ascend the North Ridge of Tryfan. They were carrying full camping kit as they were planning to carry on over Glyder Fach, wild camp and then return via Glyder Fawr and the Devil's Kitchen the next day. By 1600hrs. they had only reached the flat area below the North Tower where two of the group decided they could not continue or return the way they had come. The Team found them and walked them down the path to the road. Another unnecessary call-out as with full camping kit and in a safe position they could have waited for another party to come past and help them. 10 Team members involved.

17th 1015hrs 1 hour A5, 400m east of Oggie Base

Female 17 yrs Fractures (leg, arm collarbone) and facial abrasions

A Team member had just left Oggie Base in the Team Ambulance when she came across a road accident; a female pedestrian had been hit by a car and knocked down. She was assessed and given treatment by the Team member who then assisted the ambulance and Helimed crews when they arrived. The casualty was flown to hospital for further treatment.

1 Team member involved.

18th 1920hrs 4 hours 20 minutes Glyder Fach

Male 30, Female 26 Lost, no injuries

A party of two were attempting to scramble up Main Gully, Glyder Fach, having seen it described in a recent magazine. Because of the inexperience of one of them they roped the whole route so it took far longer to reach the summit plateau. They were now in cloud and fading light with no local

knowledge. Although they had small torches they felt unable to navigate themselves off the mountain so called for help. A group of Team members went to the plateau area, located them and walked them down to Oggie Base.

18 Team members involved.

23rd 1505hrs 2.5 hours Bwlch Tryfan

Male 53 yrs Fractured ankle

A Dutch party of two were descending the South Ridge of Tryfan when the Casualty slipped and hurt his ankle. Team members arrived on scene shortly after 22 Sqn. and assisted with the evacuation. He was flown to Ysbyty Gwynedd.

14 Team members involved.

24th 1625hrs 1hour 35 min Crib Goch

Party of 3 stuck in atrocious weather

The Team were asked to assist Llanberis MRT with the evacuation of 3 walkers stuck on Crib Goch. A strong fully equipped party were about to depart for Pen y Pass when it was downgraded to a stand-by. Llanberis members had reached the group and decided they were able to walk down.

17 Team members involved.

25th 0040hrs 7 hours Craig yr Ysfa

Male exhausted

Two males were attempting Great Gully of Craig yr Ysfa after a long drive and a late start and had not completed the route before darkness. They spent many hours in the forecasted heavy rain and high winds abseiling off the route. One was exhausted and felt unable to make the col on the return journey to Ogwen. He stayed in location and his companion walked out to Ogwen and called the MR on arriving back at the car. 22 Sqn, tried to winch him but were beaten back by the atrocious weather. He was found by the advance party and given hot drinks and food. Luckily he managed to walk out saving a long carry.

26th 2000hrs 2 hours Milestone Buttress

3 males, 1 female

Two ropes of climbers on different routes took a lot longer than they expected and reached the top of their routes in gathering darkness. On rejoining into one party they were unsure of the descent routes. With only one head torch between them one tried to abseil down the cliff and did not reach the base and was assisted back up. They rang for assistance and were duly escorted off the mountain via the eastern descent of the cliff.

30th 1740hrs 9 hours Glyder Fawr Main Face

2 males (Father and son) No injuries

They left Cwm Idwal at 1630 hrs. to scramble on Glyder Fawr with no map, guidebook or knowledge of the area. (Another family member had returned to the Youth Hostel having told them that their route was unrealistic.) Excellent flying by 22 Sqn. saw the son being winched off while the father was extracted with ropes and walked off.

NOVEMBER

7th 1700 hrs 4.5hours Glyder Fach

2 Males 48 & unrecorded No injuries

This party of two left Ogwen Cottage at 1000 hrs to traverse the Glyders, the conditions were cloudy with showers. They had been over Y Garn and Glyder Fawr before the cloud dropped and as they tried to go round Castell y Gwynt they became disorientated in the cloud. With the loss of their map earlier in the day and having no compass but one said he had been over this route many times but they failed to find the Bristly screes and eventually called for assistance. There was a flare

training practice taking place so a small party left the event and located them and brought them off the hill.

11 Team members involved with others on stand-by.

8th 1300 hrs 1.25 hours Tryfan

Male no info No injuries, lost

This man phoned North Wales Police to say he was lost somewhere on Tryfan (on a clear afternoon). He did not know his phone number and had a low battery. He could see the A5 and thought he was about 1000 feet above the road. The Team could not make contact to clarify the location and get more info. 22 Sqn were training in the area and were tasked to search for him. He was not seen and as 22 became involved in two other incidents on Tryfan. He phoned about 90 min. later to say he was in Betws y Coed. A totally unnecessary call which could have resulted in many man hours in searching had 22 not been in the area and able to assist.

13 Team members involved.

8th 1355 hrs 35 minutes West Face Tryfan

2 Males and 2 Females all 23yrs No injuries, Crag Fast

They had no map, no compass and very little experience on the hill. Their plan was to ascend the North Ridge then the Eastern Traverse finishing up Upper North Gully and down the other side. They had no prior knowledge of the area. 22 were looking for the man from the previous incident when they waved at the helicopter and phoned 999 to request help. 22 kindly winched them from easy ground and deposited them at Oggie Base before returning to the search. An opportunist request for help? This group were on easy ground and could have found their own way off the mountain.

13 Team members involved.

8th 1405 hrs 55 minutes Grooved Arête, Tryfan

2 males 20, 21 No injuries, stuck climbers

They set off after a period of heavy rain. The upper part of the route was very wet so they tried to traverse off somewhere near the Haven, but became stuck on steep ground. 22 already in the area kindly snatched them and dropped them at Oggie Base (minus all their kit). They could not explain why they could not abseil to safe ground considering they had full climbing kit.

13 Team members involved.

9th 1700 hrs 4 hours Llyn y Foel, Moel Siabod

Male 62 yrs Soft tissue injury to knee

A well equipped and experienced group of friends had ascended to the summit of Siabod and were making their way down the SW slopes when the casualty slipped on wet grass and hurt his knee. With assistance from his friends he managed to walk a good distance very slowly. As it got dark they realised they needed help to get him down. They were located and he was stretchered back to the road head.

25 Team members involved.

15th 1330 hrs 3.25 hours Nor Nor Gully, Tryfan

Male 79 yrs No injuries

An elderly experienced walker had ascended the North Ridge and descended the Eastern Traverse into Nor Nor Gully. Not far above the Heather Terrace he realised he could not negotiate the last part of the gully safely so called for help. The Team climbed into his location and lowered him to the Heather Terrace from where he was able to walk back with the Team.

16 Team members involved.

17th 0340 hrs 9.5 hours Great Orme, Llandudno

Male 81 yrs Fatal

This vulnerable elderly gentleman was reported missing from home at about 2240 hrs on the 16th. He was last seen leaving home late in the afternoon. SARDA were tasked to search the Great Orme area as it was a place he liked to walk. At first light the Team were called to assist and 22 Sqn were also called. Street searches were carried out after a possible sighting at 0830 hrs. A walker saw his body at the base of a small cliff on the Great Orme. The Team recovered the body.

9 Team members, 4 SARDA and 8 Coastguard involved.

20th 0935 hrs Lake District (Floods)

Missing person in flooded river.

A small swift water rescue team were asked to assist in the Cumbrian Floods but were stood down as they prepared to leave.

9 Team members involved.

27th 1710 hrs 4.3 hours Conwy Falls, Penmachno

3 females, 2 males Hypothermic Kayakers stuck in river

They were descending the River Conwy as a recce for their club who were to canoe the river the next day. In poor light they missed the get out point and ended up stranded on rocks and ledges just past the road bridge. One escaped and raised the alarm. A multi agency response of the MR, Fire, Ambulance and Police services and 22 Sqn ensured that all were brought safely retrieved. One female and one rescuer who was unfortunately injured were flown to Ysbyty Gwynedd for treatment.

19 Team members involved.

29th 0255 hrs 9 hours 40 min Carnedd Fach

2 males 19 and 30 yrs No injuries

Weather conditions snow and windy. They had had a long day out scrambling and walking on Pen Yr Ole Wen and Carnedd Dafydd before making a planned bivy on what they thought was the summit of Dafydd. At this time the weather was clear and the tops were covered in snow. Well equipped and experienced they settled down but the wind strengthened and it snowed again. At 0255 cold and wet they called for help. Advised to sit it out and move at first light. When contacted at 0700 hrs they claimed they were too cold to move. A small party was sent to look for them and they were found to be 500m away from their claimed location on Carnedd Fach. Within 10 min of the Team reaching them they were able to walk out to Oggie Base.

10 Team members involved.

DECEMBER

4th 1305 hrs 1 hour Bera Mawr

Male 60 yrs Fractured upper arm, a slip on ice

A group of four were walking towards the summit of Bera Mawr when he slipped on ice. Due to the time of day and it being midweek 22 Sqn were asked to assist. They took the Casualty to Ysbyty Gwynedd.

7 Team members involved.

12th 1535 hrs 2 hours Heather Terrace, Tryfan

Male 54 yrs Neck and arm injury

The well equipped walkers had a long day out on the Glyders and were descending the Heather Terrace when one took a tumbling fall of about 20 meters. Although they tried to continue it soon became too painful. A Team party and 22 Sqn arrived on scene at the same time so the Casualty was airlifted to Ysbyty Gwynedd and the companion walked down with the Team.

6 Team members involved.

12th 1525 hrs 5 hours Forestry area above Dolwyddelan

Male 47, Female 46 yrs No injuries, lost

Another unnecessary incident. On a clear sunny afternoon this couple asked for help because they were lost on Siabod. They gave no useful information about where they had started from. They did not like the look of the scramble on the ridge so they kept on walking! They passed a dam and went into forestry, crossed a track, waded a river instead on crossing the bridge, sat down and called for help even though it was still daylight. Several parties searched to find them eventually finding them not far from Dolwyddelan.

16 Team members involved.

19th 1700 hrs 5 hours Idwal Slabs

2 males both 21 yrs No injuries, cragfast

No torches or winter climbing equipment. Two friends started climbing Ordinary route in the early afternoon, despite there being snow on the ground and a poor weather forecast for the evening. They reached the top of the climb at dusk and were unable to follow the walk off as they had no torches or winter climbing equipment. They were also unable to abseil down the route. The Team were deployed from the top of the walk off to extract them. Another example of poor preparation and lack of equipment.

13 Team members involved.

26th 1300 hrs 1.25 hours Cwm Llafar

2 females 49, 21 yrs No injuries

A party of three females set out up Cwm Llafar to walk to the summit of Carnedd Dafydd. The younger daughter decided to return to the car and meet the others later. The other two walked too far up the valley then attempted to reach the ridge line by a faint footpath. The snow covered ground became steeper and they could not move up or down as they had no ice axes or crampons. 22 Sqn were asked to assist and were able to winch the females aboard and fly them to Oggie Base where they were met by members of the Team.

5 Team members involved.

26th 1655hrs 1 hour 10 min North Wales path near Aber Falls

A family walking near Aber Falls reported seeing a dog loose on the mountain side which appeared distressed. They reported it to North Wales Police as they were concerned that its owner may be injured and unable to move. A small party went to Aber with the intention of capturing the dog and searching for the owner. However, the dog had followed another group down to the road. It was taken to a local kennels as it was from the local hunt that had been in the area that day.

12 Team members involved.

26th 1805 hrs 2 hours Llyn y Cwn

Male 46 No injuries

The casualty left Nant Peris at 1130 for a long mountain walk. Elidir Fawr then Mynydd Perfedd, Carnedd y Filiast, Foel Goch and then Y Garn arriving at Llyn y Cwn area. Here he turned the wrong way as he would not look at his map or guidebook in case they got wet! At the top of the Devil's Kitchen he realised his mistake retraced his steps and tried to find the path to Nant Peris. At darkness, he did not have a torch so he phoned for help. A joint effort by Ogwen, Llanberis and 22 Sqn he was found and taken to Llanberis.

9 Team members, 9 Llanberis and 22 Sqn involved.

26th 2005 hrs 1 hour 50 min Top of Gribin Ridge

2 males 41, 37yrs No injuries

They set off at midday with no fixed plan and little experience. They went to Cwm Cnefion and climbed a snow gully as it was getting dark, with no idea of where they were or how to get down.

They found the stone circle and sat there before calling for help. The party on the hill searching for the last incident who had now been found were diverted and 22 flying in extremely marginal conditions snatched them to drop them at Oggie Base.

9 Team members involved.

27th 1400 hrs 2 hours Cliffs north of Devil's Kitchen

2 Males 49, 22 yrs No injuries

The Father and son set out for a long walk and although not equipped for winter conditions walked up the Goats' Path in deep snow and strayed onto the awkward ground below the East Ridge of Y Garn. The son, who was wearing CAT boots, lost confidence and could not move. A passer by called for help and went to assist. Team members went to assist but were beaten there by 22 who snatched them and brought them to Oggie Base.

16 Team members involved.

28th 1150 hrs 1 hour 20 min Y Garn

Male 42 yrs Ankle injury

A group of friends were well equipped and practising ice axe breaking when one sustained an ankle injury. They tried to help him down but it was too painful so they called for help. He was airlifted to Ysbyty Gwynedd for treatment. The hill party were recalled.

12 Team members involved.

28th 1600 hrs 3 hours 50 min West side of Tryfan

3 males, 1 female 1 Head and leg injury, 1 Leg injury

They set off at midday and reached the summit at 1445 hrs and decided to descend the Western Gully which was filled with snow and ice. With no winter equipment it was difficult and they decided to slide down. Two decided it was dangerous and stopped the other two continued to slide until the inevitable happened and fell 50 – 100m sustaining injuries on the way. A passer by called for help. 22 Sqn managed to retrieve the two injured while the other two were brought down by the Team.

14 Team members involved.

29th 1010 hrs 1 hour 40 min Betws y Coed

Recovery of article from river for North Wales Police.

The Team were asked to assist North Wales Police in the recovery of evidence after the burglary of a local shop as an important item had been thrown into the river. A small party retrieved the article.

7 Team members involved.

29th 1710 hrs 5 hours Devil's Kitchen

2 males, 41, 22 yrs No injuries, lost and benighted

The pair started climbing South Gully at about 1100 hrs and finished the route as it was getting dark. They did not know the area and could not find the descent path in the failing light and worsening weather. After wandering around for a while they built a snow shelter and called for help. They were found and escorted off the mountain... Another late start probably caused the call out.

11 Team members involved.

Equipment Officers Report

At the beginning of the year, as a first time Equipment Officer, I asked myself what have I done? I must be mad! But, I think I have survived, just about, with lots of help from Kevin and Team

members lending a hand and providing useful comments such as ‘this is broken’.

Unlike previous Equipment Officers I have inherited a pretty steady ship making it a fairly straight forward job to get to grips with.

We have had a fairly eventful year with equipment being used constantly due to the volume of callouts. There has been general wear and tear with a bit of damage to ropes and the odd lost wire, which is to be expected, but on the whole the Team hasn’t done too badly this year compared to previous ones.

We have had to replace 90% of our Personal Flotation Devices (PFD), but due to the new regional trade account with Palm it has not made so much of a dent in the kitty.

One of the big changes for the team was a new set of hand held lights, part funded by RWE npower renewables, as the old ones had become unreliable. Because these were sponsored we were able to increase the number of units purchased.

A new addition to the equipment was the First Response bag or ‘go bag’ as it has been christened. This contains equipment for climbing or personal protection and was also funded by RWE NPower Renewable.

Over the last year I have been trying to continue the changes started by Kevin such as improving and organising the kit room. The swift water gear has now been moved to the garage for quicker loading onto vehicles. Furthermore, we now have new easier stuff bags for some of the shorter ropes making packing easier.

So, a fairly straight forward year with a lot to fit into a short space of time. Again I would like to thank all the Team members who have been helping out making life a bit easier.

Geraint D C Jones
Equipment Officer

Treasurer’s Report

I am pleased to report the Team finances are in a healthy state but it is with a tinge of sadness that this is due, in part, to a legacy we were left in memory of Miss Eirlys Owen Edwards. Regrettably we are not sure of the reason for the bequest other than Miss Edwards lived in the area and requested that we should have a share in her assets. Thank you Miss Edwards for thinking of us.

This will underpin a sound financial basis for us for a number of years. I would also like to record here that we also received a large number of donations in memory of other people. I am somewhat relieved to say that most were not lost on our patch this year, indeed some donations relate to the memory of people who passed away some years ago. Nonetheless, I wish to record our thanks to the memory of: -

I have deliberately not included two others who very sadly were our own, John Evans and Mick Parsons. Tributes to them will be found elsewhere in this report. I would just like to add my personal comments and say what a privilege it had been to know both of them, John the most laid back and safest climber I have known and Mick the most irascible but likable person whom some readers may have spoken to when he phoned around to ask about gift aiding for our 333 membership. Lin, John's partner and his son David requested that we might set up a special fund in his memory and thus the Committee has agreed to set up "The John Evans bursary for Training in Wilderness Medicine".

You will also have read elsewhere that we had an abnormal number of incidents in 2009. I thought it might be an interesting comment to say that of the 133 incidents there were approximately 15 Team members on each occasion. To drive to and from base the average driving distance is at least 20 miles – thus total approximate distance traveled by Team members on call outs was 40,000 miles. If we guess that a car consumption is 40mpg and that an average gallon of fuel is now about £5, that means Team members have personally paid £5,000 in fuel costs alone to rescue people. This excludes all wear and tear on the vehicles, on personal kit, time off work or away from family, attending training and fund raising events etc. That is quite a commitment to mountain rescue. (A car claim @ 35p per mile would cost the Team £14,000!!)

In my records we received £4368 of donations, which are directly attributable to rescues this year. There may have been some contributions from people we rescued where the money has been listed as 'personal contribution' but nonetheless the comparison to the personal costs paid by Team members is interesting. All I can say is 'thank goodness' for our 333 support group and the funds they bring in, as well as other personal contributions from individuals, clubs, companies and our collecting boxes etc. which cover our annual running costs for communications, base maintenance, equipment, transport etc. Fortunately contributions from companies, clubs and personal donations have all increased this year despite the recession.

I would also like to comment that the Chairman and I had the pleasure of going to the Houses of Parliament to receive a donation from our local MP, Betty Williams who had won a prize and donated the money to us. The Oggie 8 event again made a significant input to our funds - my thanks to Mark Edwards, Dave Worrall and many others, not forgetting the participants and their sponsors for making the event so successful. As mentioned above, the contributions 'in memoriam' were a major source of income. This year I recorded two new sources of income, very small at the moment but maybe they have potential to grow – donations as a result of sales on E-Bay and donations in

lieu of birthday presents, wedding lists or Christmas cards etc.

I made another claim for Gift Aid this year and am pleased to report the Tax Man paid up in full, with interest. This gives us 25% EXTRA on all personal donations which have been authorized. This includes membership subscriptions of our 333-support group. If you have not yet given us a Gift Aid authorisation for any money you have given us over the past few years and you pay UK tax please drop us a line to say you wish your donations to be Gift Aided, we will do the rest and get an extra 25% from the government.

This year we had no major financial outgoings on special projects other than the issue of a fleece jacket to Team members and a pair of socks each. The Transport Officer was advised that a major re-fit of the vehicles was more cost effective than replacement and this accounts for significant increase in transport costs. The IT group are in the process of installing a new web cam setup which hopefully will survive the severe weather conditions which have hampered us in the past. This is not cheap but is our 'window to the world' and has been a successful fundraiser. General running costs were slightly up mainly due to the increase in the number of callouts.

Next year the Communication Officer hopes to roll out the new GPS enabled radios and for the first time we hope to supply each Team member with a set. Although this may be expensive we expect that North Wales Police will make a significant contribution. We also plan some improvements and a lick-over of paint for Base.

Bill Dean
Hon Treasurer
Training Officer
Prologue:

In January 2009 whilst in attendance at a Team training event, I was what I can only describe as 'ambushed' by a cunning and well executed rouse by the then Training Officer, Tim Bird. Tim took me aside and told me that he was hoping to stand down as Training Officer after a 2 year stint in the post, as he had increased work and family commitments which demanded more of his time. He clearly knew that he had failed to gain my sympathy, so he upped the ante and told me that if no one were to come forward, that he would continue in post, but in doing so he would suffer adversely and that further, he may not be in a position to give the 110% which he had given over the last 2 years... I still was not impressed, so he then played his trump card and told me that fellow Team member John Evans was very interested in taking over the role of training officer, but that his Alaskan commitments meant that he was unavailable for part of the year.

After a discussion with John to check that Tim was not bluffing, John and I decided to put ourselves forward as what I can only describe as a 'double act'. I was to take the role on the first year, with assistance from John where necessary and John would take over in 2010, with the reciprocal assistance from me. A sound plan!

The AGM passed by in March 2009 and I was duly elected as Training Officer (I am sure that I heard Tim Bird cheer?) and the role began. At first, things were very easy as the Wednesday evening training, which takes place almost every week of the year and the Monthly Sunday training on the first Sunday of each month, were already in the Team diary and I simply needed to facilitate the training or beg the indulgence of others to do the same. A huge thank you must go to Tim Bird et al for providing the structure, which will make the role of Training Officer much easier in years to come.

Sadly, on 28 April 2009, John Evans was tragically killed whilst out climbing with family and friends and not only did I lose my 'partner in crime', but the Team lost an extremely talented and strong team member; trainer and mentor. His strength and humour are much missed by all. This

pales into insignificance at the loss suffered by Lin, David and Rhiannon and our thoughts and condolences are with them always. John will forever be remembered by the team and by many others throughout the mountaineering world and I for one was deeply humbled by the amount of people both locally and internationally who had such wonderful things to say about the man who was John Evans immediately after his death. Accordingly, as a mark of respect and memorial to John a small plaque has been placed at base in his honour by the Team. It will be my great pleasure to think fondly of John every time I pass it by and to remember in particular his tales of daring-do in Alaska and with the U.S Para rescue team.

The Training Officer's role within the Team:

Besides the obvious provision and facilitation of Team training, I have been asked by the Committee to consider various things over the course of my tenure, one of these being the Trainee Team Leader Program. A small group was formed to consider how team members might best put themselves forward for training as a trainee team leader and move into the role of team leader in the future. We currently have 3 Trainee Team Leaders and 6 Team Leaders and part of our remit was to decide how we might best manage the fitting of 9 very competent and committed people into 6 team leader positions? A great deal of thought went into consideration of everyone involved in this process, namely Team Members, Trainee Team Leaders and Team Leaders and finding a fair and equitable way forward was no mean feat, but a plan was made and delivered to the Committee for their approval. Fortunately it was not required as the Team Leaders have found that 2009 in particular, due to the much increased workload and therefore heavier burden upon them (over 130 callouts as opposed to 76 in 2008) that they would like to increase the number of team leaders to 8. This was agreed by the Committee and should be ratified by the members at the AGM in March 2010. 1 team leader – Roger Jones – will stand down this year as a team leader, Roger has been a stalwart of the Team since the very early days (not the early days of time itself as some might think, but the early days of the Team), his skills and experience will be rightly retained by the Team for, I hope, a good number of years to come.

We have also developed the practice of inviting other teams to attend our training events in 2009 and we were fortunate enough to have 4 members of Glossop MRT in attendance with us in September, who had a full weekend out on the hill and were also in attendance with us on a challenging Technical Rope Rescue training session, which saw a casualty being lowered from just below Adam and Eve at the summit of Tryfan, down to the Heather Terrace on the east face – with a real rescue thrown in along the way! The boys from Glossop were also kind enough to review what they had seen over the weekend as what I would term 'critical friends' and I was very pleased to note that they liked what they had seen and were considering changes in their own practices as a result. My thanks go to them for attending and providing the feedback.

The membership:

The Team currently benefits from the voluntary assistance of 46 full members and 6 trainees who carry out rescues, searches and other jobs which come to us via North Wales Police and other emergency services, both on the mountains and in the rivers of North Wales. We have also sent Team members to Southern Ireland and England to assist with rescues in 2009. We are further assisted by 3 specialist members who provide operational support, search training and post incident support to casualties and their families and also to Team members. Providing training to a large amount of individuals is no small order and without the attendance and assistance of everyone concerned on the numerous training events the Team would, without doubt, come to a crashing halt. I am astounded by the amount of time and commitment given by Team members and whilst my commitment in terms of time spent planning and facilitating training is considerable, it falls very far short of that given by others and I applaud them all for that. You should all give yourselves a very large pat on the back!

The upshot is that during the period January 2009 to January 2010 there has been no less than 3030

training hours undertaken by the organisation. This equates to almost 76 full time working weeks, or 1½ years of full time work for a single individual! Add all of this to the record 133 callouts last year and you start to get a picture of the Team's commitment. All of this time is given freely by every member.

Types of training:

Over the last few years, skills have diversified within the Team, which has made the Team a more professional and adaptable body. The flip side of this is that the training required to keep members up to date with all of the elements of our Team's skills requires a great deal of thought and management by the Training Officer and the various other heads of disciplines. For example, we now have approximately 50% of the Team who are trained in white water rescue to an internationally recognised standard. This requires a great deal of commitment from the Team members and of course those who provide the training – which is all in-house now thanks to Chris Onions and Tim Vollum. This Swift Water Technician course takes 5 days of volunteer time – a whole week of unpaid leave, or holiday entitlement. We also have first aid trainers of the highest order, who provide our advanced casualty care and also facilitate the training of us 'lesser first aid mortals', the absolute minimum requirement within the team is an annual 1 day first aid refresher, the intermediate and advanced first aid Team members train for a minimum of 3 to 6 days per year. Technical Rope Rescue 'Technicians' also attended a 5 day training course. There are also helicopter training sessions, visits to other emergency agencies, assistance to trainees and numerous other training events crammed into our diary. This all takes a hefty chunk out of Team Members' free time.

2009 saw the implementation of driver training within the Team. Several of our Team members went out with North Wales Police for a week's training to learn the skills of police drivers. These skills were diluted down to a 1 day driver training course for other team drivers. Having attended the 1 day course and been thoroughly rebuked by our Transport Officer Roger Jones for my bad driving habits, I can say with impunity that I am a better and more thoughtful driver whilst cruising the roads in our beloved Pie-wagons (which is the Team euphemism for our 2 Land Rovers) on operations and training. Anecdotally, one Team member (who I shall not name in order to protect the innocent) crashed one of our Pie-wagons into a wall on the way to the Police driving training. His only saving grace was that it was not on his way home post training! I fear that the member in question may well be nominated for an award at this year's Annual Dinner.

Scotland Winter and Lakes Summer Skills 2009:

This year saw another well-attended Scottish winter trip, with 15 Team members in attendance. We are fortunate enough to have a handful of Mountain Instructors within our ranks and the winter training was very professionally delivered at no cost to the Team.

Avalanche Probing

Unfortunately conditions were far from fabulous and whilst we managed to cover our planned training and a final exercise without problem, there was a large dump of snow and then a thaw in the days preceding our trip and avalanche conditions were high on the Ben and in the 'Gorms'. However, much fun was had on Aonach Mor, with at least 2 team members being avalanched whilst on (separate) routes – which fortunately did not lead to any injuries, just many a tale of heroism in the pub that evening!

The Lakes 'summer skills' aka 'camping and beer weekend' was a popular event this year too, with 14 members attending this event and carrying out some personal climbing and mountaineering with a final technical crag exercise. Both of these events provide not only valuable and necessary team continuation training, but also important team building events which are outside of our normal operational constraints and allow members to get to know one another in a different and perhaps less stressful environment.

Trainees:

In the early parts of 2009, the Team had no fewer than 12 trainees on our books, which is unprecedented in the history of the Team and I would suggest that this speaks volumes for the public profile and professionalism of the Team. More normally we would have 1 or 2 trainees per year, so facilitating training for 12 trainees was challenging at best. That being said, we resurrected the practice of having a full team member to act as a 'mentor' to each trainee and this reduced the burden on the Training Officer a great deal and gives every trainee an initial point of contact for all things Oggie.

Fortunately, in the summer of 2009, 5 of our trainees passed their final hill day and ascended to the dizzying heights of Team member. The final hill day is comprised of a morning in base demonstrating knowledge of team practices and equipment, followed by an afternoon exercise on a crag demonstrating technical ability and knowledge during a simulated rescue. I am very pleased (and indeed relieved) to say that all 5 of the trainees passed and 1 sadly left us, which reduced my trainee pool to 6.

Traditionally, we have taken trainees on an ad-hoc basis and simply taken them out on what is known as an Initial Hill Day. This day is spent on the hill demonstrating their knowledge of rock climbing, mountaineering, navigation and local knowledge etc and was undertaken as and when they applied. If they are successful, traineeship is normally no less than 12 months and no longer than 18 months in duration. Because of the Team's current strength and the large amount of existing trainees, we have decided to reduce our intake for 2010 to 1 weekend only. By the time you are reading this, the weekend will have taken place (06/07 March 2010) and we should have a new 'batch' of trainees to welcome into the Team. Those that are currently trainees will be considering making an application to the Training Officer to attend a Final Hill Day and hopefully ascend to full team membership by the end of the year.

Almost finished...

I am assisted greatly in my role by our Team IT guru's, who have provided a fantastic training calendar which Team members can log into and register their interest in any given training event, this gives the trainers a good 'heads up' on how many people will be attending the sessions. For those interested, the training programme is available for all to view on our (very good) website at <http://www.ogwen-rescue.org.uk/events>. They have also facilitated the use of a Training Mastersheet, which collates inter alia, all of the training events, the attendees, what the training was about and of course its duration. This is a very helpful tool when looking back at the preceding years training and events.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to every Team member for their interest and support of the training over the last year and perhaps in anticipation of the same in 2010. You are all, without doubt, the most professional and dedicated voluntary organisation, of which I am proud to call myself a member.

Andy Nelson

Press Officer

With 133 “Call Outs” in the year, it has been busy for the Press Officers. We must thank The Daily Post for giving us many “column inches” throughout the year. North Wales Weekly News and the Bangor Chronicle have been supporters too. The BBC website is always quick to publish our reports. And for those who follow more specific websites, www.Grough.co.uk, regularly carries our reports and comments.

There have been a number of times when we have reported on Radio Cymru (thanks to Gerwyn Lloyd and Geraint Jones for their Welsh expertise), BBC Radio Wales. BBC Wales TV, ITV Wales and even BBC National News and News 24. It is hoped that by keeping Mountain Rescue and the Ogwen name in the media, members of the public will appreciate that Mountain Rescue maybe a free service offered by volunteers but that the teams are funded by charitable donations. In 2009, whilst we are very grateful to a few of our “clients” for their generous donations, the average donation was £33 per rescue. It is also hoped that by commenting on “avoidable” call outs, we might spread “the word” about being equipped, experienced and more self-reliant.

It was a busy start to the year with freezing conditions causing many slips and breaks. In the media was the suggestion that Ofcom might start charging Mountain Rescue Teams for the use of the radio frequencies. Sufficient publicity and concern helped them review their decision.

We thank Hywel Williams, MP for Caernarfon for trying to raise the profile and needs of Mountain Rescue Teams with his honourable friends in the House of Commons by asking for tax breaks. Shortly after this, MP’s had more important things on their minds...their own “tax breaks”!

“C” Flight, 22 Squadron RAF Valley clocked up their 8000th. Rescue earlier this year when assisting OVMRO in the rescue of two stranded ice climbers.

Shortly afterwards, members of OVMRO were being flown across the Irish Sea to assist the Irish Mountain Rescue teams in a search in winter conditions for two overdue mountaineers.

OVMRO had its’ Longest Day on the 6th. June, when bad weather disrupted the Welsh 1000m race. The team dealt with a number of incidents for lost, exhausted or injured competitors. This well established race is run by entrants from all over the UK so our “Longest Day” promoted national interest in the media.

The Founder of OVMRO, Ron James, was awarded an MBE in June for services to mountaineering and mountain rescue. This was followed in the Autumn with the Welsh Assembly Government’s award Recognising Achievement for Service to Wales.

By early October, OVMRO had clocked 100 “Call Outs”. With this record number, we were concerned when the Ministry of defence announced a restriction on the flying hours of the Seaking helicopters at RAF Valley. The crews were to work a 12-hour day shift from late November to late

December. Fortunately, this did not affect the rescues, which were carried out during that period.

As the year drew to a close, OVMRO members found themselves back at Conwy Falls rescuing four paddlers who had been flushed under the road bridge and were in danger of going over the Falls. Rescues in this area frequently attract the TV cameras as the crews and reporters have a grandstand view from the bridge.

2009 closed with nine "Call Outs" between Boxing Day and New Year's Eve, which were mainly caused by superb winter conditions on the mountains with many people enjoying the snow.

Chris Lloyd

Communications Report

Often in the background until things go wrong, efficient communications are a critical part in the success of many of our operations. Continuing change and improvements in radios, mapping systems, security and area coverage is keeping the Comms Team very busy.

To continue to improve the efficiency and safety of our operations, the Team agreed in June to provide each full and trainee member with a waterproof GPS radio compatible with the superb MRMAP system designed and in service in the Lake District and operational in several other mountainous regions of the UK and Ireland. The system, part funded by North Wales Police, should be operational in Ogwen within the next few months, software permitting!

The Tetra/Airwave sets are being used on an increasing number of incidents enabling secure communications from the hill to both Base and the North Wales Police Control Room at St. Asaph. To extend our communications infrastructure, both the Team Land Rovers are now equipped with Tetra communications. As the Fire and Ambulance services migrate to Tetra, then we will have the capability to directly communicate with the incident commanders enabling us to participate more fully and effectively in multi-agency operations.

A huge amount of hard work is being done by Paul Smith in keeping the existing systems running and in the migration to the new GPS radio systems. I am exceptionally grateful for all his time, diligence and patience.

John Hulse

IT Group Report

Once again we have had mixed fortune with IT issues this year. The weather over the last couple of months has made our lives more difficult, but we are making progress with a number of projects.

Website

At the start of the year we carried out a review of the website. We decided to give the site a fresh look, and Tim spent time working on the new layout. This includes new menus to make the site easier to use, and a Twitter feed to show what the Team has been up to recently. As part of the new look we also made the site more dynamic, so the front page now shows the latest incident as well as details of forthcoming Team and 333 events.

There is a new members' area on the site, which allows Team members to register their attendance at events and receive reminders of upcoming events. Members can also add events they are organising to the site. This is taking a considerable burden off the IT Group since we no longer have to make all the changes ourselves. There is a facility that allows easy editing of content on the public site, and we plan to integrate this in to the members' area.

Our new sponsorship system has just gone live, and already has two registered users. The idea is that anyone who is doing an event and raising money for the Team can register on the site. They can then add their event to the site, and members of the public can sponsor them using credit or debit cards. In the last week this has raised £60.00 for the team.

The 333 website has also been integrated into the Team website format which allows us to offer further features such as a dynamically generated event listing.

The Team site can be found at <http://www.ogwen-rescue.org.uk>

The 333 site is at <http://www.333.org.uk>

If you have any suggestions for the website please email it.officer@ogwen-rescue.org.uk

Webcam

After a long period of frustration trying to get web cams working ourselves

we decided to get a professional company in. Island Camera Units started installing the system in December, however the snow has now arrived which has delayed the completion of the project. When this is finished we will have two static cameras, one looking up and one down the valley. These will send photos to the website several times an hour. We will also have a pan, tilt and zoom camera, which will be controlled, from the base computers, allowing us to view mountains in the operational area.

Broadband

The Internet connectivity at base has continued to challenge us. We are outside the supported distance from our local exchange, and get a very slow speed at present. We have also suffered 4 lightning strikes in the last few months, each of which have blown up a router. Because of this we have been investigating wireless broadband. We have a signal outside, so are planning to get a roof-mounted antenna to provide a reliable service. This is becoming operationally more important with the introduction of the GPS radios, allowing Team Leaders to see where members are on the hill from their homes.

Weather Station

The weather has brought down the outside temperature sensor, and possibly the rainfall sensor, and these will be replaced as soon as conditions improve. Once this happens and the broadband connection is reliable we will be uploading data to the website again.

Hardware and Software

We have one PC in our operations room, which is used during incidents. It has software on it, which allows Team leaders to track members who are carrying a GPS radio. It also has a utility to allow callout messages to be sent via the Internet, rather than trying to type them on a mobile phone.

We have a PC upstairs which is used for training and the giving of presentations. Our final PC is going to be used for sending information from the weather station and web cams to the Internet.

We have recently implemented our own version of the team manager software, which is on-line and allows a record of attendance at incidents and training to be easily maintained. Reports can be extracted, and, because we maintain the system ourselves we are able to respond proactively to requests for additional statistics.

Conclusion

We have a number of projects, which are nearing completion, and I would like to thank everyone who has helped with these, especially Tim, Russ and Mark.

Andy Harbach

Casualty Care

This year the statistics show the percentages in all categories (both injured and non-injured) remain remarkably similar to 2008. This is surprising as we had lots of slips on ice due to a wintery start to the year and subsequently we endured a massive increase in incidents. I would have expected this to distort the numbers in favour of the uninjured category, as I perceived the increase to be mainly due to avoidable or unnecessary calls for assistance. However, statistics never lie.....

A serious arm injury sustained on Pen Yr Ole Wen hi-lighted the difference between the Mountain Rescue casualty care environment and other casualty care providers. A lady was blown over by gale force winds near the summit. Such was the strength of the wind and exposed position; Team members attending were also being blown over. Carrying a stretcher up to the location was not possible; neither was camping out for the night, so the only solution was some strong pain relief for the casualty and a ring of people to protect her as the whole party struggled down. Not exactly the gold standard we strive to achieve but the only practicable solution given the situation.

Rather more disturbing was the serious injury, due to a falling rock, sustained by a Team member while undertaking the rescue of some kayakers. We were fortunate enough not to have to treat 'one of our own', as the incident was roadside and he was immediately treated by ambulance crews already on-scene and then looked after by an RAF winchman as he was flown to hospital. We wish him a full & speedy recovery.

No significant new equipment has been purchased this year although we have made arrangements to train, in the coming year, to use a new method of administering more effective pain relief.

We have again run 'mandatory' first aid training, such that all Team members are trained to a basic level. Also, Team members attended the regional First Aid course leading to the MREW Casualty Care certificate and others have re-validated expiring qualifications, so we remain well provided with able and enthusiastic people ready and capable to help when it matters most.

As usual, there are the many who have helped us as a Team to help the casualties. I would especially like to thank RAF Valley Search & Rescue helicopter, RAF Valley MRT, NEWSAR, Ysbyty Gwynedd, North Wales Ambulance Service and CoSARM.

Paul Smith
Casualty Care Rep

Transport Officer's Report

Last year was the busiest ever with 133 call-outs and other activities. We kept the vehicles on standby for other emergency services in the extreme winter weather, supported 333 on collection days and some of the local summer fetes around the area. Also, one vehicle accompanied the team to winter training in Scotland and the summer training weekend in the Lake District.

At the beginning of the year, I felt it was time to look at the long term life of Mobile 1, which is now nine years old. The question was whether to replace at a cost of £40,000, or have a re-fit. After taking professional advice, and bearing in mind its low mileage, a £4000 re-fit was carried out which will see the vehicle giving good service for many years to come.

As for Mobile 2, it has been a tough year. Many say troubles come in three's. In the summer it was involved in a road traffic incident, which left the near front side having to be re-built at some considerable cost, which was covered by our insurers. At the end of September while manoeuvring in the dark a culvert collapsed and the vehicle almost landed on its side. The recovery was carried out by team members and a big pull from one of the SARDA member's Land Rover. The third incident was above Dolgarrog in the Conwy Valley at Cedryn Farm above Llyn Eigiau when team members were on route to support a rescue in the area of Craig-yr-Ysfa and became completely bogged down. After the rescue, it took two hours of digging and pulling to get the Land Rover out of the mud. Fortunately, with the three incidents, no one was hurt and in the last two, there was minimal damage to the Land Rover. With the work that has been carried out on the Land Rovers over the last year, I feel they are in good shape for service in 2010.

Driver training continues with three more members completing the five-day driving course with the North Wales Police Driving School. Over the last twelve months, the team has made use of the off road driving facility at RWE site at Dolgarrog.

I would like to thank LAS Land Rover Ltd, Llandegai, Bangor for their sponsorship in keeping us on the road. Also RWE npower renewables, for their continuing support.

Roger Jones
Transport Officer

OGWEN VALLEY MOUNTAIN RESCUE ORGANISATION
Registered Charity No.502442

TRUSTEES REPORT for 2009

The Aims & Objectives of this Organisation are “To search for and rescue people in difficulties in inhospitable terrain and in furtherance thereof to develop search & rescue techniques and to disseminate information about the activities of the Organisation”.

The four Trustees have been appointed by members of the Organisation to safeguard and promote the values and mission of the Organisation. Also, they must ensure that the Organisation operates in an effective, responsible and accountable manner. Whilst the work of running the Organisation (Administration and Operations) is delegated to the elected Officers, Committee and Team Leaders, responsibility remains with the Trustees.

The Trustees must act with integrity and must avoid conflicts of interest, or misuse of the charity’s funds and assets. They must also ensure solvency, ensure funds are used wisely and ensure funds are not put at unnecessary risk.

Throughout the year, Trustees have attended the Committee meetings and have met quarterly to discuss the management of OVMRO.

We are pleased to see that the Organisation remains in a good financial state and that the overall financial security has not been affected by the “Credit Crunch” and Recession. Funds were enhanced this year by a generous legacy. Once again, members of 333, our support group, made a substantial contribution.

OVMRO continues to meet and exceed its “Aims & Objectives”. This year the team has attended a record number of “call outs” (nearly double those of recent years). Whilst most of those “call outs” have been for walkers and climbers on the mountains of Snowdonia, we have worked with professional emergency services assisting North Wales Police, Wales Ambulance Trust and The Fire and Rescue Service in non-mountain incidents. In February, members were called to Eire to assist in a winter search and rescue operation and in November members were ready to assist following the Cumbrian floods.

Team members continue to train to a high standard with nearly half the attending, one of two, four day Swiftwater Rescue Technician courses. Once again, North Wales Police supported the by sponsoring three members on their intensive, week long defensive driving course. Members are continually training in First Aid and advanced Casualty Care and Technical (rope) Rescue. All members have attended a “Helicopter familiarisation and safety course” given by the crews of “C” Flight 22 Squadron.

Members are attending and assisting with training within the North Wales region. Members are also attending meetings with the national body, Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) as well as contributing to the national conference. In 2009 members attended and addressed the IKAR (International Commission for Alpine Rescue) Conference in Zermatt.

The Trustees are pleased with and proud of Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation.

Christopher Lloyd, Joan Edwards, Neil Adam, Jo Worrall

333 Hon Chairman's Report

Before starting this report on 333 I feel that I should mention the two sad losses the Team has suffered during the past twelve months, Firstly, John Evans, a stalwart member of the Team and secondly Mick Parsons, a Team member and a valued member of 333. Over the past months a lot has been said about these individuals but I feel it would be remiss of me not to mention in 333's report, the gap they have left in the Team and its support group; they will be sorely missed.

133 incidents, yes 133, that's the number of callouts the Team attended to in 2009. When you consider the fact that the usual maximum number of callouts is around the 65 mark I think you will agree that 2009 was exceptional by any standard. Not only is this a considerable drain on the Team members but also makes inroads into the team's finances with the requirement for equipment replacement etc. So folks, I know you will agree with me that the financial support from 333 is ever more essential to maintain the viability of the Team and ensures that it can maintain the high standards it continues to give to those who get into difficulties in the mountains and increasingly, in the urban environment.

Each year I go on about the need for increasing the number of members of 333 so this year I would like to expand on the other side of 333. The Team knows how essential you are to maintain its response capabilities, but are also hopeful of the fact that 333 members will look on the Team as colleagues, who would love to see them attend more of the functions they arrange to show their appreciation. I will not repeat the list, but merely point out the diversity of the joint Team/333, events. There is everything from Search theory, GPS, first aid, walks, camping weekends, barbeques, tracking, scrambling and many more. Interspersed between these we have collection days, where we rattle the tins and sell Team memorabilia.

Most times it's the same faces that turn up, so please let's see some new ones. Take it from me these are not just boring tin rattling days but a chance to socialise with other members and of course members of the public. I cannot recall one such event, when even in bad weather; we didn't have a great time, with plenty of laughter and great camaraderie.

On New Years day 2010, we met at the Brew Shack in the Ogwen Valley; there was plenty of snow and clear skies. It was Pauline Hallet's birthday; Pauline is the Team Secretary, so in the snow we had a birthday cake with a candle and of course, plenty of good humour. (see picture below). So please, why not consider joining us at the next collection day, we would love to see you there, not just for the collecting, but to meet and greet with you and give you a chance to join in with us and experience what 333 is all about. It goes without saying that we would love to see more of you at any of the events we organise. Please make 2010, this new decade, the time when you will get involved even more. We appreciate you and want you to feel just how much you are part of what I believe to be the best Team around.

Clive Swombow
Chairman 333

Location of Collection Boxes

Aber Falls Hotel	Awesome Walls, Liverpool
Bethesda Chip Shop	Black Cat Filling Station
Blacks, Llandudno	The Brewshack, Idwal
Bryn Bella Guest House	Capel Curig Y.H.A.
Cobdens Hotel	Conwy Falls Cafe
Conwy Outdoors	Cotswold Outdoors Betws and Rock
	Bottom
Country Cooks	Cunninghams
Douglas Arms, Bethesda	Eagles, Penmachno
Ellis Brighams	GIFW Scout Hut
Glanaber Hotel	Griffin Inn
Hafod Scout Hut	Hawkshead Shop
HMS Indefatigable	Hen Felin Cafe
Joe Brown's	Judge's
Llandudno Jct. Leisure Ctr.	Llyn Crafnant Tearooms
Llys Parc Rhos	Londis, Bethesda
Maes y Garth	Ogwen Bank
Pen-y-Gwryd	Plas y Brenin
Pinnacle Stores	Pont y Pair
Prince's Arms	Pyllau Bunk House, Rowen
Rose Hill	Royal Oak
Shell Garage, Betws y Coed	Snowdon Ranger
The Great Arete	The Great Outdoors
Trail and Bike	Trefriw Wells
Ty'n-y-Coed	Ultimate Outdoors
Urban Rock, Swindon	Waterloo, Betws y Coed
Base & Events	

Please forgive us if you have a Collection Box and we have not listed you - your efforts are appreciated and we will try to do better next time.

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

Virgin London Marathon

The London Marathon is famous the world over and requires no further introduction. I will be running this event for the first time on the 25th April 2010. As a keen mountaineer and runner I enjoy the physical side of the sport but I have never tested myself over this distance before., I was therefore thankful of the opportunity to take part on behalf of the Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation.

As you may know, mountain rescue teams are made up of male and female volunteers who give up their own time to help people who are in difficulty in the mountains. What you probably didn't know is that they don't just do mountain rescues. OVMRO has a specialist water rescue unit which specialises in not only helping canoeists, but anyone who gets into difficulty in the rivers and lakes in north Wales as well as flood relief along the Conwy Valley. Recently they were on standby to assist in the Lake District and Gloucester. They assist in road traffic accidents, mine and cave rescues and searches. As well as searching in the mountains for lost walkers, because of their specialist tracking skills, they also carry out urban searches for vulnerable people who have gone missing from home. The team had a record number of 133 callouts last year and this year has started just as frantically. In fact even now the team are supporting Welsh Ambulance Service in the snow and ice. Once more the team has risen to the challenge of supporting the local community as well as those of the mountaineering fraternity.

Despite all of this, they receive no funding from the Government. It costs around £50,000 per annum to keep the team going and this is why I am asking for your help as all of this is raised by public donations. Please sponsor me to run the marathon and raise funds for this very worthy cause.

Training is already underway and I have run in two events. I will also be running in the Milton Keynes Half Marathon in March. You can follow my daily training progress by following me on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Joan_BrynBella where I will keep you updated of all events relating to this challenge and hopefully how much money has been raised. Thank you for taking time to read this, I hope you will now help me by sponsoring my efforts on behalf of OVMRO. It is now so easy to do so, you can sponsor me by going to the Team's website and selecting Sponsored Events from the left hand menu. So go on, make a donation it is for a good cause after all.

Lets Help them Help Others. Joan Edwards
Oggie 8 Challenge 2010

August 7th 2010 Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation are hosting the 3rd running of "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. Times taken previously have been between 8 and 12+ hours.

OVMRO are asking for those interested in a great days walking to contact them for details. Open to teams of 4-6 people, places are limited to 100 maximum. 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!

We have details on our website at http://www.ogwen-rescue.org.uk/oggie_8/index.php. Please

feel free to write this up in any style that you feel is appropriate to your publication. We are grateful for the assistance in promoting the event.

Dave Worrall

Congratulations to our Oggie Doggies

Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Team now have a qualified Mountain Rescue Search Dog since Oggie doggie 'Spin' and her handler Sally Armond passed their Novice Mountain Assessment with the Search And Rescue Dog Association (SARDA) Wales in November 2009.

Sally and Spin

This is great news for Ogwen as they have not had a Mountain Rescue Search Dog in the team since veteran Dog Handler and Oggie Team Leader, Jed Stone, retired from SARDA seven years ago.

It usually takes two to three years to train a dog to Mountain Search Dog standard. The assessment consists of five two-hour searches of large, complex mountain areas in challenging weather conditions on Snowdon and the Glyders.

During an assessment the number of 'casualties' is unknown to the dog handler, who must ensure that their dog's nose covers the entire area by constantly adjusting their search strategy according to the terrain and the prevalent wind conditions. Handlers are assessed by SARDA assessors from across the UK, and missing a casualty or not covering even a small part of an area can result in failure to make the grade.

Oggie-dog Spin is a non-discriminating air-scenting search dog. This means that she searches for airborne scent from any human source such as a casualty, rucksack or an article of clothing. When she picks up a scent, which in certain wind conditions could be several hundred metres away, Spin zig-zags into the wind homing in on its source. She then gives the casualty a friendly lick and rushes back to Sally with a volley of barks to indicate that she has made a find, shuttling back and forth, with more excited barking until Sally reaches the casualty, where a vigorous game with a squeaky toy is given as a reward.

Congratulations also to Simon Worth and Poppy who recently passed their Novice Lowland Assessment and are hoping to be ready for their Novice Mountain Assessment in November 2010.

SARDA Wales currently have 5 operational Mountain Search Dogs, 2 Trailing Dogs and 6 Lowland Search Dogs. SARDA's search dog teams responded to over 90 call outs in urban and mountainous areas during 2009.

Sally Armond

Destination Zermatt IKAR 2009

In late September 2009 the fourth Oggie road trip to the International Commission for Alpine Rescue (IKAR) Annual Conference left North Wales, destination Zermatt. A bigger team this year comprising of Roger Jones and Kevin de Silva partly sponsored by OVMRO, and Gerwyn Jones and Tim Bird sponsored by North Wales Police. The road trip was pretty uneventful as the presence of all Passports and the like was doubly checked!

Two steady days driving later we arrived at Tasch. This is where cars are left as cars are not allowed into Zermatt. It had been a good while since any of us had been there. The great parking fields have gone, replaced by a snazzy multi storey car park with the obvious extra payment for the privilege of parking undercover, canny those Swiss.

Armed with the name of our Hotel and a pile of bags we boarded the train up to Zermatt. On arrival at the station there was the start of a comedy show panning out. All the 150 or so delegates were arriving on the train and not quite believing that the said hotel was one of the poshest in Zermatt. The sort where electric trucks ferry your bags to the hotel, you travel in horse drawn carriages and a pot of tea costs £20. But MR troops are independent sorts and are perfectly capable of carrying their own bags! Yes sir the porter will carry your bag to your room, oh no he won't, we insist sir, oh ok then but I don't tip. The staff of the hotel had obviously seen nothing like it. Particularly when it came to wine with the meal, the cheapest bottle being £30. Suffice to say, the food was first class but the quantity was found to be lacking especially by some of our ex Eastern bloc colleagues.

Day one was an early start as it was the practical day up on the glacier below the Kleine Matterhorn with a wonderful view of the Matterhorn itself. The day consisted mainly of avalanche-based activities, but as always there were interesting things to glean. Such as the device designed to pick up any mobile phone in a given area primarily for use in mass avalanche incidents ie villages. At a height of 2000m it can pick up every mobile in a 40km square. But it can be programmed to pick up just one and ignore any pre-programmed numbers such as the rescuers etc. It's still in the experimental stage, but possibly a search tool for the future.

There were also several crevasse rescue demonstrations using techniques similar to ones we might use in a gorge. We were blessed with bright and sunny weather, which led to a number of sun burnt heads being visible on the cable car down.

Day two was the start of the conference proper and delegate numbers increased to over 300, from all over Europe, Canada, USA, Japan etc. The conference is divided into 4 commissions; Avalanche, Air, Medical and Terrestrial. It's a busy programme of lectures starting at 8.30 and

finishing at 18.30. Which makes for a lot of lectures over three days. Gerwyn and Tim presented a very good talk on the fatal incident protocol we have running in North Wales.

Other memorable talks were;

- The use of 25 million pixel cameras in search, which helped to locate missing climbers in Alaska by picking out their crampon tracks.
- The Swedish Mountain Safety Organisation, which has been going for 30 years and presents mountain safety displays at main railway stations in the big cities so as to try and get the message across to the hill users not the converted locals.
- The Icelandic Team, which is regularly called to crevasse incidents where a vehicle has gone down a crevasse. So they have had to adapt car crash techniques for use down the crevasse.

As always there were talks that made some of us laugh. I happened to be sitting next to a Swede and an Icelander where the talk was on bad weather Glacier search, the presenter finished by saying that luckily that was the only one they had had that season, at which we simultaneously burst into laughter, “oh to have one bad weather search over an entire summer” we harped. Then there was by far the best explanation of the principles of search management I have ever seen. There was the Austrian guy who asked why we were there as “There are no mountains in your country”?? Luckily a German rescuer chipped in with the fact that he had been climbing in North Wales and said “You can really get hurt there as they don’t have bolts on their climbing routes! Or signs to guide you back to the car park”

Over my visits to IKAR one thing that has been interesting is the fact that the Rescue services in most places around the world use much smaller helicopters for rescue than we do in the UK. Generally they are the same size or next size up from the Air Ambulances we use here. Some have winches but most use long lining ie a long line attached centrally underneath the Helicopter, with one of the rescue team clipped on the end. We were given a demonstration of the effectiveness of this technique. 140 of us were put on to a cable car system with 4 on a chair and 8 persons in a cabin. The system was then stopped. Into view flew two small Llama Helicopters each with four rescuers attached to a long line with 4 jerry cans of fuel. 40 minutes later we were all safely on the ground, a very slick show indeed.

The big question, is it worth going? For me the answer is definitely yes. We have made and maintained contacts from all over the world, looked at equipment we have never seen in the UK and been able to watch the progress of new techniques which may be of interest to us in the future without having to reinvent the wheel.

Through the contacts made, we have been offered places on a winter training course in Croatia and three team members should be attending. Just being able to talk through similar problems with fellow rescuers from around the world both paid and volunteer has allowed me to look at some situations in a different light. Also there always seems to be some nice timber building for me to look at. So, 2010 Slovakia.

Kevin de Silva

Glyder Fawr via Y Gribin

As Saturday the 30th was forecast to be a clear day, a friend came down on his motorbike from Sheffield for the weekend on his motorbike. We started reasonably early and were at Ogwen Cottage by 10.15 . I'd walked up Y Gribin last summer and thought that it would be good in the snow and ice and IT WAS!

Walked up to Llyn Bochlwyd – most of the path was coated in ice, but didn't need to put on the crampons – and then started up the track leading to Y Gribin. Stopped at the football pitch for some coffee and a sarnie and thought about the route up – instead of going straight up the ridge, we decided to go up a steep snow slope on the right of the ridge – put my crampons on, unhooked the ice axe and started up.

360 degree clear views – Tryfan, Bristly Ridge, Glyder Fach, Glyder Fawr, Extremely cold and 5 minutes without gloves and fingers started freezing. Lot of climbers going up a gully on the side of Cwm Cneifion fully roped up. The snow slope got steeper and steeper – at about this time we saw the 22 Squadron rescue helicopter buzzing about around the top of the Devil’s Kitchen path - now know that this was the accident referred to in the OVMRO incident log where some walkers slipped on the snow slope injuring their ankles and had to be airlifted to Ysbyty Gwynedd.

The snow slope we were on required great care and there was plenty of exposure so we took it easy and finally popped up on the top of Gribin – absolutely fantastic! Bright sun, superb all round views – walked over to the top of Glyder Fawr and finished off the coffee and pork pies.

Fairly routine after that walked down to Llyn Y Cwn down a solid ice slope without crampons it would have been impossible, and then down the Devil’s Kitchen path back to Ogwen Cottage. Removed the spikes half way down the Kitchen. Went to the Ty’n-Y-Coed for some fish and chips, which were a disappointment – should have gone to the local chippie instead! Back home to Anglesey, a great day out and one to remember.

A short video of the walk can be seen here in my Photobucket album:

<http://tinyurl.com/yc84tgk>

Anil Shirsat (333)

I'll bet you see some real Idiots in the Hills

"A mountain walker suffered head and leg injuries when he decided to slide 150 feet (45.7m) down an ice sheet in Snowdonia because it was 'easier than walking'." He was eventually lifted off Tryfan by helicopter. I read this from Ceefax as I was about to start editing the article below. It is interesting on a number of counts, one of which is that the headline referred to

Snowdon, another the commendable precision with which the fall was described in metres. Possibly the quote involved journalistic licence. At any rate it was an attention-grabbing story and Chris Lloyd had the opportunity on national television of pointing out that people who want to walk in the mountains in severe winter conditions should be equipped with crampons. My emphasis below is on less severe weather only because I assume relatively few inexperienced people are going to want to leave a warm home for such conditions. Much as I love the Ogwen Valley I have opted for typing today.

The last year has seen a huge increase in the number of callouts and the Team has been stretched in a way, which has not happened in its lifetime. This may not have been unexpected in view of the apparent increase in actual visitors to the area but, by my estimates, about a quarter of the callouts recorded over a period of four months should never have arisen. The problem of the waste of time and resources is not new and the *proportions* may not have changed much over the past ten years or more.

A huge increase in the number of rescues is more likely a simple result of more people making for the hills. Nor is this a problem confined to Ogwen – the Lake District was featured on television not so long ago and teams around Britain report in a similar vein. The concern is over the numbers of avoidable callouts and the influence on the capacity of the team to deliver in a genuine emergency. Perhaps also (and I speak as an outsider) the effect on the families of team members and on the financial and practical effects on small businesses when someone is absent for hours and at a minute's notice.

I make no pretence but that this is an appeal. However, not for money, nor necessarily for work. It is an appeal for *ideas*, and *expertise*: ideas as to why such callouts arise and ways we might try to reduce their numbers, the expertise of anyone who can contribute with knowledge which we may not have on tap (how the miscreants think, how best to get the message across) and where we might find help forthcoming. At the outset let me reiterate some points which have already been made, namely that most current 'educational' material is preaching to the converted and that our own manpower alone could barely scratch the surface of any kind of national campaign. I accept entirely that the question is not our *responsibility*, but any improvement is surely in our interests. Nobody thinks a solution is simple.

A few ideas for discussion are set out below, many of which you will already have seen in these pages, and I may rabbit on a bit, so feel free to skip to the last paragraph!

We might divide the discussion on the 'why?' into avoidable emergencies and avoidable callouts but the upshot is similar: A group arrives late in the area but still tackles a substantial rock climb when even Team Oggie can't stop darkness falling at 4:30; a tourist is on a good descending track at a thousand feet, does not notice clouds descending and decides she is lost and must call for help. In the first case what is lacking is an **awareness that mountains bite**; I believe the numbers for deaths in Snowdonia are comparable with those on the Matterhorn, but they are not so spectacular, so as a rule the drama is little publicised outside the region. The second instance shows a lack of **foresight** as to what may happen and of **common sense** as to potential solutions. It is ironical that this is precisely the thinking of the formal risk assessments in industry and elsewhere about which many of us complain bitterly. Moving on quickly...

In those far-off days when a mobile was a few bits of tinfoil hung on strings, called Art and priced accordingly, we knew that, if we fouled up in a big way, summoning help might be limited to the use of a whistle and a mirror; I reckon there was less chance of a helicopter ride when you were tired. Both did rather concentrate the mind. Nowadays, when a phone must be carried everywhere in case the better half doesn't know what size of cornflakes to buy, getting help is easy. Well, sometimes, as anyone who has tried to discuss cereal on certain stretches of the A5 will know.

The mobile must have saved countless lives, but the down side is a perception that we need no longer even *think* because there is always someone there to wipe up the mess. That said, remote ordering of cereal has been around for a long time now, so the phone cannot be responsible for the recent surge in numbers. Another benefit of modern technology is the GPS gadget, which tells you in the flash of an LCD that you aren't where you thought you were but does locate you on a map. However, just as with the mobile phone, there is a risk of the comfort-blanket syndrome: The technophile who can use a computer for anything short of changing nappies knows he only needs to squirt in a list of waypoints the night before and nothing can go wrong. Unless his spare batteries are faulty or until his track passes over a cliff he hadn't noticed when he was doing all the clever

stuff at home – I know this can happen.

The real value of this gadget, though, is that even someone who wouldn't know his lighthouse (disused) from his 5' graticule can at least tell Base exactly where he is by just pressing 'ON'. Unfortunately, like a lot of high-tech - why can children do all this stuff before they can tie shoelaces? - Many ramblers may be put off buying these miracles by their apparent complexity. Others may give up on ones they did invest in, midway through a disciple's computerspeak explanation of finding how long it takes to get back to waypoint 38 if you go via 22 and 23, continue to walk at exactly 3.68 kph and follow the direction the arrow would point if you weren't standing still listening to him.

A friend who guides modest lowland walks uses his only as a pedometer and could have bought a lot of beers for the difference in price. Is there a case for a user-friendly gadget, which only provides a grid reference, altitude, sunset time, a clear compass and backlighting, with each brought up by pressing a large old-fashioned button? These could appear on a good high-resolution display, instead of the menus you can't read because there is rain on your glasses and you couldn't negotiate anyway because your fingers are so cold? If I can now buy a small hand-powered torch in a market for the price of a coffee, possibly even a wind-up battery? I imagine such a gadget would be no cheaper but if anyone out there knows differently, here's your business opportunity!

It may now actually be too easy to call up help when you are lost, and less and less are we being expected to take responsibility for ourselves in our daily lives anyway. In some countries you pay market rate to be rescued, although I have never tested whether they leave you hanging by your fingernails when you can't get at the plastic card in your rucksack. This setup, with or without insurance, does cultivate a certain caution. The danger is that people - whether or not they are at fault - are discouraged from calling for help. What we need is software at Base, which subtly interprets the 'GO TO' option in its menu as 'route over boulder fields, through a minimum of two streams and finishing with at least five miles on tarmac'.

Conversations in pubs along the lines of "Can you believe Ogwen MRT sent us down via *Bangor!!?*" would work wonders. Better still, helicopter pilots could upgrade their training to include finding turbulence and leaving the door open when banking.

There are less obvious influences, which may be counterproductive, teaching people that the mountains are more benign than they actually are. I have watched climbing competitions in the Alps with young athletes swanning up a fibreglass rock face on brightly-coloured plastic lumps. Bolts every few feet on a lovely sunny day. Think Patey's ballerinas. Spectators were, I think, mainly the general public and there was no wet plastic moss on the holds, no refrigerated air from a fan blowing on the climbers' hands and no booby-prize pitches of free rope. Cool - a few hours in the gym and we're ready for the Dru?

Then there are the walking mags in which Sam climbs a Munro in January, sees a beautiful distant rock ridge surmounting a shimmering dome of virgin snow stark against an azure sky, makes a 'why not?' beeline for it through snow up to her waist, gets momentarily disorientated in a blizzard, finds the descent cut off by a 200m face and covers a final 10k in the dark. All good clean fun for a fit young experienced journalist who knows how to dig a snow hole, but possibly tempting rambblers, enchanted by photos of the Highlands in winter, to be a little too ambitious?

The first need, then, is to ensure a full awareness in anyone who just might venture above fifty feet - meaning everyone who doesn't call Sri Lanka by its real name. Once people are aware of the potential danger they should be motivated to learn what is necessary and how to apply it. Training. And for most people who were around to watch the Spice Girls become a major influence on British fashion (1997, you really wanted to know that) this isn't going to happen. For them it comes down to training on the job. In fact, I suspect that most of us only learned by inspired trial and error.

I have been known to rest my compass on a galvanised-iron gate, descend from a mountain into the wrong valley and get caught returning across a steep slope after the snow has frozen solid - fortunately not all at once. Thus, perhaps our efforts should be directed towards people who already both *respect the mountains* and *think about what they are doing*, ensuring only that they do not come to grief while they are gaining more experience. That is, in truth, the premise behind the driving test - a piece of paper with a few ticks does not make you a great driver but should make you safe to practise. However, it is well to bear in mind that many, if not most, of those swarming over the mountains come from distant cities. They live where they do not even know the meaning of darkness – I have been told of small

children taken to an outdoor centre who were terrified when the light was turned out. Fog in cities is a thing of the past, navigation is by pubs and tall hermetically-sealed buildings scarcely simulate Crib Goch.

Some of us who did learn on the job learned from our mistakes but probably most did so from friends, and I remember one who calmly ushered me from the top of the Berwyns in a total, mist and snow, whiteout long before we had clever yellow boxes. Indeed, groups, formal and otherwise are only to be encouraged and perhaps some led walks might offer a few tips on navigation. The question of competitions or sponsored walks, be it for aficionados or for the man in the street, is one for the organisers not the participants.

Then there is the promotion of the message: Swamping any media with overt propaganda is not going to work. Am I alone in leaving the downstairs light on when going for a bath because I am so weary of being told that it's my fault when the only polar bear that can't swim falls off an ice floe? To direct any messages most efficiently we need to be selective. For that – and this is something that only MRTs can answer – we need to analyse the major reasons for those rescues which should never have happened:

Thinking 'weather for the North and West' = 'weather on the Glyders'? A lack of map reading skills? A bull-headed insistence that walking over a large grassy hill can't be that hard? A refusal to lose face by asking directions? (OK chaps, that's us!) Risk-taking on length of route after arriving late due to a traffic jam? Ill judgement of companions' capabilities on a rock climb? A belief that carrying drink only means more weight? (A mistake I never repeated.) Snow by the road means the same at 900m? Lack of a torch because we'll be back long before nightfall? Panic outside normal comfort zone due to fatigue or stress?

Other factors might be worth knowing: We need statistics on people broken down by age and sex, details of where they live and what they carry. Are they people who come to the mountains regularly, at weekends or at traditional holiday times? How much experience of this kind of terrain do they have? Are they fairly active people otherwise? Are they mostly friends, family groups, students, retired or full-time employed? Spanish climbers have been known to finish work on a summer Friday, drive to Zermatt overnight, climb on Saturday and Sunday, then drive back to Barcelona and go in to work on Monday morning. Keen or what? As I write this I read that

seven (including four rescuers) have just died in Italian avalanches 'because people were ignoring warnings about conditions'. Would the toll include tourists who had paid a lot of money to squeeze a holiday into their Christmas break?

Some traditional ways of educating people are obviously not working. The 'Mountain Safety' leaflet in any local tourist office is possibly a case in point. Lost amongst others on The Rope Slide Experience, A Country House A Hundred Miles Away, and Teddy Bears Made of Genuine Snowdonia Slate, those leaflets which are picked up with good intentions have slipped down at the side of the car seat within minutes. There is no time to reread the chapter on kit in the pocket book which tells you at which rock you need to turn left to get to the ridge on route XVIIc. Indeed, I wonder whether efforts actually being made are more than token anyway.

In good conditions much navigation requires no more than following clear paths and ridges. However, perhaps we have come to the point where we should reluctantly accept a limited number of small but visible finger-posts at problematic points - the exits to the Carnedd Llewelyn plateau, the descent into the Devil's Kitchen? Then, possibly occasional and small splashes of fluorescent paint on stretches of path where straying is dangerous but easy to do when you are engrossed in a discussion on the spiritual intensity of Sibelius 3? Low key signposting and route confirmation is routine below the snowline in the Alps. Given that such mistakes are much more likely in darkness or bad visibility, even bicycle reflectors?

Incidentally, finger-posts directed *down* are much more important than those pointing up. Only minor intrusions of this kind may reap large benefits. None of us wants to spoil the very environment we cherish, and heaven help us if the 'elf 'n safety police get their feet in the door: After a tragedy in the Cairngorms one education department prescribed that nobody must take children over 1,000' without a Mountain Leadership Certificate. A head teacher then telephoned to ask if he could open his school that morning, since it was built at 1,200' above sea level.

By the same token, dare we assume that, for most days and casual visitors, even being soaked to the skin is no more than unpleasant, and white wrinkled skin is as traditional a part of October as Christmas cards? Once, at no great height on a bitterly cold day with a wind which screamed that, despite polytechnomegatherm[®] fibres and a nanostructured

ventoshield[®] multilayer, nature always has the last word, I asked a friend whether we should continue. "Well, we are doing this for pleasure..." he said, and I think most of the uninitiated would be of the same mind. Thus, perhaps minimum gear to emphasise might only be boots, map, compass, torch and drink, plus ideally a GPS - presuming that few would now forsake the mobile anyway. A brief list is rememberable and not too preachy, and most people only need to be caught once without warm clothing or waterproofs.

By way of gentle education, small but prominent notices at the foot of every major track could say variously "Can you get back in daylight?", "Have you a map and compass?", "Do you have a torch for emergencies?" and so on. A devious one might be "Mobile phone coverage in this area is patchy", true or not. It would be *very* useful if a notice with the local weather forecast and time of sunset could be placed and updated in such places, but clearly this requires a commitment, which may be difficult to obtain. Details of recent MRT callouts might be put up on the walls of cafes - just for interest...

I hear the clamour "Who is going to pay and who will do all this?" The suggestions above - and they are only ideas I am floating - do not sound unduly expensive within the budgets of councils and National Parks. Indeed, it might not seem unreasonable to invite hotels, pubs, equipment shops and the like, each to sponsor the erection of a notice. I am conscious of the fact that typical walkers or climbers may not bring a great deal of business to the area: some arrive by car with their packed lunches and travel back the same night, contributing nothing whatsoever to the local economy, so it would be wrong to assume these potential donors owe us a favour.

As to the 'doing', why should not 333 members volunteer their services, both for admin and practical work, the latter probably under the supervision of professionals, wardens or team members? There must be those who have never been invited to trudge up a sodden mountainside at night, and would welcome the opportunity to contribute something else, something practical. The difficult one is a commitment to a daily distribution of weather forecasts but, if it could not be covered officially by, say, wardens, perhaps people passing the departure points of the most-frequented tracks on their way to work would be willing to stop for a couple of minutes to pin up a notice? Unfortunately, in this case the likely supply would tend to be during the week but demand at weekends.

A long-term plan has a quite different scenario as it involves children: The good news is that we have access to the whole population, a captive audience, in every part of the land, and with a massive workforce of trained communicators! We can't ask more than that! Education is a lot more than regurgitating what it says in books in order to go somewhere else where you can to learn to regurgitate bigger words from books with fewer pictures. Inspired teachers will find every excuse to illustrate practical applications – map reading, the effect of wind in cooling the body, the microclimate of mountain ranges, the magnetic compass. They will do this whether or not very clever people have decreed that it is Essential Knowledge, and it is not irrelevant that children in class delight in straying off the point.

In the last decade or so, all manner of what we might call social aspects have actually become formalised and required. The description of one national science course needs two pages to describe 'Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social, Cultural and Other Issues' (I kid you not) and misses no opportunity to promote the climate change agenda. Is it, then, a lot to ask that attention be drawn periodically to aspects of the environment that can offer endless enjoyment and health benefits, but also kill? Is it also not prudent to offer a minimum of training in finding your way safely around it? Understated little-and-often is likely to be best for awareness – I find myself reading short health tips in the newspaper but wouldn't dream of buying a book.

In fact, many employers value the kind of character-building, initiative, teamwork and problem-solving skills which can be learned in the hills more than they do a piece of paper which says you could at one time form the pluperfect tense of *se désaltérer*, so best of all is for children to learn literally in the field. Sadly, teachers know only too well about the mounds of paperwork this will involve, not to mention the liability Sword of Damocles. For most schools, alas, getting to mountains is prohibitively expensive quite aside from the logistical and administrative obstacles. Taking a party to any significant height is almost certain to require a mountain leadership certificate.

Furthermore, the System will have left few teachers with an ideal background themselves. So, the bad news is that, whilst much can be done in the way of drip feeding some useful education over eleven years - and that is far better than nothing - what we would really like is not going to

happen except in isolated spots... Well I remember driving a group of children into a beautiful range of hills to follow an orienteering programme. I stood enjoying the sunshine, thinking "I am getting paid for this!"

There is the marvellous Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, of which an integral part is excursions into the wild. Yet I wonder how extensive this is, in State schools at least. A dubious carrot in job interviews and - some centres of true dedication apart - liable to be administered by people with some training but without their own enduring love for, and long experience of, wilderness areas? A job: one which demands a huge commitment in time on top of all the other stuff which is asked of the modern teacher. Please tell me I am being unfair.

How do we reach a hundred percent of the adult population? Yes, we must assume that *anyone* may one day take it into his or her head to get out of the car on the A5 and wander up onto the Glyders. My first climb started one gloomy day from my father's car below Helvellyn. 'Let's go for a walk', said he, and I have a photo of him in his raincoat by the summit pillar surrounded by thick cloud. In his defence it must be said that he was brought up in those mountains and knew the hill as well as our back garden, but that is not the case for those who just lock the car and head in the general direction of up. The most effective way to *reach* large numbers must be television.

I had hesitated from saying that what we really need is lots of serious accidents, but the fact remains that the issue was given a good deal of peak time coverage during the cold snap (and the Ceefax story even outranked that of the 999 call about a playful cat). Also, with programmes becoming ever brighter, noisier and more frenetic, the odd poster simply cannot compete in terms of *impact*. Some time ago I think it was Corrie which featured a mountain rescue – brilliant! All the human frailties, all the emotion, all the arguments. I noted a long period on Christmas day when one channel, I suppose realising that people could only sleep in one half-price bed at a time, had to resort to advertising mainly itself.

What chance of bargain rates or even free 'public service' advertising in such lulls? Given that helicopter rescues are at present grist for the entertainment mill, how about a thorough documentary looking into our particular problem from all angles, one which most likely afflicts all remote or highland areas? In fact, if Ray Mears can interest a large audience which

will never have to sleep out on an ice field or eat kangaroo meat à l'eucalyptus, what price a series on all the things people should know in British mountains? Then there would be the trailers, 'a chance to see again', iplayer, book, DVD, red buttons, digital, website, Celebrity Getting Lost in Mountains etc. etc.

Accidents do happen: Vibram isn't perfect and, if there is one thing our patch is renowned for, it is the rain, which makes rocks wet. If Newton hadn't invented gravity rock climbing would be a lot safer, and even a hold, which is 99% sure leaves 1 in 100 at risk. Foxes make holes, ice remains in crevices when the books say it has all gone, and an enthusiastic walker is not going to stay in the valley just because occasional showers are forecast, To reserve the mountains for experienced walkers and climbers would leave them empty within a generation.

Yet there is a difference between concern and anxiety: It is well to take into account that a minor problem will be more unnerving in an unfamiliar situation, stress feeds on stress, and any decisions - including those to call for help - may be based on emotion rather than the clear logic of whether to buy one packet at 49p or two for £1. (Seen locally; do supermarket managers climb?) Ultimately, all anyone can ask is that those who leave the road are aware of the potential hazards, take precautions consistent with their experience, think calmly if a situation demands it, and call for help only when do otherwise exposes them to significant risk.

So, this is an appeal for ideas and help. Anyone with ideas, opinions, time or expertise who might be able to help us reduce the level of these callouts, which should never have happened, is invited to get in touch. Are there any soon-to-be psychology graduates who need a subject for research, TV directors looking for fresh material, media students who will make us a professional film? How about teachers who need a fresh challenge or advertising execs who can tell us why the message is not getting through? A children's writer who could write a thrilling story about how things go wrong very quickly in the mountains? Above all, though, a cross section of opinion from members across the country, from all walks of life, and offers of mundane help. Your team, as they say, needs you.

Peter Tyson

Any ideas or offers of help to the editor please!