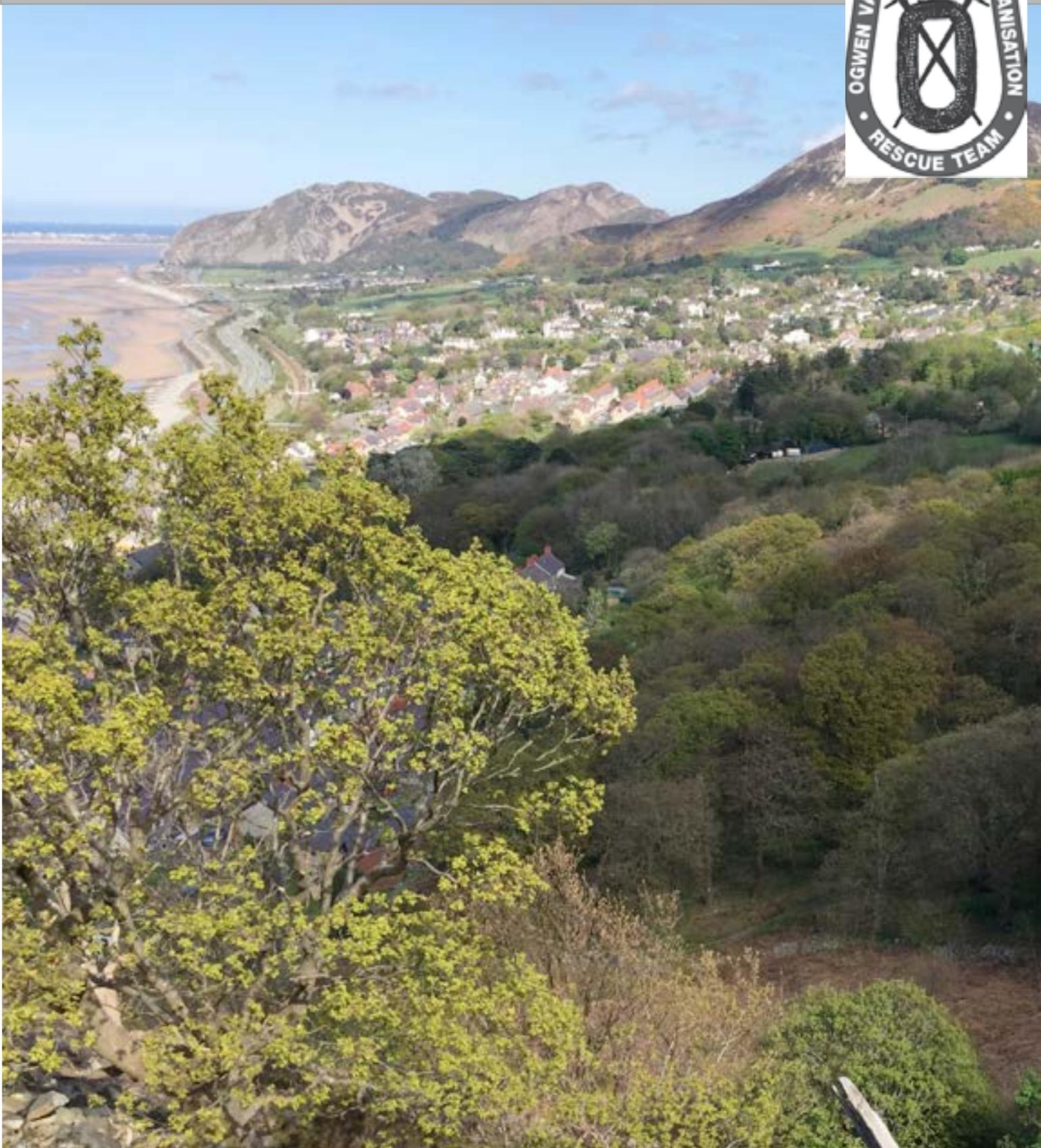


Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation



NEWSLETTER
Summer 2017

OGWEN VALLEY MOUNTAIN RESCUE ORGANISATION



July 2017

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

Chairman's Introduction

Well it doesn't seem that long since I was writing my introduction to the annual report, but it has been 6 months and as always time is going way too quickly.

The Team continues to be busy with 43 incidents listed on the website at 6th June. Last year we were at 52 by this time so it has been slightly quieter, but not a lot. Of note is that 9 of these incidents have only been a stand-by to the full team. This means that the Team Leaders have taken the call and been able to deal with it without committing members to the hill. This is highly beneficial as it prevents members needing to attend base un-necessarily.

Two challenges for the team are getting more people on to the Team Leader group, and keeping up our skills level. Team leaders dedicate a lot of time to the Team, and have an on-call rota which is difficult for a lot of people to commit to. We need to try to be creative so we can support our current team leaders whilst building some resilience in to the system to allow for people retiring. With a large number of callouts members need to take time to spend with friends and families, however we also need to ensure we keep up with our training so we are able to operate slickly in poor weather conditions at night.

The range of incidents we attend continues to be broad. We have had a person reported missing after a two-night camping trip, who turned up well when he got back in to range of a phone signal, and a goat stuck in a fence above Bethesda making loud crying noises! We have had to do some stretcher carrying over difficult terrain when the weather conditions mean the Coastguard helicopter was unable to lift someone with a broken ankle high on Tryfan. The helicopter continues to be a great asset in saving casualties from long carry-offs when they have potentially serious injuries, and the associated risk to team members doing the carrying.

We were also involved in the search for a missing helicopter on the Rhinogs. Unfortunately, the aircraft crashed in very poor weather conditions, and there were no survivors. There was a significant multi-agency response, and it was good to see everyone working extremely well together. Ogwen had two senior team leaders working in the North Wales Police silver control for this incident.

22 of the incidents have involved people being lost or stuck, and not injured. This shows the importance of going in to the hills well prepared and being able to navigate traditionally as well as with a smart phone. The smart phone definitely helps us to find people, especially when used in conjunction with SARLOC™ which allows us to send a text message to a casualty containing a link that, given data signal, will bring up their position on our base computers. In terms of injuries, a leg injury is the most common with 11 occurrences so far this year.

It has been a time of significant change in the administrative side of the team. Pete Frost and Jo Worrall stepped down as Secretary and Treasurer respectively at our AGM in March. I am extremely grateful to them for all the work they have done for the team.

Dave Worrall also stood down as a team member and Committee member, although he will continue to work with 333 and as the Regional Secretary. Dave has done a huge amount of work for the Team, and his contribution will be missed. Dave has been awarded honorary membership of OVMRO in recognition of his contribution. Finally Dave and Carol Salter retired from helping to keep base tidy, and Kevin de Silva has moved on from being House Officer. The work of Dave, Carol and Kevin has helped to keep Bryn Poeth in excellent condition.

The good news is that we have people stepping in to these roles to ensure everything continues to run smoothly. I had an excellent response to my email request for 333 members to help out with administrative roles. Following our AGM, John Barber became Team Secretary, and Heather Beale took on the role of Team Treasurer. Both are settling in to their new roles well, and are providing valuable contributions to the Team. Pauline Hallett and Chris Lloyd have been looking at the tasks that need doing to maintain base, and have been helped by Andy Mercer, a 333 member, who is a painter and decorator by trade.

Matt Nobles continues to help us as merchandise officer. The most popular product purchased through the shop is our book, Risking Life & Limb, which has sold 226 copies online, followed by 71 ceramic mugs. The shop can be found at <https://shop.ogwen-rescue.org.uk> and you can also make donations to the Team through the shop.

Of course, the 333 Committee are continuing to do good work co-ordinating a number of events for 333 members. These include navigation skills and first aid training. 333 also continues to provide a number of base operators to help man base at weekends and provide a meet and greet service to visitors. 333 members also continue to support our fundraising efforts.

The Oggie 8 Challenge is back for a 9th year, on Saturday 5th August. Zoé Penfold and Melanie Day are doing a good job of organising the event, and I look forward to seeing some of you either on the hill or at base during the event. It is a major undertaking organising such a big event, and your continuing support is appreciated. Details of the event can be found at <http://www.ogwen-rescue.org.uk/oggie-8/>

Finally, I would like to wish you all an enjoyable summer.

Andy Harbach
Chairman
OVMRO

Mountain Man - An evening with Buc Thomas

On Saturday, 14th. January 2017, John Rowell and Marion Waine of The Soul of Snowdonia, presented an Evening with Buc Thomas at Siabod Cafe. The proceeds of the evening were in aid of Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation.

For those who don't know Buc (Gwyn Thomas), he is a Welsh Hill farmer and he farms from Blaen y Nant, Nant Ffrancon. He is also a keen supporter of OVMRO.

For those who don't know Blaen y Nant, it nestles at the back of Nant Ffrancon, on the West side, just below Ogwen Falls, and in the shadow of the Scout hut at Hafod. From his farm house, his farm covers the West of Tryfan, the North of the Glyders, Cwm Bochlwyd, Cwm Idwal, Y Garn and up to Foel Goch.

The evening started with "Last Orders" for food at 6.30 pm. The "specials" for the evening were lamb burgers, beef burgers, goat burgers and lamb stew. All the meat was the finest organic meat from Blaen y Nant and it was expertly cooked and presented by Gabi and her team at the "Siabod". Soon the room was filled. Once everyone had been fed, the furniture was re-arranged so that we could see the screen. Two gentlemen sat adjacent: John Rowell and Buc. John introduced the format of the presentation and then introduced Buc. John had a list of questions on his clip board so as to prompt Buc. in case there was "hesitation, deviation or repetition". He asked the first question, Buc took one more swig from his Great Orme beer, then started to talk. Soon he had the audience hooked because he talked with passion, he talked with knowledge and he talked with honesty and sincerity.

Buc comes from a family of farmers who have been farming in the Bethesda area for over 300 years. He was the second son of a farmer so was not to inherit his father's farm. Having learned many farming skills on his father's farm, he sought employment as a shepherd in the area. In post war years and for many years, the farmers were paid a subsidy per head of stock by the Government. Prior to that, the farms had a few cattle, a few pigs, a flock of sheep and arable land to grow winter feed for the stock. With the advent of the "per head", subsidy, the cattle and pigs went and the sheep multiplied. However, as the vast number of sheep could not be supported by the land in the winter, they were sent to lowland farms to graze. That meant that there was no need to grow winter feed. As Buc said, no Welsh farmer want to miss out on a subsidy, so the flocks increased and the mountains became over grazed.

With the sheep being sent to the lowlands for part of the year, employment as a shepherd did not pay the bills. Like so many young men from farming stock, Buc left farming to work in the slate quarry.

"It was my dream for 27 years, whilst working for other farmers, to farm myself, to bring back the balance between nature and farming that I had known during my upbringing. I remembered how this area looked. Things were done for a reason. I was keen to combine these old ways with modern technology."

Buc could foresee the problems with the British upland farming techniques and want-

ed to see why the New Zealanders could do better. They could send their lamb half way around the world to compete with Welsh lamb. He planned to go to New Zealand and Australia for a year to work on their farms. This had a Downside, the cost of leaving his young family. After just a few months overseas, he realised that his children were calling and he decided to return home. The Upside was that shortly after his return, the lease for Blaen y nant farm became available. This was an opportunity that Buc could not refuse. He eagerly signed the lease and then looked at his responsibilities: a rather run down farm with over-grazed pasture producing average quality, mass produced lamb that had only survived on Government subsidies.

Buc knew that to compete and be successful, he would have to produce a better product, one that would command a better market price. This he could do by Organic farming. Reducing his flock and bringing in Welsh Blacks (cattle), he was able to graze his pasture organically. He didn't use chemicals to treat his stock on a "just in case" policy; he didn't dip them in organophosphates (as used by Saddam Hussein on the Kurds); he didn't spread chemical fertilizer or weed killer on his land. By careful use of his pasture and careful monitoring of his stock, he did not need to use chemicals. In addition, when October came and it was time for the young rams to go to the abattoir, he would go with them right to the point of slaughter. He knew that if they were cared for right up until the end, they would be more relaxed and produce a better meat.

Hill farming is not an easy life. No one makes a fortune. You have to be strong, dedicated, determined and have passion for this vocation. Added to all the physical challenges of the mountain landscape, mountain weather and irresponsible "visitors", are the challenges of administration. Gone are the days of a coloured dye marker and clipped ears to identify your flock. Now every sheep is double ear tagged and recorded. Every time the sheep is moved from the farm, forms have to be completed. Today's shepherd spends as much time filling in forms as he does tending his animals.

Having gone Organic, Buc needed to Winter his Welsh Blacks under cover on the farm. The ancient and barely weather-proof stone and slate barn did not meet current regulations. Buc needed to build a new barn. Many of you might remember the old barn. The previous tenant didn't have cattle so he hired out the straw floor to climbers for 6d a night at the dry end and 3d a night for the damp end. One might think that a farmer who wants to improve his lot, improve Welsh hill farming and improve the countryside would be supported by all the authorities. Alas, he had to jump various hurdles to get permission from his landlord and the National Park authorities. Undeterred, Buc now has a new barn for his cattle.

Initially, Buc was able to sell his quality organic meat to the supermarkets at a premium price. Eventually, this premium was eroded until it was not worth the effort. Buc wanted to market his meat. He bought a refrigerated van from which he could sell his raw meat. Initially, he parked in a lay-by in the Ogwen valley. The word that quality meat was being sold here soon got around and customers would go out of their way to buy quality meat from his van. Once more, the great boot of authority was to stamp on Buc's success. He could not trade on public land. Undeterred, Buc befriended the

staff at Ogwen Cottage. His refrigerated van was parked in their car park. Once more the sales of refrigerated meat boomed. With the temporary closure of the other cafe in the vicinity, Buc was selling cooked local meats too. Added to that, he was selling other local foodstuffs such as ice cream, teas and coffees. A business success, employing local people selling local healthy food to visitors. Welcome to Wales! Alas, once more the boot of authority stamped on the success as he was selling refreshments and that required more forms, more approvals etc. And then Ogwen Cottage changed ownership and the new owners wanted to open their own cafe.

Buc is a proud man. He is proud of his heritage, proud of his farm. He enjoys talking to people about his farm. He now hosts numerous groups of school children and students to Blaen y nant to tell them all about Welsh hill farming.

Buc kept his audience's full attention for a couple of hours without "hesitation, deviation or repetition." John need his clipboard. There was just so much information, so many tales. We left full of interesting facts and with a great respect for this unassuming Welsh hill farmer and over £1000 presented to OVMRO.

Chris Lloyd

15th January 2017



Kate Humble meets Search Dog Team, Sally and Spin

When the BBC contacted OVMRO asking if Kate Humble could visit to film part of an episode for an upcoming series about people working and playing in the Welsh mountains, several members of the team were happy to help-out.

Of course, the Snowdonia mountain weather did not make things easy. It was a blustery, cold and very wet day with only the odd break in the driving rain. As a dog handler herself, Kate particularly wished to meet Sally Armond and her Search Dog Spin, who have been valued members of OVMRO and SARDA Wales for around a decade.

Spin is a small, smooth haired Border Collie with many years' experience training and working as an air scenting Mountain Rescue Search Dog and with several finds under her 'collar'. During the filming Sally wanted to emphasise that it is the relationship between the dog and handler, functioning together as a team that leads to them being a successful search unit.

When Kate and the film crew arrived at Oggie base, her friendly personality soon put everyone at ease, not least Sally, who was not relishing her debut as a national TV star! Kate was also accompanied by her own dog, Teg, a rather handsome working Welsh Collie sheep dog.

The professionalism and good humour of the film crew, facing the adversity of keeping camera and sound recorders dry in the squally conditions, made a cold, wet day very enjoyable. The Drone pilot had a particularly difficult task, but he did manage to get his machine aloft to take, what I am sure will be, some spectacular shots from the air.

During the interview, Sally emphasised that the unsung heroes of SARDA, are the volunteers who give their time to be 'dogs-bodies', hiding themselves high up in the mountain-side among the rocks, so the Search Dog Teams can practise finding them. OVMRO team member Jed Stone, himself an experienced Search Dog Handler, embraced the opportunity, once again, to play 'hide-and-seek' with Spin, whom he has helped train since she was a pup. Jed found a good hiding place amongst the boulders below Clogwyn y Tarw, whilst Kate interviewed Sally about the work of Search and Rescue Dogs in Wales.

When Sally gave Spin the command 'away-find!' their training and experience working as a team was clearly demonstrated. Sally skilfully worked Spin, who quartered across the steep hillside into the gusting wind. It was at a distance of a few hundred metres that those of us watching could see Spin lift her head as she picked up Jed's scent to strike off towards the boulders where he was hidden. Having located Jed, and given him a thoroughly wet licking, she headed back to Sally to give a volley of barks and lead her to back to the 'casualty'. It was text book stuff. We could clearly see that Spin had done this kind of thing, in training and for real, on many occasions. Spin seemed delighted to repeat the last section of the 'search' twice more, so that the film crew could get some different angles and close-ups. A few more Drone shots were taken and then we headed back to Oggie base for a well-earned brew and to warm up.

The day was a great success, despite the weather, and we are all keen to see the final version on TV later in the year (to be announced). Kate Humble was a pleasure to meet and

made the event enjoyable for all the team members who kindly gave their time to assist. Final thanks must go to Sally and Spin for being prepared to put themselves into the public eye, and, of course, for their long-term dedication to UK Search and Rescue.

John Pailthorpe



OVMRO members join Sally, Spin, Kate and Teg in a brief interlude from the driving rain!

Credit : J Pailthorpe



Enjoying the filming in 'liquid sunshine', Teg in the background watching the proceedings.

Credit: J. Pailthorpe

It's Cool up North

I first visited Alaska back in 1996 when I and other team members attempted to climb Denali (20,310'). This June I finally got to go back.

Facts about Alaska

Alaska is the largest state in the US at 663,000 sq.miles with a population of 738,432 (0.9 sq.miles per person)

By comparison, Hawaii has an area of 10,900 sq.miles with a population of 1,432,000 (0.008 sq.miles per person)

Alaska is the only state that does not collect state sales tax or an individual income tax. To finance state operations, Alaska depends primarily on petroleum revenues.

We flew from Heathrow on a pleasant afternoon flight. We had dropped off Kip, our dog, at his holiday home where he ran off with the owner without even looking back.

Luckily we managed to get an upgrade to Business Class so turned right and up the stairs as we entered the plane. Free drinks and a lay-flat bed made the 9½ flight 'fly' by. We had a couple of nights in Seattle so we could have a look around the city.

The Pike Fish market had been recommended with tales of flying fish (The sellers throwing fish to each other). We only found one fish stall and missed the fish throwing. There were lots of flower stall but they weren't being thrown.

The Klondike museum with its tales of the Gold Rush periods passed a few minutes, but at least it was free. We had an evening drink at Miners Landing where two pints of IPA cost \$28 !!

The 'underground' in Seattle is interesting. It is more like an underground road with normal buses, trams and trains in the same tunnel. We had heard tales of the underground streets where the city had built on top of the old buildings. Unfortunately we did not have time to visit them as the Space Needle was calling for an evening meal to celebrate my birthday. Seattle has a monorail left over from the Olympics. There are fantastic views from the tower. The restaurant revolves at a surprising speed but be warned, don't put anything on the windowsill as it does not revolve with you.

We left Seattle and flew to Juneau, Alaska's capital for a night before joining our 'cruise' the next day. For a capital city, Juneau is very small. There are many jewellery shops and very large cruise ships dock here. We later learned that most of the jewellery shops are owned by the cruise liners, explain why they all shut when the passengers went back on board. We had dinner in the red Dog saloon. Well worth a visit with sawdust on the floors and Wyatt Earp's pistol hanging on the wall.

To pass the time we took the 'tramway' (for 'tramway' read 'Cable Car') up Mount Roberts. During the ride two bald eagles circled in front of the car. They were called Pricilla and Elvis. Kate and I were the only ones excited by seeing eagles. At the top of the cable car is a caged bald eagle called Lady Baltimore, which is a shame as 'he' was named before they realised. It had been shot and is blind in one eye so can no longer be released. To pass more time we took the bus out to the salmon hatchery. Farmed salmon is illegal in Alaska but the hatchery milks the salmon, grows them to a suitable age and sets them free. The salmon spend a few years at sea then come back to the

exact farm to spawn and die (after being milked of course).

We finally boarded our ship in the afternoon prior to setting sail. We were sailing with UnCruise who only have small ships. Ours had 60 passengers and 20 crew. The benefit of being a small ship is they can get places the 'floating hotels' can't. The cabins are small and comfortable but the ships are not about luxury and "all you can eat 24 hour buffets", they are there to let you see wildlife. A couple of hours south of Juneau we got our first glimpse of wales, sorry I mean whales. We moored in Endicott Arm for the night.

The morning activity was a skiff ride up to Dawes glacier to watch the ice calving into the sea. The glacier did not disappoint with a few huge blocks falling off the face. In the afternoon we relocated to Fords Terror. The ship had three skiffs, paddle boards and kayaks on the back deck. Launching the kayaks is made easy by an "easy launch" deck that hangs off the back of the ship. Fords Terror is named due to a narrow canyon that produces a huge standing wave when the tide is dropping. Ford's Terror is named after a crew member who rowed into the narrow entrance of the fjord at low tide. Ford was trapped in the canyon for a "terrifying" six hours.



After dinner we set sail and moored off a whale research station for the night. In the morning we were treated to the amazing sight of a mother humpback whale teaching her calf how to breach. She kept this up for 10-25 minutes allowing some superb photos. They also "fin slap" on the surface of the water with 5m fins. Why do they do it? The best explanation offered was "because they can".

The days followed with lots of wildlife sightings. Other activities included "bush whacking". We were dropped on the shore with a guide and wandered off into the forest along animal tracks if possible or just pushing through the undergrowth if not. Due to the ever present opportunity of encountering bears, the guide carried bear spray and regularly called "Heeeeeeeeeeyyyyyy Beeeeaaaaarrrrrrrr" to warn them of our approach. On one morning walk we crossed tidal mud flats and spotted very fresh bear tracks. A group did the same walk in the afternoon and the bear walked out onto the same beach they were walking down and started walking towards them. The guide sounded an air horn to scare it off but it carried on walking. She got on the radio and said "We need a skiff.... NOW". Luckily all went well.

Once the crew were sure we could manage a kayak we were allowed to go off on our own. Kate and I spent 20 minutes watching two bears mooching along the shore, picking up clams and play fighting.



We initially headed south from Juneau but we were now heading north up into Glacier Bay and needed to pick up a Park Warden. Visits to Glacier Bay are strictly controlled and the number of large ships is limited to 3 a day. It contains fifteen tidewater glaciers and one of the hi-lights of the cruise is called the "Polar Plunge" which is performed, by some brave souls, in front of one of the glaciers and involves jump-

ing into the icy water, and rapidly getting out. (PS No I didn't do it)

All too soon the cruise came to an end but the list of wildlife we saw includes, minky and humpback whales, black bears, brown bears, coastal brown bears, bald eagles, sea lions, sea otters, wolves, puffins, seals, porpoise, moose and many more I have forgotten.

We took a short flight to Anchorage before catching the Alaska railroad glass topped train to Talkeetna which I last visited 21 years ago. I have a couple of friends living there so we had a good time catching up and drinking too much. Talkeetna is the take off point for most people attempting to climb Denali. This year has seen bad weather leading to a 29% success rate for summiting. We could not even see the foothills. I took a flight with one of the air taxis hoping to see the summits but the cloud base kept us below 7000 feet. Whilst waiting for the flight a teenage looking girl came out of the office and walked us outside to the plane. It turns out she was the pilot and had been one of the top stunt pilots in the country. I wondered why the flight was a bit bumpy but at least she promised not to fly upside down. She did get a slight shock when the engine cut out and she quickly swapped the fuel tanks over. We planned to do an unscheduled glacier landing but the weather defeated us. Air Traffic Control is non-existent and pilots just chat to each other asking if it safe to land where they want to go. We battled back to the airstrip through a snow storm and aborted our approach because another pilot decided he wanted to land first.

For a change we took a Jet boat up the three rivers that pass Talkeetna. The captain thought he was featuring in Top-Gun (Pilot shades, all the corny lines) but did give us a good trip and spotted more wildlife for us.

We leave Talkeetna and head up to Denali (The town not the mountain) followed by a bus along the park road to Kantishna, north of Denali (The peak) Kantishna was founded during the gold rush of 1905. We stayed at The Roadhouse which is almost at the end of the 92.6 mile park road. Whilst there, we took a walk up onto Camp Ridge. Boiling hot on the way up, with great views of the top of Denali, within 10 feet of the summit it started to rain and the wind picked up. We walked down in waterproofs only to be back in t-shirts at the bottom. We panned for and found gold in the stream but I won't be retiring just yet.

Before we left for home we visited Fannie Quigly's second cabin. Fannie was born to Bohemian parents and moved to Kantishna in 1906, survived by feeding the miners and settled for the rest of her life. She learnt her 'English' from the drunk, Irish miners so she could swear like a trooper and wrestle a bear, or so the story goes. She died alone and was found by her 'neighbour' when he was worried he had not seen smoke from her cabin for a day or two. She is an Alaskan legend.

It was long trip home but ranks as one of my best trips.

Russ Hore



Life has been busy of late

I have been pestering Chris for an article for this newsletter. Here is his excuse for not providing one [Russ]

“Life has been busy of late...

... including three live interviews on BBC Breakfast this morning. It was all rather chaotic from the time Andy Simpson contacted me last Friday to ask if I could do an interview in Snowdonia and could I find a casualty to do likewise. I immediately replied in the affirmative, but heard no more. I assumed that he had found another person and not having any details, I could not start seeking for a casualty.

On Monday evening I received an email from a representative of the local Ordnance Survey group to say he had received a call from a concerned OS Press Manager, who had not heard anything from MREW. He then put me on the case.

On Tuesday I contacted the Ordnance Survey Press Manager as they wanted to run an interview along with the BBC regarding Mountain Safety. They would be filming with BBC Wales on the following morning. Could I find a casualty? Grabbing the odd moment between work, I started my quest but without and data at hand it was not easy. He was expecting a reply within the hour! Later, the plan changed from Wednesday to the BBC Breakfast on Thursday, first interview at 06.20hrs. Be at the RV in Llanberis for 05.30.

I couldn't find a casualty so the OS shipped a person up from Torquay for 36 hrs. She had broken her ankle on Dartmoor a couple of years before.

Wednesday evening training at Oggi Base was Cas Care scenarios. The Cas care group had organised excellent training using three volunteer casualties from outside OVMRO. We were put in groups, given some kit and sent out into the weather behind Oggi Base. Just below the rocky outcrop to the West of the weather station, we found three seriously injured casualties. Soon the scissors were in action cutting through harnesses and clothing. Time was ticking. Then “End Ex”. Back into Oggi Base for tea and hang up three sets of rescue and Cas Care kit. Knowing that I was to be in Llanberis for 05.30, I opted to stay overnight at Oggi Base. There was not the usual rush to the pub after training as many members wanted to chat about Cas Care. Just as the last few were leaving, a trainee who left the team for Australia last year called in. We had a chat. I sold him a book and he left after 22.00.

At last, time to sort out my kit and props for tomorrow and read my notes before getting my head down at 23.00. I was awoken just before midnight by Kim. “Wake up, There's a job”. Soon I found myself along with Charlie Beale being carefully driven through the darkness by Neil Adam to the South side of Moel Siabod to search for a lost and unhappy walker. So much for my plans of a five hour sleep, a relaxed awakening and an organised start to Thursday, before driving the team Land Rover around to Llyn Padarn. “Would we be off the hill in time?”

After some expert navigation by Charlie and careful driving on the forest tracks by Neil, we arrived at our deployment point. Unfortunately, the footpath through the forest was now a fight through the brash left from felling. Fighting our way through to the edge of the forest, we left

the trip hazards of the brash to the minefield of boggy ground. Our “casualty” responded to the blasts on our horns. Neil from his vantage point was able to guide us in the right direction. Our “casualty had set off on a three day hike from Dolwyddelen in a Northerly direction. Unbeknown to him, the small screen of his new GPS did not reveal his change of direction to the West. His report to the Police was that he had headed North which did not correspond with other information he supplied. He too had fought the brash and the bog. In the failing light of a manky evening, he plunged thigh deep into the bog. However, like the two of us, he endeavored to finally overcome this minefield.

Now on relatively good ground and still on the marked footpath, he erected his new tent, pulled on his new over-trousers and crawled into his new sleeping bag to await rescue. Had he a map to study, he would have realised that he was on his intended route and was only a mile from the road in Nant Gwynant.

Relieved to be saved from the threat of the Bog Monster, he carefully packed his new kit, and followed us carefully across the bog, over the brash and up to the sanctuary of the Land Rover. He was delivered to his car in Dolwyddelen and we arrived at Oggi base for 03.00. With my alarm set for 04.00, wet kit to hang up and kit and props for the BBC to load, I failed to return to the comfort of my sleeping bag.

By 05.00, I was driving through the low cloud and drizzle to “the lonely tree” RV point on the shores of Llyn Padarn.

I was soon to be met by the man from the Ordnance Survey and shortly after by Jason Rawles and his followers of the local OS supporters and the casualty from Torquay. The only thing missing was the BBC crew. They were located at a different venue across the lake and up the hillside at the Quarry Hospital.

With precious time ticking for the first of three live interviews on BBC Breakfast, our convoy shot around. The TV reporter was just giving his live “trailer” to the slot. We were quickly in place: three of us to be interviewed with a cloudy scene of what should have been Snowdon as the backdrop.

06.20 came and the three interviews were made: first the casualty's story of how even an experienced outdoor instructor can be injured, then me as to the latest MR incident figure for 2016 showing a 10% rise in incidents and finally to an extreme outdoor adventurer who was to advise on basic kit to take on the hill (my kit) and how one should always carry a hard copy OS map.

With interviews complete, a tarpaulin pulled over my soggy display of kit, we stood and chatted getting to know each other.

07.20 soon came around and we answered the same questions with “similar” answers. Knowing the score, we now jumped into two vehicles and raced to the Padarn Hotel for bacon butties and hot drinks, leaving the BBC reporter and cameraman to record the 08.00 trailer. We arrived back on set to find the local BBC Wales reporter, Roger Pinney with his cameraman there too. Although he was meant to film his report after the “national”, he managed to slip it

in just before. Roger has filmed with OVMRO on a number of occasions including one at Tr-wyeryn White Water Centre where we kitted him out and launched him into the cold raging waters. That was a very good bit of footage and reporting.

Finally, our last interviews, a few photographs and then farewells.

I drove a wet Land Rover, filled with my kit back to Oggi Base for about 09.30.

Then a run for home, a hot shower and to work. Finding frequent reasons to leave my desk to check on my gang working on projects around the town, thankfully I was able to keep my eyes open. I left work at 16.00, taking a careful drive to home just 20 minutes away. Soon I was in my bed and in deep sleep.

I was awoken by the telephone. The time was 6.30 on bedside clock. I failed to find the telephone in time, so I just listened to a pre-recorded announcement from some call centre. 6.30? Had I really slept for 14 hours? It certainly felt like it. The weather hadn't changed much overnight. Time to get up and have some breakfast.....or should that be supper?"

Chris Lloyd – Press Officer



The 9th Oggie 8 Mountain Challenge

ENTER A TEAM NOW...

- **Saturday 5th August 2017**
- **A team event over eight 3000ft peaks surrounding the Ogwen Valley**
- **Full marshalling and event support**
- **Legendary after party, food, drink and goodie bag**
- **£25 per person to enter**
- **Plus recommended £100 per person sponsorship**



We are in our 9th year of running this endurance event to raise much needed funds for Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation. Please enter a team and be a vital part of keeping the team operational for another 50 years...

For more information and to apply on line go to:
www.ogwen-rescue.org.uk/oggie_8



OVMRO is a registered charity (No. 1160504)

CALLOUTS for 2017

Date	Time	Duration	Location	Cas.	Description	Team deployed
01/01	05:25	1h 5m	PyG Track, Snowdon	1M/1F	A couple, who had presumably gone to the summit for the New Year, got lost on their way down the PyG track in sleet and snow (forecast). The male had medical problems which increased as they waited so when Llanberis MRT arrived on scene he could no longer walk. R936 were requested for the evacuation and OVMRO and Aberglaslyn MRT were put on stand-by.	5
01/01	16:45	4h 45m	Bwlch Eryl Farchog	1M/1F	Two well equipped walkers descended the SE ridge of Carnedd Llewelyn but lacked the confidence to climb down the 'bad step' due to the icy conditions. They requested assistance so hill parties were deployed up Mac's Highway for the short walk in to the Bwlch. The walkers were then roped down to the Bwlch for the walk down to the Team vehicles.	19
04/01	23:10	0h 35m	Pentraeth	2M	Two young brothers were reported as missing from home and NWP requested that OVMRO attend with SARDA dogs. Whilst initial investigation was still ongoing the brothers turned up safe and well and the team stood down.	4
07/01	17:20	19h 10m	Pinnacle Rib East Face Tryfan	2M	Two well equipped but relatively inexperienced climbers asked for advice when night fell and they had not completed the route. They were on a safe platform just below Yellow Slab but were reluctant to carry on climbing the greasy rock in the dark. They had a Cas shelter, torches, food and water and decided that they would sit it out on the mountain overnight and continue the climb the following morning. The Team Leader made welfare calls to them until midnight and early the next morning. Although being a little wet and cold they continued the route in the morning and walked back off the mountain unaided.	3
14/10	10:45	1h 45m	Tin Can Alley	1M	A male hill walker slipped on a wet rock a short distance above the Idwal carpark, and suffered a lower leg injury. Hi sposition was confirmed using SARLOC and team members were on scene quickly as he was only 10 minutes from the road. They splinted his leg and then he was carried on a stretcher to the road to be transferred to an ambulance.	16
19/01	17:30	1h 30m	Tryfan	0	A male on the A5 below Tryfan reported hearing screams and shouts coming from the mountainside and was concerned someone needed help. Unfortunately he had borrowed a phone to make the call so no further info could be gathered initially. A Team Leader went to the location but could find no sign of the informant, and on questioning other people in the area no-one else had heard the shouts.	2
21/01	14:45	1h 45m	Bristly Ridge	1M	A male walker was seen to fall a considerable distance down a gully from the ridgeline, and was reported as unresponsive. The informant was some distance below him with no means of access to the location so the team were immediately called and R936 tasked. The aircraft managed to locate the male and winched him from the mountain. He was taken to Bangor Hospital. We have been informed by his friend since the event that the casualty died from a heart attack which caused the fall.	15

Date	Time	Duration	Location	Cas.	Description	Team deployed
22/01	12:05	3h 25m	Gyrn Wigau	1M	Two brothers walking on Gyrn Wigau became separated in misty conditions. One of them grew concerned for the other and searched the area thoroughly before asking for assistance. Because of the easy nature of the ground there was concern that the missing man may have had a medical problem and be unable to respond. Hill members plus a SARDA search dog were deployed to the area but luckily the brothers found each other shortly before the MRT arrived at the place last seen. The hill party met up with the brothers for a debrief and to check all was well.	10
28/01	14:06	3h 24m	Main Gully Glyder Fach	2M	A man and his 10 year old son reported themselves stuck in the top section of Main Gully on Glyder Fach, having thought it was a descent route in the cloudy conditions. Their position was confirmed using SARLOC and with some advice over the phone they managed to ascend the gully again and gain the plateau. From there they were monitored by phone until they were safely back on the road. They were a well equipped party who asked for assistance at an appropriate time.	11
30/01	20:40	17h 20m	Afon Cynfal Llan Ffestiniog	1M	The team were asked to assist South Snowdonia Search and Rescue Team, and North Wales Police with an incident at the Afon Cynfal. In a joint effort with the Police Divers and MRT, the body of a male was recovered from the river gorge and transported to an undertaker. Further investigation by NWP will be carried out.	9
14/02	14:30	7h 00m	Bristly Ridge	1M	A solo male scrambler became stuck in a gully on the side of Bristly Ridge. He wisely decided to remain on a ledge and ask for assistance, as moving up or down the gully would have been dangerous. He was well equipped with good mountain clothing and a bivvi bag, and had a torch and whistle to aid in locating him. Due to a limited response from OVMRO the TL requested assistance from RAF Valley MRT. Hill parties from both teams made their way to the ridge where one party went to the ridge line and rigged an abseil, then lowered a team member to the casualty who was then lowered down to the other hill party waiting on the Bristly Screes. All team members and casualty then walked off to Oggie Base.	16
17/02	17:20	4h 55m	Glyder Fach	1M/1F	A young pair of walkers started their day early enough to complete the route they had planned. They parked at the Pen Y Gwryd and went up to Pen Y Pass to take the red spot route to Glyder Fawr, to then continue on to Glyder Fach, intending to come down to Llyn Caseg Fraith area and descend back to the Pen Y Gwryd via the Miners Path. Having got to Glyder Fawr they continued on but lost their way in the cloud. After having spent some time trying to refine the path unsuccessfully they called for assistance. They reported that they thought they were at Bwlch Y Ddwy-Glyder. SARLOC showed them to be at the top of the Bristly Ridge. They were advised to walk East towards Caseg Fraith whilst being tracked with SARLOC and a small hill party deployed to locate and retrieve them to Oggie Base.	15

Date	Time	Duration	Location	Cas.	Description	Team deployed
19/02	18:45		Y Gully West Face Tryfan	2M/1F	A party of 3 well equipped walkers started up the North Ridge but one of them slipped and twisted an ankle not far from the summit. He was able to continue walking slowly but they decided it would be best to head down; unfortunately they chose the West face. They climbed down into Y Gully until they could go no further due to the steepness of the terrain, and then wisely asked for help. Their position was confirmed with SARLOC and two hill parties were able to climb into their location and then lower the group on a rope system to safe ground. They were then able to walk off with team members.	14
04/03	13:45	6h 15m	Glyder Fawr	2M	Two males asked for help as they had become disoriented in a white out on Glyder Fawr. NO report submitted so no further details.	0
11/03	16:00	2h 20m	Marin Trail	1M	A solo male mountain biker on the Marin Trail hit his knee against a rock causing him to fall off the bike. He was unable to straighten the knee or weight bear so rang for help. With assistance from NEWSAR team members and WAST paramedics, a small hill party located the male, treated his injury and then lowered him on a stretcher to the adjacent forestry track. He was then transferred to the ambulance for onward transport to Ysbyty Gwynedd. The use of SARLOC helped with the speedy recovery.	18
11/03	21:00	0h 45m	Tryfan	5M	A group of 5 climbers were reported as being overdue from a day of climbing on the East Face of Tryfan. There was no report of injury and the group leader had spoken to the group 90 minutes earlier as they were descending the South Ridge. He was advised to wait a further 30 mins and the Team Leader would then contact him for an update. Shortly afterwards the group leader rang to report the group had turned up safe and well, but had descended by a different route to the one expected.	2
12/03	13:45	4h 15m	Tal y Fan	1M	A male walker slipped on wet grass and injured his knee. He was unable to walk so his wife called for assistance. His location was confirmed with SARLOC and several hill parties made their way to his location, his injury was treated, and then he was moved on a stretcher back to the team vehicles. He was then returned to his own transport for the journey home.	14
12/03	16:45	1h 15m	West Face Tryfan	1M/1F	A well equipped father and his 11 year old daughter parked at the Tryfan lay-by intending to climb the North Ridge. They reached the snow line and decided to turn back because of the conditions underfoot. Unfortunately they strayed onto the West face while descending and felt it was too dangerous to go up or down so called for help. The Coast-guard aircraft, returning from other tasking, winched the pair as they were passing and dropped them at Oggie base.	13

Date	Time	Duration	Location	Cas.	Description	Team deployed
21/03	17:45	3h 00m	Rhiw Bach Cwm Penmachno	1M	A 10 year old boy, in an organised group, was on the descent path from the Rhiw Bach mine system when he slipped on the mud and injured his lower leg. The Outdoor Centre staff requested rescue kit from their centre and also called for Mountain Rescue. Team members were on scene shortly afterwards to assess the casualty, and it was decided that he would need to be evacuated by stretcher to the road. This was done quickly and he was passed over to an ambulance crew for transport to Ysbyty Gwynedd.	17
26/03	10:35	5h 40m	Milestone Buttress	1M	The well organised and equipped pair of climbers were on Rowan Route. The casualty led the second pitch and then fell 2-3m severely injuring his ankle and was unable to move. The MRT treated and reduced the dislocated ankle and then evacuated the casualty using a stretcher lower to safe ground for a carry to the road. The aircraft was not able to winch from the cliff due to the continual presence of un-roped climbers on routes close to the incident site. Excellent joint operation with RAF Valley MRS	14
29/03	22:50	42h 10m	South Snowdonia	3M/2F	The team were asked to assist in the search for a missing helicopter in the Rhinog area of South Snowdonia. Other MRTs had found the crash site before OVMRO team members deployed, so the team stood down whilst the AAIB were on scene. The following day team members were deployed on to the mountain to assist with the removal of the bodies, however the Coastguard Helicopter was able to complete the task in a break in the weather so all team members returned to base.	18
30/03	20:50	0h 55m	Coedty	1F	Four female horse riders became lost in the dark not far from Coedty reservoir, having travelled from Lyn Cowltyd. A Team leader was able to locate them using SARLOC and give them directions back to the road, which was less than 500m away. They were met there by the wife of a Team Member who advised them how to get to their lodgings.	4
31/03	15:30	6h 00m	Devil's Kitchen	1M	A solo male walker was descending the path from the Devils Kitchen when he slipped 2-3m in a bouncing fall impacting himself hard in various locations; he managed to walk a little further but then had to stop. He was found by a passing school group who then raised the alarm. The team was called out but it was already committed to supporting the crashed helicopter incident in the Rhinogs so Llanberis MRT and Rescue 936 were also requested to attend. Poor wind conditions stopped Rescue 936 approaching so teams treated and evacuated the casualty by stretcher to a waiting ambulance.	25
01/04	13:10	2h 50m	Sub Cneifion Rib	1M	A male climber, third on the rope, suffered a twisting injury to his left upper arm low down on the first pitch of Sub Cneifion Rib. He was unable to continue so his friends lowered him to the base of the crag and then climbed back down to him. The team were requested with a small party going straight to scene. R936 were training in the Ogwen Valley so were also asked to assist. The casualty was splinted and then winched aboard the helicopter for a short journey to hospital.	13

Date	Time	Duration	Location	Cas.	Description	Team deployed
01/04	17:15	2h 30m	North Ridge Tryfan	6F/4M	A group of 10 walkers set off up the N ridge of Tryfan and ended up on the Eastern Traverse in mist. They were tired and worried about their unknown location and the possibility of nightfall. A TL spoke to the party by phone and a debrief and SARLOC confirmed their location. Advice was given to retrace their route back down along Eastern Traverse and then to descend N ridge. Regular comms with party and monitoring continued until the party reached the road.	12
02/04	19:25	3h 05m	North Ridge Tryfan	2M	A family of 4 set off at 1700hrs up Tryfan North ridge with the intention to only retrace start of route for a possible summit trip. The 2 teenage boys moved faster and parents lost sight of them. Father called NWP as he was worried and wanted some advice. A TL spoke to older boy who stated they were both ok, had reached the summit and were now descending N ridge. Advised to proceed with caution down ridge but to remain within mobile coverage. Shortly afterwards unable to locate using SARLOC and mobile going to voicemail. Party of 7 MRT deployed from road at the Milestone. R936 were tasked to locate missing pair due to age, lack of equipment/clothing and now dark. MRT party quickly located missing pair in vicinity of Waterfall Gully. Helo stood down as boys close to the road. Older boy had suffered a foot injury and could not put weight on it. MRT splinted cas's foot and assisted pair to road where they were brought to base to be reunited with parents.	13
08/04	19:35	3h 55m	Pen yr Ole Wen	1M/1F	An inadequately equipped pair set off from Aber to walk to Ogwen. They made their way across the Carneddau and became stuck during the descent of Pen-Yr-Olewen towards Ogwen at the onset of darkness. They were located using SARLOC and a small MRT party climbed to meet them and guide them off the mountain to safety. The ambitious pair were not at all familiar with walking in UK mountains and were fortunate to have got as far as they managed without an earlier incident.	7
09/04	12:20	7h 25m	South Ridge Tryfan	1M	The party of 3 people were descending from the summit of Tryfan when one slipped and fell about 2m landing partly on his rucksack and his thigh across a rock. He was unable to move and given the reported presence of swelling in the thigh, this was judged by MR as a potentially serious injury. Support from Ogwen, NEWSAR, RAF MRS and SAR-H was requested for this incident which potentially could have required a long stretcher carry across difficult ground. MRT and R936 treated the casualty and variable cloud conditions eventually required the stretcher to be lowered/carried below cloud level to a winching site. The casualty was flown to Oggie Base and then transferred to hospital by WAST ambulance.	22
22/04	16:40	2h 00m	Tryfan Bach	1F	A 17 year old female injured her knee whilst rock climbing on Tryfan Bach. She managed to get back down to the base of the climb but was unable to walk to the road. RAF Leeming MRT were on scene very quickly to administer first aid, and a stretcher party from Ogwen joined them shortly afterwards to carry her back to the road. She was then taken to her local hospital by the group leader.	13

Date	Time	Duration	Location	Cas.	Description	Team deployed
01/05	18:30	5h 35m	Glyder Fach	5	A family group of 2 adults and 3 children set off for a walk in good weather conditions onto the Glyders without any equipment, planning or knowledge. About 1 hour from darkness, they called 999 to ask for help as they were lost and could not see a safe way off the mountain. Using SARLOC, it transpired that they were near the summit of Glyder Fach and given the very young age of one of the children, an MRT response was created. The group were located and escorted off the mountain but needed assistance and warm clothing from the MRT.	14
02/05	13:25	2h 15m	Bethesda	1F	A female walker slipped on a damp rock whilst walking in Braichmelyn forest, which resulted in an ankle and wrist injury. A small hill party were able to locate and treat her, and then carry her a short distance to the team vehicle. She was driven to the road, transferred to her husband's car and they were advised to attend the local hospital.	13
05/05	12:10	0h 25m	Brynteg Anglesey	1	NWP contacted the team for assistance with a missing person search at Brynteg. A Team Leader put the Search dogs on stand by and then contacted NWP for further information. Whilst the info was being passed the missing person turned up, so MR and SARDA were stood down.	1
05/05	18:20	0h 25m	Great Orme	1F/1D	A member of the public reported hearing shouts for help from a young girl who appeared to be stuck on a cliff ledge with her dog. NWP tasked MR and the Coastguard and also sent Officers to the scene to assess the situation. The father of the girl plus NWP Officers managed to extract the girl and the team were stood down.	3
05/05	20:05	1h 40m	North Ridge Tryfan	1F/1M	A couple set off up the North Ridge of Tryfan with little knowledge of the route. At some point they strayed on to the East Face and then became stuck in a gully. Luckily, as MRT members were deploying the couple were seen by some climbers who offered to help them. The climbers walked them back to the road via Bochlwyd.	8
13/05	12:10		South Ridge Snowdon	1M	A male walker stumbled on the South Ridge of Tryfan sustaining an ankle injury. Initially there was confusion as to his location but a hasty party soon located him and Coastguard helicopter support was requested. RAF MRT training locally were also requested to assist. Unfortunately the helicopter could not access the casualty site due to strong winds, however several hill parties were flown to Caseg Ffraith and then made their way to the casualty site. The casualty was lowered down some very difficult terrain on the stretcher and then the Coastguard Helicopter was able to return and winch him aboard for a short flight to hospital. Many thanks to the crew of the Coastguard Helicopter and the members of the RAF MRT for their assistance.	17

Date	Time	Duration	Location	Cas.	Description	Team deployed
14/05	12:15	8h 45m	North Gully Tryfan	1M	The team received a report from a solo climber that he believed a male had fallen some distance down a gully on the East Face of Tryfan and was possibly unconscious. Whilst the climber made his way down to the fallen male the Team immediately prepared for deployment and the Coastguard Helicopter was tasked. The winchman was able to rapidly extract the walker from the gully and he was flown direct to Bangor Hospital where sadly he passed away. The team then assisted the climber and the walker's daughter back to the road and arranged appropriate care for both.	19
14/05	14:35	1h 10m	Little Gully East Face Tryfan	1F/1M 1 Dog	Two walkers and their dog became cragfast in the Little gully area of the East Face. Team members who had been deployed to the previous rescue came across them and roped them down the gully to the Heather Terrace. They were then brought back to Oggie Base.	6
17/05	15:00	3h 45m	Cwm Idwal	1F	An 82 year old lady slipped on steep grass at the back of Cwm Idwal, sustaining an ankle injury. RAF Valley MRT were training at Oggie Base and deployed immediately to scene whilst Ogwen team members gathered at base. An Ogwen hill party joined the RAF at the incident site and in a joint effort carried the lady on a stretcher back to Ogwen cottage. She was then transferred to hospital by ambulance.	10
17/05	15:55	2h 55m	Cwm Tryfan	1F	A solo female walker rang 999 to say she was lost somewhere in the Tryfan/ Cwm Tryfan area. Initially there was no contact with her despite her carrying 2 phones, however after an hour contact was finally made. It was established that she was towards the Southern end of Cwm Tryfan but was not confident to continue down in to the Cwm. Team members set out to find her and met her walking down the Cwm with 2 walkers who had stumbled across her. She was brought back to Oggie Base for a drink and debrief.	9
17/05	18:50	1h 35m	Y Rowen Dolwyddellan	1F	A couple were walking on the hills above Dolwyddelan when the lady fell onto rocks and sustained a large head laceration which was bleeding excessively. Her husband asked for help as she felt unable to continue the walk down. Team members at base from the previous job were deployed by team vehicle and the assistance of the Coastguard Helicopter was requested due to the nature of the injury and the distance from the road. The helicopter was able to locate and lift the lady to hospital and the husband was happy to walk down so the team stood down.	14
28/05	20:00		Penrhyn Quarry Bethesda	1 Goat	An informant reported cries for help being carried on the wind from the Penrhyn quarry area; initial investigation was carried by NWP officers and a Team Leader with the NPAS aircraft also being tasked to assist. At this point nothing was found but when the NPAS aircraft left the area cries for help could still be heard. The TL continued to try and localise the source. As darkness fell a request for R936 was made and additional team support was provided with 2 team members deploying into the quarries. A short distance above the quarry a young goat was found with its head trapped in fencing, it was released and the team and R936 was stood down.	4

Date	Time	Duration	Location	Cas.	Description	Team deployed
02/06	23:45	14h 5m	Eastern Carneddau	1M	Concern was reported for a solo male walker who had not returned from a 2 night camping trip in the Eastern Carneddau area. A hasty search was organised with RAF Valley MRT members and Ogwen team members deploying along the main footpaths leading into that area; a SARDA dog team was also deployed. At the same time a Police Helicopter was used to overfly the area and search for the walker. At midday, when his phone came back into signal, he was able to confirm that he was safe and well and was on his way off the mountain. All teams stood down.	17
12/06	22:00	11h 40m	Llandudno	1F	A female was reported missing by her husband. The missing person was graded as high risk and with no availability of a PoISA, the NWMRA Search Advisors were asked to assist with search planning and to support the search. At dawn, the search activity was increased with SARDA trailing and air scenting dogs being brought into the operation. An NPAS aircraft also assisted together with a very significant number of Police resources. Fortunately the missing female was found safe by NWP Officers and returned to her home address.	4
17/06	13:50	3h 10m	Bristly Screens Glyder Fach	2M 1 Dog	Two men set off on a long walk (Idwal, G Fawr, G Fach) on a hot day with a black lab that doesn't normally walk that far. The dog got sore paws and tired by the heat so it was struggling on steep ground as they started to descend the screens. Passing members of the public helped them continue down slowly until team members arrived. The dog's paws were bandaged and it was given plenty to drink, enough to revitalise it and allow it to finish the walk down to the road	12
28/06	22:50	4h 55m	Dolwyddelan Area	1M	A solo male walker set out for a 3 day camping trip in the area north of Dolwyddelan. At some point the weather worsened so he decided to retreat, but in doing so fell into a deep bog and was therefore very wet and cold. He was also lost. The TL only managed one brief phone call with the casualty, who could not be persuaded to put up his tent and wait till morning. A small hill party deployed by Landrover into the forestry area above Dolwyddelan and extracted him back to his car.	6

From the editor

Many thanks to those that contributed articles for the newsletter.

We have a few more that we will save for the next issue, but we can never have enough articles. So please put pen to paper (that is showing my age) and write something for the newsletter. It does not matter how long or short it is.

Pictures are also welcome, especially for the front cover.

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