



# Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue CIO

## Newsletter February 2019



FROM THE CHAIRMAN : Andy Harbach

2018 was another busy year for OVMRO. We had 130 callouts, an increase from 112 during 2017. Fortunately our Team Leaders were able to manage 22 of the callouts without the need to deploy members. However it is still a significant commitment, and clearly when combined with training, team administration, work and family life leaves very little time for other things. I am extremely grateful to our members and Team Leaders for their continued amazing display of commitment. Of course we are helped by 333 who assist with our fundraising, fill important administrative roles, and assist with some of the peripheral activities around Team life. My thanks go to all those who help in any way, however small. Sadly we had three fatalities during 2018 including Iwan Huws, the drummer with a band Yucatan, whose family and friends raised over £14,700 in his memory which was split amongst all the North Wales teams that helped in the search for Iwan.

Since I last wrote, Dave Williams, an ex member of OVMRO and a SARDA handler has died. Dave was a member of OVMRO for 17 years and was one of the dog handlers who attended the Lockerbie air disaster scene.

I would like to finish by thanking you for your continued support during 2018, and I wish you all the best for 2019. The Team has already been active with a Technical Rope Rescue training day, and a callout to assist a lost person on the Carneddau; and we are only in the first week of January. We have a Trustees meeting tonight, and a Committee meeting tomorrow night. It looks like 2019 will be busy too.

TRYFAN ... AGAIN !!! : Chris Lloyd

As Press Officer, I regularly submit reports to the popular Grough website. However, if I come off the hill late, my submission might not be until later the following day. I never forget, because Bob Smith, Editor of Grough, will always remind me with an E mail with just two words: "Tryfan again!".

Towards the end of last year, a journalist sent out enquiries to all MRT's enquiring about specific Hotspots on their geographical areas. "Easy" I thought: "Tryfan". But I thought he might require a more specific and accurate reply.

Not being an IT expert, I drew up a spread sheet and listed various categories. I then scrolled through three years of reports on our website. I am sure that the IT gurus would have just highlighted something on some list and produced the data within minutes: several hours for me.

I wish I could have used IT to update our scrapbooks too. I have just spent 12 hours of my Saturday sorting through three piles of newspaper cuttings handed to me from three sources. Many cuttings were duplicated. Many were un-dated so required some research before lickin' and stickin'. Then I found that many of the sleeves in the seven Artists' portfolios and were not in order. That meant that I would carefully compose a new page with a cluster of articles, lick and stick, only to find a similar page a few sleeves later in the portfolio!

Anyway, back to the facts of "Tryfan again". Many readers might think most of our incidents are on Tryfan but not so. Taking the most recent three years, about 30 of our calls of about 130 per annum are on Tryfan, or about 24%. The remaining 76% is scattered over the Glyders, Moel Siabod, Carneddau, Great Orme etc.: a vast area.

Not being satisfied with this, I listed which quarter of the year, which aspect of the mountain, ascent or descent; cragfast/overdue/injured, medical, fatal; shouts for help or lights(again!), self rescue; hillwalking or climbing.

The results were:

1. Time of year: a fairly even distribution and probably depends upon weather/ Winter. The order was July to September (Summer holidays), then October to December, January to March and finally Spring.
2. Location: well we all know it must be the North Ridge, closely followed by the West Face, followed by the East Face and Milestone Buttress(including stuck above it)
3. Descent outnumbered ascent by 2:
4. Cragfast outnumbered injuries by 2:1
5. And the vast majority were hill walkers

Despite the popularity of this craggy mountain, there are just over one fatal incidents per annum, thankfully.

What we do with these figures, I am unsure. Some would suggest that specific routes should be clearly marked. However, that would take away the adventure and challenge of this mountain. It is not our call, but that of the Snowdonia National Park Authority.

The newsletter relies on contributions from the membership so please think about writing an article or providing a picture.

**Please can you email [heather.beale@ogwen-rescue.org.uk](mailto:heather.beale@ogwen-rescue.org.uk) if would prefer an electronic version of the newsletter in the next copy**

Russ Hore - [russ.hore@ogwen-rescue.org.uk](mailto:russ.hore@ogwen-rescue.org.uk) - Editor

"Turkey and Cobweb walk" Lead by Dave Salter : John Roberts of Prestatyn Ramblers

333 Ogwen Rescue Supporters Group were joined by Prestatyn Rambling Club to participate in a joint walk after the Christmas break with the purpose of "blowing the cobwebs" away.

A large turnout of 29 people met up at the Blaenau Ffestiniog car park, with the walk planned to pass through some of the old quarries and then to the high open moorland. Eventually the goal was Manod Mawr and then a decent would lead back via quarry ramps to the town. The age range in this group was unusually large, the youngest being eight and the eldest perhaps in their seventies.

The quarries here are vast and one can only start to appreciate them by walking through them, but even so, the slate here was mostly mined so there is a massive set of workings underground. Dave produced some notes that indicated that the slate from here was transported to Maentwrog/Porthmadog and then to the world.

We started by climbing up incline 1 and 2 of the Rhiwbach quarry and then through the remains of several other quarries now effectively merged by further open working. The path is becoming congested by Rhododendron which is populating the area, but the going was fairly easy to the old winch point where we had our "elevenses" at 10 am. Thick steel ropes still encircle the wheel where once full carriages of slate would be lowered, the energy from which would be used to simultaneously haul empty carriages back up.

We continued the walk towards the Manod quarries, Bwlch Slatters and Craig Ddu. It is here where the Nation's Art Treasures and other valuables were stored deep underground in large airconditioned units in WW2. Indeed, it is an area which would probably have been one of the last to "fall" should invasion have been successful. Dave indicated that the premises had been reserved by the DOE until the end of the Cold War.



**In the mists on top of Manod Mawr**

Onwards to the summit of Manod Mawr and although it was now cold and misty, enthusiasm carried us quickly to the summit where a group photo was taken. For a brief time blue sky appeared above us and we hoped that a temperature inversion may put us above the clouds but this was not to be. Following lunch in the quarry below, we returned to Blaenau Ffestiniog via Llyn y Manod [looking atmospheric and moody] and various quarry inclines.

We had tea in the café near to the car park which gave very good value in pleasant surroundings. The day was rounded off by the obligatory panad in a local café.

Thanks go to Dave for the very interesting walk and to those that helped out with the Recce. The GPS indicated 11.9 km and 712m of ascent in total.



**Outside the old cellars**

*"Hide them in caves and cellars but not one picture shall leave these islands"*

Winston Churchill in 1940 regarding the valuables many from the National Gallery and later on paintings from Penrhyn Castle.

333 NEWS AND EVENTS : Chris Wycherley : 333 Secretary : secretary@333.org.uk

The AGM was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

In summary;

To date there are 567 members and we have added 49 more since this time last year

The newsletters are now circulated in electronic format. In July 2017 the mail out was 480, 375 mailed October, the cost last year was £864.

The latest newsletter cost £208. The Annual report will also be a newsletter. All other info will be available on the website.

Election of officers

Chair	Clive Swombow	Re-elected. Proposed Anne Rogers seconded Malcolm Rogers
Secretary	Chris Wycherley	
Membership secretary	Clive Wycherley	
Committee members	Dave Salter	Re-elected. Proposed Malcolm Rogers Seconded Anne Rogers
	Alan Green	
	Dave Jones	

Evening walk January 19<sup>th</sup> 2019 : Chris Wycherley

Nine intrepid walkers set off from Base at 16:30 on 19<sup>th</sup> January, for a walk up Mac's Highway to Cwm Llugwy. By the time we reached the reservoir the light had disappeared leaving us to negotiate the steep climb to Bwlch Eryl Farchog by torch light. The path here is quite steep so care had to be taken not to slip as the path was covered with a layer of wet snow.

Reaching the Bwlch we were given a chance to catch our breath and turn off our torches. Our eyes soon adjusted the light and we were rewarded with spectacular views of snow-covered slopes. Following a scramble, we found ourselves on the snowy summit of Pen Yr Helgi Du. Unfortunately the nearly full moon didn't quite come out but the reflection on the snow allowed us to continue down Y Braich without torch light. Night time hill walking certainly gives you a different perspective in the hills.

Thanks to Dave Worrall for organising and leading the walk. We look forward to next year's walk.



**A hot drink on Pen Yr Helgi Du**



**Bwlch Erel Farchog**



**A cloud inversion on Y Braich**