

THE OGWEN VALLEY MOUNTAIN RESCUE ORGANISATION

51st ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2015



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Please note that the articles contained in this report express the views of the individuals and are not necessarily the views of the team.

Ogwen in winter: View across the valley © Andy Harbach.





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Pensive looks: Team members worked alongside mountain rescue colleagues from around the region to support the Princes' Charities Day in June © Paramo.





chairman's report 2015

IT SEEMS TO BE A RECURRING THEME, WHEN I WRITE A REPORT, TO SAY THAT WE HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY BUSY. THIS YEAR IS NO DIFFERENT.

Andy Harbach
Chairman



During 2015, we attended over 130 incidents and had over 1450 member responses. Sadly, five of these incidents involved fatalities, which always puts more of a strain on our volunteers who have responded. Our thoughts also go to the families and friends of these casualties.

Sadly, December saw flooding for many parts of the UK. Early in the month, Cumbria was hit then, over the Christmas period, there was flooding in our local area of North Wales. Team members with swift water training used their skills to assist people in difficulties due to this flooding. Team members then travelled to York on 27th December to assist with flood rescue there. They were joined by others from the North Wales region and elsewhere within the UK. The commitment shown by UK mountain rescue volunteers, to leave their families at Christmas to help those in need, was highly commendable.

Earlier in the year we were delighted to hear that John Hulse had been awarded an MBE for services to mountain rescue. John has been involved with MR for over 40 years, and he has been a team leader for a lot of this time. He developed the SARCALL incident logger and call-out system used by the majority of teams in the UK and also worked on the transition from RAF search and rescue helicopters to Bristow. In the North Wales region, John was assisted by Pauline Hallett.

During 2015, Alex King, Craig Jowitt, Chris Campbell and Tim Lamberton all passed their

final hill day. They have all demonstrated great commitment to the team. KC Gordon and Jim Quinn resigned from the team. KC had been a member for over 50 years, and we are extremely grateful for his contribution to the organisation.

At the start of June, we finally made the change to operating as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The main driver behind this was to provide an element of protection for our Trustees should something go wrong. There is still some work to be done to finish the process, but we have made good progress so far. The project has been on-going for a number of years, and I am grateful to Chris Lloyd and Jo Worrall for all their work.

As you are probably aware, 2015 was the team's 50th anniversary. As always, OVMRO was keen to make the most of the opportunity to have a good party. We started with an excellent cake, baked by Anne Aspinall, at our AGM in March. During the evening we held a grand dinner at Venue Cymru in Llandudno. The dinner was attended by members past and present. Our principal guest, Sir Chris Bonington, gave a short speech about his experiences of never quite being rescued. Everyone had an enjoyable and entertaining evening.

During April, we held an event called the Tryfan Skylight. Over 100 members and supporters met at Oggi base in the evening and lined the north and south ridges of Tryfan. As dusk fell, head torches were used to light the ridge-line. The inspiration for this event came from Jim Langley seeing a similar event on the Matterhorn. Our version, although on a smaller mountain, was equally spectacular. Drivers on the A5 stopped to take photos, as did a professional film crew who happened to be shooting the Camelot movie in the valley. John Rowell and Marion Waine took some excellent professional photos, available

from the Soul of Snowdonia gallery at the Moel Siabod Café and 22 Squadron, just happened to be training in the area. They were able to add an extra large light above Adam and Eve.

May saw members back on Tryfan again, this time for a formal dinner on the summit. The idea was conceived by Tim Bird. After a rescue in the afternoon, team members and RAF Valley MRT set off carrying tables and chairs up the mountain. Dressed in black tie and formal dress they enjoyed Welsh lamb with potatoes and vegetables, Ogwen Mess, and port with cheese and biscuits, provided by Conwy Falls Café. The weather held and team members walked back down shortly after sunset. Once again 22 Squadron were in the right place at the right time to do a fly past.

June saw us host an event for the Princes' Charities. Young people from Child Bereavement UK, Centrepont, WellChild and Place2Be visited the Ogwen Valley to take part in adventurous activities put on by members of the region's mountain rescue teams. WellChild did some wheelchair-based activities at The Towers outdoor education centre in the morning, before seeing a search dog demonstration in the mountains during the afternoon. The police helicopter landed and they were able to see it close up. The able-bodied young people did abseiling and climbing in the morning, and after lunch they took part in a simulated rescue. During the presentations at the end of the day, 22 Squadron did a fly past, and the new helicopter from Bristow at Caernarfon landed to drop off a team member as part of its pre-operation training.

The day was extremely well received, and feedback from all the charities was extremely positive. As you will read later, the day was also well received at a higher level. Thanks go to Tim Radford specifically for doing a lot of the work organising this event.



Dinner with altitude: Team members and guests enjoy a Black Tie dinner at the summit of Tryfan © OVMRO.

Sadly we said goodbye to the RAF search and rescue helicopter service at the end of June. OVMRO was with the RAF on their 10,000th rescue and also on their last. We also provided the Bristow helicopter with its first live tasking. We were privileged to be invited to Valley for a farewell get-together with the crew and officers before the annual reception. We also attended the official launch of the Bristow service in Caernarfon. So far we have been extremely pleased with the service that has been provided by Bristow.

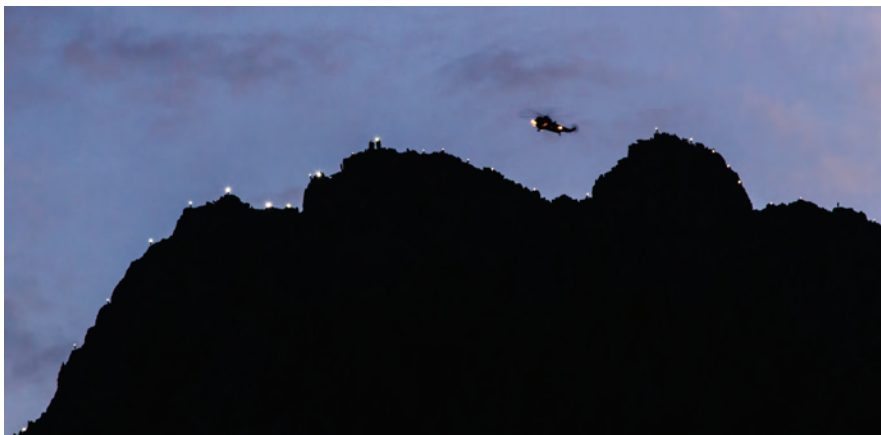
July saw a beach party at Idwal Beach. Of course, in July you might expect some warm, sunny weather to go swimming in the lake. However, being North Wales it was cold and windy, although it did not rain. Members and supporters still had a good evening with a Hawaiian theme, palm trees that didn't quite blow in to the middle of the lake and a BBQ. The event was well organised by Dave Worrall and Jed Stone.

August saw the eighth annual 'Oggie 8' event.

The winners were Siabod Shifters in a record time of 5 hours 55 minutes — very well done to them. We also held an 'Oggie 4' challenge, covering just the second half of the course, to encourage more people to enter. Thanks go to all the organisers, marshals and competitors. The weather was unusually good, and the after-event party was excellent as usual. The Oggie 8 is due for a well-deserved break in 2016, but we plan to hold some sort of mountain challenge again in 2017.

Tim Radford and Jed Stone organised a raft race for September. As usual this took place on Llyn Ogwen. Due to a late call-out the night before, there were only two rafts entered. Tim's raft, which looked like a luxury yacht, made it to the finish in style. Jed's raft just about made it on to the water before breaking up in spectacular style, dumping Jed and his co-pilot Alex in the water. A good morning's entertainment was had by all.

At the end of October, the 333 AGM and dinner was held at Siabod Café. As usual the café has been a great supporter of the team throughout



the year. They once again hosted a Christmas quiz to raise funds for us too. After the AGM, Chris Lloyd gave a presentation on his trip to Iceland, and Tess ran an entertaining photographic quiz. The food and cake from Siabod Café were excellent. As always I would like to thank all the 333 support group members for assisting us during the year. Your support is invaluable and allows our members to spend more time doing rescue related training and attending call-outs.

In November we held the annual mulled wine, mince pies and memories evening. This was as popular as always, with a number of interesting videos and photographic presentations. Chris Lloyd kindly prepared the mulled wine and mince pies to his usual excellent standard.

As I mentioned earlier, the Charities' Day in June was well received. We were delighted to be asked to hold another event in November for a group from Mind. This was held at The Towers, where the young people took part in via ferrata, tree climbing, abseiling, climbing and a zip wire activity. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge attended the event for an hour and had an opportunity to participate in climbing and abseiling, as well as meeting the young people and team members. As before, the event was put on by the region, but Tim Radford dedicated a huge amount of time to planning. The Towers was an excellent venue for the event and their staff who ran the activities and helped with planning were great. Special thanks go to Liz, the co-manager.

Finally, in December, our 50th Anniversary book was published. This has been eighteen months in the planning and was written by Judy Whiteside with excellent illustrations by George Manley. A small sub-group including Tim Radford, Chris Lloyd, Dave and Jo Worrall put in a lot of time to help manage the project. Members past and present, as well as casualties, gave their time to

be interviewed by Judy. This has resulted in an excellent 300-page book. It is available in Moel Siabod Café and Joe Brown's in Capel Curig; Cotswold and Cunninghams in Betws y Coed; and online at <http://ovmro.uk/book>.

To close this report, I'd like to thank all our team members for the time they give to attend call-outs and training and to carry out administrative tasks. This year we have held a lot of celebration events that I wanted to mention, which means I've not had space to detail all the work everyone has done during the year. Please be assured your efforts are greatly appreciated.

I would also like to thank the family and friends of team members for their understanding — without their support, members would not be able to go out on rescues at all hours of the day and night, even during Christmas celebrations. I hope you too have enjoyed being able to take part in some of our 50th anniversary events.



Friends in high places: A fitting farewell to our RAF colleagues who joined us for dinner on Tryfan

Fun and games: (facing page)
Centre image © John Rowell.
Remaining images © OVMRO.

Rescue on Pen y Ole Wen: Team members and RAF winchman involved with a major traumatic incident © OVMRO.



ADRODDIAD Y CADEIRYDD 2015

MAE FEL PETAI
BOB TRO 'RWY'N
YSGRIFENNU
ADRODDIAD Y
BYDDAF YN DWEUD
MOR BRYSUR Y
BUOM NI. NID YW
ELENI'N WAHANOL.

Andy Harbach
Cadeirydd



Yn ystod 2015 buom yn ateb dros 130 o alwadau. Cawsom dros 1450 o ymatebion gan aelodau. Trist dweud y bu tair o'r galwadau yn ymwneud â damweiniau angheuol, peth sydd bob amser yn golygu rhagor o straen ar y rhai hynny o'n gwirfoddolwyr sydd wedi ymateb. Bydd teuluoedd a ffrindiau'r meirwon yn ein meddyliau.

Yn anffodus, cafwyd llifogydd mewn sawl rhan o'r Deyrnas Unedig yn ystod mis Rhagfyr. Ddechrau'r mis cafodd Cymbria ei tharo, yna, dros gyfnod y Nadolig, cafwyd llifogydd yn ein hardal ni'n hunain yng Ngogledd Cymru. Bu arweinyddion tîm a hyfforddwyd ar gyfer dyfroedd cyflym yn defnyddio eu medrau i helpu pobl mewn anawsterau oherwydd y llifogydd hyn. Wedyn teithiodd rhai aelodau i Gaer Efrog ar 27ain Rhagfyr i helpu achub pobl yn y llifogydd yno. Gyda nhw oedd eraill o ranbarth Gogledd Cymru, ac o fannau eraill yn y Deyrnas. Rhaid canmol yn uchel ymrwymiad gwirfoddolwyr y gwasanaeth achub mynydd a adawodd eu teuluoedd adeg y Nadolig i helpu eraill mewn angen.

Yn gynharach eleni 'roeddem wrth ein boddau o glywed i John Hulse dderbyn MBE ar gyfer gwasanaethau i achub mynydd. Bu John yn ymwneud ag achub mynydd ers dros 40 mlynedd, ac yn arwain tîm am lawer o'r adeg hon. Hefyd, mae wedi datblygu SARCALL, y system cofnodi digwyddiadau a threfnu galwadau a ddefnyddir gan y rhan fwyaf o'r timau yn y Deyrnas. Ar ben hynny, gweithiodd John ar y trosglwyddo o hofrenyddion chwilio ac achub yr Awyrlu Brenhinol

i rai Bristow. Bu Pauline Hallett yn cynorthwyo John yn rhanbarth Gogledd.

Yn ystod 2015 llwyddodd Alex King, Craig Jowitt, Chris Campbell a Tim Lambertson yn eu diwrnod olaf ar y mynydd. Maen nhw ill tri wedi dangos ymrwymiad mawr i'r tîm. Ymddiswyddodd KC Gordon a Jim Quinn o'r tîm. Bu KC yn aelod am dros 50 mlynedd, ac 'rydym yn hynod ddiolchgar am ei gyfraniad i'r sefydliad.

Ddechrau mis Mehefin newidiasom o'r diwedd i weithredu fel Sefydliad Elusennol Corfforedig (CIO). Prif ysgogiad hyn oedd yr angen i ddarparu elfen o amddiffyn i'n Hymddriedolwyr petai rhywbeth yn mynd o'i le. Mae rhywfaint o waith i'w wneud o hyd er mwyn cwblhau'r broses, ond 'rydym wedi gwneud cynnydd da hyd yn hyn. Bu'r prosiect ar y gweill ers nifer o flynyddoedd, ac 'rwy'n ddiolchgar i Chris Lloyd a Jo Worrall am eu holl waith.

Fel y gwyddoch, mae'n debyg, 2015 fu pen-blwydd y tîm yn 50 oed. Fel erioed, yr oedd SAMDO'n awyddus iawn i fanteisio ar y cyfle i ddatlu gyda pharti da. Cychwynasom â theisen ardderchog, a wnaed gan Anne Aspinall, yn ein Cyfarfod Blynnyddol ym mis Mawrth. Yn ystod y noson, cynhaliwyd cinio mawreddog yn Venue Cymru yn Llandudno. Daeth aelodau o'r tîm presennol a rhai o'r gorffennol at ei gilydd. Rhoddodd Syr Chris Bonington, ein prif westai, araith fer ynghylch ei brofiadau o beidio, o drwch blewyn, â chael ei achub. Cafodd pawb noson ddymunol a difyr.

Ym mis Ebrill cawsom ddigwyddiad a alwyd yn 'Tryfan Skylight' Daeth dros gant o aelodau a chefnogwyr at ei gilydd wrth ein pencadlys, 'Oggi base', gyda'r nos a sefyll ar hyd cribau gogleddol a deheuol Tryfan. Wrth iddi nosi, defnyddiwyd tortshis pennau i oleuo llinell crib y mynydd. Gan Jim Langley y daeth yr ysbrydoliaeth ar gyfer hyn ar ôl iddo weld digwyddiad tebyg ar y Matterhorn.

Yr oedd ein fersiwn ni, er bod y mynydd yn llai, yr un mor drawiadol. Oeddodd gyrrwyr ar yr A5 i dynnu lluniau, fel y gwnaeth criw ffilmio proffesiynol a ddigwyddodd fod yn saethu'r ffilm 'Camelot' yn y dyffryn. Tynnodd John Rowell a Marion Waine rai ffotograffau proffesiynol gwych, sydd ar gael o oriel Enaid Eryri (Soul of Snowdonia) yng Nghaffi Moel Siabod. Fel y digwyddodd yr oedd Sgwadron 22 yn hyfforddi yn yr ardal ac yn medru ychwanegu golau tra chryf uwchben Siôn a Siân (y Bugail a'i Wraig).

Yr oedd aelodau'n ôl ar Dryfan eto ym mis Mai; y tro hwn ar gyfer cinio ffurfiol ar y copa, canlyniad syniad o eiddo Tim Bird. Ar ôl galwad i achub yn y prynhawn, cychwynnodd aelodau o'r tîm a Thîm Achub ar y Mynydd yr Awyrlu Brenhinol, y Fali, am gopa'r mynydd, gan gario byrddau a chadeiriau. Mewn gwisg ffurfiol a thei du, cawsant fwynhau cig oen Cymru a thatws a llysiau, 'Ogwen Mess', a phort gyda chaws a bisgedi, a ddarparwyd gan Gaffi'r Rhaeadr Lwyd. Daliodd yn braf, a cherddodd yr aelodau i lawr eto ychydig cyn y machlud. Unwaith eto yr oedd Sgwadron 22 yn y lle iawn ar yr adeg iawn i hedfan heibio.

Ym mis Mehefin buom yn westeiwyr digwyddiad er budd Elusennau'r Tywysog. Daeth pobl ifainc o Child Bereavement UK, Centrepoin, WellChild a Place2Be i Ddyffryn Ogwen i gymryd rhan mewn gweithgareddau anturus a drefnwyd gan aelodau o dimau achub mynydd y rhanbarth. Cymerodd ymwelwyr WellChild ran mewn gweithgareddau mewn cadeiriau olwyn yng nghanolfan addysg awyr agored 'The Towers' yn y bore, cyn gwylio arddangosfa gan gi chwilio ar y mynydd yn y prynhawn. Glaniodd hofrennydd yr heddlu a chawsant olwg agos arno.

Bu'r bobl ifainc nad oeddent yn anabl yn abseilio a dringo yn ystod y bore, gan gymryd rhan mewn ymarfer achub ar ôl cinio. Trefnodd Sgwadron 22 hedfan heibio yn ystod y cyflwyniadau ddiwedd



Briefing the 'lightworkers': Jim Langley gives a final briefing to team and Treble Three members in preparation for the Tryfan Skylight © John Rowell.

y dydd, a glaniodd yr hofrennydd newydd o Bristow (Caernarfon) i adael aelod o'r tîm fel rhan o'i hyfforddiant cynweithredol.

Bu canmol mawr ar y diwrnod, gydag adborth cadarnhaol iawn gan yr elusennau i gyd. Fel y cewch ddarllen yn nes ymlaen, cafodd y diwrnod dderbyniad da ar lefel uwch hefyd. Diolchwn i Tim Radford, yn arbennig, am wneud llawer o'r gwaith trefnu ar gyfer y digwyddiad hwn.

Trist dweud inni ffarwelio â'r gwasanaeth chwilio ac achub â hofrenyddion yr Awyrlu Brenhinol ddiwedd mis Mehefin. SAMDO oedd gyda'r Awyrlu Brenhinol ar ei 10,000fed galwad a hefyd ar ei alwad olaf. Ni hefyd roddodd ei dasg achub go iawn cyntaf i hofrennydd Bristow. Braint fu cael ein gwahodd i'r Fali ar gyfer aduniad ffarwelio gyda'r criw a swyddogion cyn y derbyniad blynyddol. Aethom hefyd i lansiad swyddogol gwasanaeth Bristow yng Nghaernarfon. Hyd yn hyn buom yn fodlon iawn ar wasanaeth Bristow.

Ym mis Gorffennaf cawsom barti traeth ar y Ro

(ar lan Llyn Idwal). Wrth gwrs, ym mis Gorffennaf gallech ddisgwyl tywydd heulog, cynnes ar gyfer nofio yn y llyn. Ond gan ein bod ni yng Ngogledd Cymru bu'n oer a gwyntog, er na chawsom law. Er hynny, cafodd aelodau a chefnogwyr noson dda gyda thema Hawāiaidd, palmwydd na chawsant rywsut eu chwythu i ganol y llyn a barbeciw. Trefnwyd y noson yn dda, diolch i Dave Worrall a Jed Stone.

Ym mis Awst cynhaliwyd yr 8fed Tro Wyth Copa Ogwen. 'Siabod Shifters' a enillodd, yn gynt na neb o'r blaen, mewn 5 awr a 55 munud — go dda nhw! Hefyd, cynhaliwyd her Bedwar Copa, a gynhwysai ail hanner y daith yn unig, er mwyn annog rhagor o bobl i gystadlu. Diolchwn i'r trefnwyr, i'r marsialiaid ac i'r cystadleuwyr i gyd. Bu'r tywydd yn anarferol o ffafriol, a'r parti wedyn mor wych ag erioed. Mae'n hen bryd inni roi hoe i Dro'r Wyth Copa yn 2016, ond bwriadwn gynnal rhyw fath o her yn y mynyddoedd eto yn 2017.

Trefnodd Tim Radford a Jed Stone ras raffiaiu



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ar gyfer mis Medi. Fel arfer, cynhaliwyd hyn ar Lyn Ogwen. Oherwydd galwad hwyr y noson gynt, ni fu ond dwy rafft yn cystadlu. Daeth rafft Tim, a golwg iot foethus arni, i'r llinell derfyn mewn steil. Prin y cyrhaeddodd rafft Jed y dŵr cyn syrthio'n dipiau'n werth ei gweld, gan daflu Jed a'i gyd-beilot, Alex, i'r dŵr. Cafodd pawb ddigonedd o hwyl y bore hwnnw.

Ddiwedd mis Hydref cynhaliwyd cinio a chyfarfod blynyddol 333 yng Nghaffi Siabod. Fel arfer, bu'r caffi yn gefnogwr ardderchog i'r tîm trwy gydol y flwyddyn. Yno, unwaith eto, y cynhaliwyd cwis Nadolig er mwyn codi arian inni Yn dilyn y cyfarfod blynyddol rhoddodd Chris Lloyd gyflwyniad ynghylch ei daith i Ynys yr Iâ a chynhaliodd Tess gwis ffotograffig difyr. Yr oedd y bwyd a'r deisen gan Gaffi Siabod yn ardderchog. Fel erioed, hoffwn ddiolch i holl aelodau 333, ein grŵp cefnogi, am ein cynorthwyo yn ystod y flwyddyn. Mae eich cefnogaeth yn amhrisiadwy ac yn caniatáu i'n haelodau dreulio mwy o amser yn ymgymryd â hyfforddiant yn ymwneud ag achub ac yn ateb galwadau.

Ym mis Tachwedd cynhaliwyd ein noson flynyddol o win twym, mins peis ac atgofion. Bu hon mor boblogaidd ag erioed, gyda nifer o fideos a chyflwyniadau ffotograffig diddorol. Bu Chris Lloyd mor garedig â pharatoi'r gwin twym a'r mins peis yn rhagorol fel arfer.

Fel y soniais i'n gynharach, bu croeso i'r Diwrnod i Elusennau ym mis Mehefin. Pleser inni fu cael cais i gynnal digwyddiad arall ym mis Tachwedd ar gyfer grŵp o'r elusen Mind. Fe gynhaliwyd hwn yn 'The Towers', lle cymerodd y bobl ifainc ran yng ngweithgareddau 'via ferrata', dringo coed, abseilio, dringo a defnyddio weiren wib. Daeth Dug a Duges Caergrawnt heibio am awr, gan gael cyfle i gymryd rhan yn y dringo a'r abseilio, yn ogystal â chyfarfod a'r bobl ifainc ac aelodau'r tîm. Fel o'r blaen, y rhanbarth fu'n gyfrifol am drefnu'r

digwyddiad, ond rhoddodd Tim Radford gyfnod hir iawn i'r gwaith cynllunio. Yr oedd 'The Towers' yn lleoliad ardderchog i'r digwyddiad a mawr yw ein diolch i aelodau ei staff a gynhaliodd y gweithgareddau a chynorthwyo â'r cynllunio. Diolchwn yn enwedig i Liz, y cyd-reolwr.

Yn olaf, ym mis Rhagfyr, cyhoeddwyd llyfr ein pen-blwydd yn hanner cant. Cymerodd hwn 18 mis i'w gynllunio, ac fe'i hysgrifennwyd gan Judy Whiteside gyda lluniau ardderchog gan George Manley. Bu is-grŵp bach, gan gynnwys Tim Radford, Chris Lloyd a Dave a Jo Worrall wrthi am gryn amser yn helpu rheoli'r prosiect. Rhoddodd aelodau presennol a hen aelodau, yn ogystal â rhai a gawsai eu hachub, eu hamser i gael eu cyfwrdd gan Judy. Y canlyniad yw llyfr ardderchog o 300 o dudalennau. Mae ar gael yng Nghaffi Moel Siabod a siop Joe Brown yng Nghapel Curig; siopau Cotswold a Cunninghams ym Metws y Coed; ac ar lein ar ovmro.uk/book.

I gloi'r adroddiad hwn, hoffwn ddiolch i holl aelodau ein tîm am yr amser maent yn ei roi i ateb galwadau, i ddod i hyfforddiant ac i wneud gwaith gweinyddol. Eleni, buom yn cynnal llawer o ddigwyddiadau dathlu yr oedd arnaf eisiau sôn amdanynt, sy'n golygu na chefais le i fanylu ar yr holl waith y mae pawb wedi'i wneud yn ystod y flwyddyn. Cewch fod yn sicr mai mawr yw ein gwerthfawrogiad o'ch ymdrechion.

Hoffwn ddiolch hefyd i berthnasau a chyfeillion aelodau'r tîm am eu goddefgarwch — heb eu cefnogaeth hwy, ni allai aelodau fynd allan ar alwadau bob awr o'r dydd a'r nos, hyd yn oed yn ystod dathliadau'r Nadolig. Gobeithio i chithau hefyd fedru cymryd rhan mewn rhai o ddigwyddiadau dathlu ein 50fed pen-blwydd.

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and Capel Curig shops cater more for the mountaineer and climber,
and are an Aladdin's cave of technical gear and equipment
from all the best specialist outdoor brands, including...



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I HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE PRIVILEGE OF WRITING THE TEAM LEADER REPORT FOR THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL REPORT. THIS WILL BE MY LAST YEAR AS TEAM LEADER AS I STEP DOWN AT THE AGM HAVING COMPLETED TEN YEARS IN POST.

Dave Worrall
Team Leader



Following my last Team Leader assessment, three years ago, the realisation of the work needed to maintain the high standard required — and that there was a life outside mountain rescue — made me think it was time to step aside. It is a role I have been honoured to have undertaken. It comes with a great deal of responsibility and a significant commitment in time. As with any such role it has its highs and sometimes its lows.

Writing this report has given me the opportunity to reflect on those ten years and the role itself. It is perhaps the variety of skills needed that is the most surprising. When I started in the role, I didn't realise I would need to have a comprehensive knowledge of search, rope rescue, first aid, swift water, investigating fatalities, supporting bereaved relatives, advanced driving techniques and, of course, making tea. You would imagine mountain rescue was just that, rescuing people in difficulty in the mountains, but its about so much more! You begin to lose track of the number of courses attended and the accumulation of knowledge that goes with it.

This year, the North Wales Mountain Rescue Association organised a course on Leadership Skills delivered by Pat Holland and Mary Mullens from Irish Mountain Rescue. This was the first time the course was run in North Wales and it was a useful introduction to this complex topic. It is a very diverse role and, to be honest, you do need to have that very broad range of skills to be a team leader in OVMRO.

I was reminded by John Hulse of the variety of jobs the team was involved in during the later stages of the year. There were two technical rescues high up on the mountains in November. One was a couple who had been attempting a climb on the East Face of Tryfan and, as is so often the case, had underestimated the time needed and been caught out by light fading. We were gratefully assisted by RAF Valley MRT in attending a climber with a leg injury on Idwal Slabs (in quite dreadful weather). There were two minor calls for canoeists in the Betws y Coed area. The team was called to recover a body of a lone walker who had fallen close to Heather Terrace with a long extraction down to Cwm Tryfan. There were also searches undertaken to look for vulnerable people missing from home.

However, without doubt the most significant and challenging event for the team was the extreme weather which came in December. As one of the many mountain rescue teams in the UK who have developed swift water and flood water capability, for this event our resources, resilience and skill were tested to the limit.

The flooding in Cumbria affected large areas of the county and placed many communities at risk. The Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association asked nationally for support and OVMRO and other teams from the area provided team members to assist. OVMRO team members were involved from the Saturday through till Monday, helping people whose homes had been flooded. However, we were also aware of the high level of risk that North Wales faced and were careful to ensure we had members on hand to carry out any rescues in our own area. This is where the support of the region is so valuable as we were able to coordinate a response from all the other teams (NEWSAR, Llanberis, Aberglaslyn, South Snowdonia, Aberdyfi and RAF Valley MRT, which ensured we all worked together to provide

cover for any incidents that might have arisen, including calls for assistance from a local farmer in Llanwrst whose sheep were in severe danger of drowning.

The month was plagued with bad weather and even over the Christmas period the team found itself involved in rescue in the Conwy Valley, supporting the Welsh Ambulance Service and health care professionals to get to vulnerable patients.

To finish off the year, the team was once again asked to provide support out of region, this time helping out in and around York. Team members gave selflessly of their time over this whole Christmas period to help those in need, often in difficult circumstances with little rest, minimal sleep and food taken as and when. The team is proud of what you did and our heartfelt thanks for all of those who were involved in this prolonged event.

John was right, the tail end of the year tested us in all sorts of ways and demonstrated just how much we need to have as a skill set to be a team leader and also a team member. Lets hope the New Year is kinder with the weather and we return to patterns that are less extreme.

Of course, a major change for us in 2015 was the transition from RAF 22 Squadron and the familiar Yellow Sea Kings to the Coastguard red and white S92 helicopters operated by Bristow. Without doubt, this change from military to a civilian service was of concern to us and we debated endlessly what the new service would be like. We had developed an excellent relationship with 22 Squadron over the years and knew their capabilities very well indeed. We worked seamlessly together and had jointly performed many rescues saving casualties from prolonged and difficult carry offs.

John Hulse and Pauline Hallett did an excellent job in preparing all the teams in the region for



Carlisle floods: Team members travelled outside their normal area of operations to join the multi-team rescue effort in December © Karen Phillips-Craig.

the handover, ensuring that training was carried out and new systems of working were tried and tested before the critical day. It helped enormously that the crew of the new Coastguard helicopter were to a great extent made up of people who were part of 22 Squadron. On the day of handover (1 July), there was a small incident in Cwm Idwal and the casualty was airlifted to Ysbyty Gwynedd in a very shiny new helicopter. Did the casualty notice any difference? I doubt it, why would they know? What we knew was that we had entered a new era and, to be honest, it's going fine. The Coastguard have been good to their word and we are receiving an excellent service which is benefiting our casualties. What more do you need?

As I mentioned at the start, this is my last year, however, we have a new team leader in our ranks. At the last AGM, Tim Bird was appointed a team leader with a year's probationary period which he will complete (all things being equal) at this next AGM. He has been a welcome

addition to the team leader group. However, it is clear that the path to becoming a team leader in OVMRO is not easy and we must look at how best we can address this for the future. We do need to be attracting the younger members to take this on and we need to consider how to achieve this.

Finally, this year has seen our working relationship with all the other teams in North Wales blossom and grow. I would like to thank NEWSAR, Llanberis, Aberglaslyn, South Snowdonia, RAF Valley MRT and Aberdyfi for working together at so many different levels. North Wales is setting the example for other regions to follow in terms of collaboration and cooperation.

And where would we be without our dedicated and highly skilled team members, who turn out in all weathers to undertake rescues? And did I mention their partners? I best had...

INCIDENTS

THE NUMBER OF RESCUES HAS INCREASED THIS YEAR, AFTER A DECLINE OVER THE LAST SIX YEARS, WITH A TOTAL OF 134 INCIDENTS.

Report compiled by
Neil Adam



Once again, January was the quietest month with just two incidents, September the busiest with seventeen, closely followed by July with sixteen. April and August saw fourteen incidents. Only three months had less than ten incidents. There was a slight change in the black spots with the Carneddau having top spot with 30 incidents closely followed by Tryfan with 27. I suppose for a single mountain it should still be top spot. The other remarkable statistic is the rise in 'out of area' incidents mainly caused by the floods with calls to assist with the flooding in Cumbria, Lancashire and York. Again a year full of a variety of incidents, all with their own problems to solve to keep us on our toes.

Thanks to all those who responded to our requests for assistance and those who requested our help. It widens all our knowledge and appreciation by working with other emergency services.



Looking after the winchie's hat: All part of the service! © OVMRO.

major injury in an incident

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Death	11	7	7	2	5
Head Injuries	6	6	6	6	5
Trunk injuries	7	2	1	2	2
Arm Injuries	6	7	2	5	9
Leg Injuries	23	22	24	21	29
Exhaustion/exposure	1	2	3	0	3
Heart Attack	0	0	0	0	1
Illness	4	8	4	6	3
Uninjured	54	74	42	41	57
Spinal	–	4	3	1	1
Multiple Injuries	–	–	4	3	–
Unknown /nothing found	–	–	–	12	–
Total	136	135	125	117	134

Plus all the people assisted on flood incidents.

AGES OF PEOPLE ASSISTED

< 16	9
16 -25	31
26 – 35	17
36 – 45	16
46 – 55	23
56 – 65	10
> 65	10
Unknown	19*
N/A	18

* (mainly people taken to hospital by helicopter)

OTHER ORGANISATIONS WORKED WITH

22 Squadron, RAF Valley	18
Coastguard R936	12
SARDA Wales	2
NEWSAR	2
Coastguard/RNLI	1
RAF MRTs	4
Llanberis MRT	3
North Wales Police	3
Air Ambulance	1
Welsh Ambulance Service	10
Fire and Rescue Service	1
Keswick MRT	1

Plus all the agencies involved in the flood relief operations in Cumbria and York (not all noted in the reports).

JANUARY

17 JANUARY 15:35: 1 HOUR 25 MINS:
ABER FALLS: **FEMALE. SPINAL INJURY**

- 1** A lady slipped on the steps up to the footbridge injuring her back. Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) deployed a paramedic in an RRV but asked for MRT back-up as they were unsure about vehicle access. However, a warden was able to unlock the gate for the paramedic so he had walked the lady to his vehicle before the first team vehicle arrived.
► 10 team members involved.

26 JANUARY 11:35: 55 MINS: CONWY MOUNTAIN: **FEMALE. LEG INJURIES**

- 2** A female walker, in a large group, slipped on steep ground, injuring her leg. The ambulance crew requested back-up but team members were stood down en route as the air ambulance had landed close by. However, the crew were unable to assist and 22 Squadron was tasked, winched the lady aboard and flew her to Ysbyty Gwynedd for treatment.
► 6 team members involved.

FEBRUARY

3 FEBRUARY 15:50: 1 HOUR 25 MINS:
Y GARN EAST RIDGE: **NOTHING FOUND**

- 3** Screams and shouts were reported to be coming from the East Ridge of Y Garn. A team leader questioned walkers in the area — no-one else had heard screams but reported lots of noisy children near the lake. A small hill party deployed to Cwm Idwal but nothing could be heard so the team was stood down.
► 11 team members involved.

5 FEBRUARY 15:50: 3 HOURS 50 MINS:
CARNEDD LLEWELYN: **2 MALES. LOST**

- 4** Two males with two dogs became stuck in snow on the Carneddau, walking from Ogwen to Dulyn Bothy. They had lots of kit but a sprained ankle had slowed their progress. As they were close to the summit of Foel Fras, they were persuaded to follow the wall towards Drum and two vehicles were deployed to meet them. They made very good progress and were picked up on the track. Their hungry, thirsty dogs were very glad of the ride off the hill in the Land Rovers.
► 9 team members involved.

6 FEBRUARY 13:10: 1 HOUR 50 MINS: CWM BOCHLWYD: **MALE. TRUNK & LEG INJURIES**

- 5** A solo winter climber fell a considerable distance down Glyder Fach Main Face and sustained injuries to his ankle and chest. He managed to crawl downhill towards Llyn Bochlwyd for half an hour before being able to shout to some walkers close by. Because of the potentially serious chest injury the team leader requested the help of 22 Squadron and RAF Valley MRT whilst team members made their way to base. Luckily, flying conditions were good and the man was evacuated to hospital within the hour.
► 14 team members involved.

7 FEBRUARY 20:50: PENRHYN QUARRY
NOTHING FOUND

- 6** The team was contacted once about a red flare seen above the quarry and later a flashing torch in a similar area. As the quarry operates at night and is private property, the police were asked to send an officer to investigate and contact the team again if there was further concern.
► 3 team members involved.

8 FEBRUARY 14:45: 2 HOURS: NORTH RIDGE TRYFAN: MALE & FEMALE. LOST

7 A couple set off to climb the North Ridge of Tryfan with little equipment or experience, in full winter conditions. At some point on the ridge, they decided they could go no further and tried to descend the way they'd come but strayed onto the West Face. When they rang for help they were unsure of their location and thought they may be able to get back up to the ridge with guidance on the correct way down. One team member already on the North Ridge tried to locate them whilst other team members gathered at base. The pair managed to get back to the ridge and met up with some other walkers who guided them back off the mountain.

► 16 team members involved.

8 FEBRUARY 16:10: 2 HOURS 5 MINS: CWM GLAS BACH: MALE & 2 FEMALES. STUCK.

8 A party of four walked up Afon Llafr from Gerlan. On reaching Crib Lem, they saw a snowy gully and decided to ascend it, reached a hanging cwm and became stuck on the steep back wall. Comms with the casualty party were poor. Whilst planning to deploy, one group on foot from Ffynnon Llugwy and another on the LZ to assist R122, the casualty party managed to contact passing climbers on the ridge above who heard the shouts, dropped a rope and extracted the casualty party. No further action for the team.

► 16 team members involved.

14 FEBRUARY 17:20: 1 HOUR 10 MINS: CARNEDDAU: FEMALE. LOST

9 A man reported his partner missing when they were separated somewhere near Carnedd Llewelyn earlier in the afternoon. He had reached the Ogwen Valley but his partner

was uncontactable. As the team prepared to search, the lady called to say she was walking out of Cwm Eigiau towards Tal y Bont. He was happy to collect her so no action was needed.

► 11 team members involved.

15 FEBRUARY 19:50: 5 HOURS 55 MINS: GRIBIN RIDGE: MALE & FEMALE. EXHAUSTION

10 This very experienced and well-equipped couple had completed Tower Gully climb and begun to descend the Gribin Ridge as darkness fell. Despite having walked this route on numerous occasions they went astray on the Football Pitch and failed to find the path down the ridge. They only had one torch and the lady was becoming exhausted after a long strenuous day. Two hill parties set out and the couple were found still high on the ridge, given extra clothing and hot drinks. It took a further three hours to walk them slowly off the mountain in increasingly wet and windy weather.

► 15 team members involved.

21 FEBRUARY 22:45: 1 HOUR 45 MINS: ABER FALLS AREA: 2 MALES. LOST

11 Two male mountain bikers were reported overdue, possibly lost on the Carneddau. Information about their start point and intended route was extremely limited. The informant's last contact had been about 7.00pm when they thought they were heading for the Roman Road above Aber. The decision was made to send two team vehicles to drive the tracks in that area to locate them. Luckily as the first vehicle was en route, the pair arrived at Aber safe and well so the team was stood down.

► 7 team members involved.

26 FEBRUARY 14:30: 1 HOUR 30 MINS:
ABER FALLS: **MALE. LEG INJURIES**

12

A member of a well-organised Mountain Training group slipped on grass sustaining an ankle injury. Given the location, in a known comms black spot, and the nature of the injury, the team requested R122. Two team leaders went to the area to provide comms whilst a mountain rescue response was built up at base. The casualty was evacuated by the helicopter to Bangor for treatment.

► 10 team members involved.

28 FEBRUARY 13:20: 3 HOURS 10 MINS:
PENMACHNO: **MALE. LEG INJURIES**

13

A mountain biker slipped off the final section of single track on the trail and fell into a small ravine, badly injuring his ankle. An ambulance crew J19 deployed to the scene and requested back-up due to the location of the casualty. The team doctor treated the injury and the casualty made an admirable effort to help with his extraction by climbing a ladder to the top of the ravine. He was then stretchered to the ambulance by team members and several bikers who had stopped to help.

► 12 team members involved.

march

6 MARCH 14:10: 5 HOURS 10 MINS:
TRYFAN: **5 MALES & FEMALE. STUCK**

14

A party of six friends decided to climb Tryfan in high winds despite being poorly equipped and with no knowledge of the mountain.

High up on the North Ridge, the party split up with one female making it to the top and the rest deciding they could no longer move due to the wind. Both groups asked for help and were unwilling to help themselves. Team members escorted both parties back to the road. This event was down to poor judgement and inexperience.

► 14 team members involved.

7 MARCH 19:45: 2 HOURS 35 MINS: COWLYD
RESERVOIR: **3 MALES. STUCK**

15

Three young male walkers had decided on a route from Aber to Ogwen but the strong winds on Carnedd Llewelyn caused them to descend in to Cwm Eigiau to find shelter. They managed to get to Llyn Cowlyd and attempted to walk along its east shore, but it was now dark so they retreated to the dam and rang for help. Several NEWSAR team members were staying at Bryn Poeth so they deployed by vehicle, located the walkers and returned them to base.

► 4 team members involved.

12 MARCH 21:05: 2 HOURS 25 MINS: GREAT
ORME: **FEMALE. MISSING FROM HOME**

16

A vulnerable female was reported as missing from home and probably in the Great Orme area. One team leader organised possible search areas whilst 22 Squadron did the first search of the Orme. Luckily, she was located quickly and flown to hospital.

► 3 team members involved.

13 MARCH 14:20: 3 HOURS 10 MINS: AFON
CONWY: **MALE. ARM INJURIES**

17

A group of three kayakers were on the river south of Betws y Coed. The first completed a rapid area successfully but the second hit a rock with his shoulder causing

significant injury. His friends helped him to the edge of the river but were then trapped in a steep-sided ravine. 22 Squadron managed a difficult extraction from the tree-covered gorge and team members helped the other kayakers retrieve the boats. A fire service coordinator was also on hand.

► 12 team members involved.

21 MARCH 13:45: 2 HOURS 5 MINS: EAST RIDGE Y GARN: **MALE. STUCK**

18

A party of three set off up the East Ridge of Y Garn. One male became stuck on a small sloping ledge whilst trying to reverse from a steep bit of the ridge, having experienced some difficulties in following his son. He was unable to move from the ledge and felt it very precarious so called for assistance. 22 Squadron was also requested, given the potential risk. They winched the gentleman into the aircraft and returned him to Oggi base. His son and friend continued to make their way down independently and the three were reunited at base two hours later.

► 7 team members involved.

26 MARCH 06:40: 6 HOURS: Y GARN: **2 MALES. EXHAUSTION/EXPOSURE**

19

Two male walkers had set off the day before to walk through the Devil's Kitchen, over Glyder Fawr and Glyder Fach, then down to their campsite. A late start and a change in weather resulted in them becoming totally disorientated and lost as darkness fell. When they finally managed to get a phone signal at 6.30pm, one of them was semi-conscious and the other suffering from hypothermia. It was extremely difficult to extract a location from them due to the high winds and slurred speech, but Y Garn seemed the probable search area. Ogwen team members and RAF Valley MRT members

jointly searched the southern slopes of Y Garn with 22 Squadron assisting when the cloud occasionally cleared. The men were located on the north side of the summit of Y Garn having spent the night trying to shelter from the weather. They were hypothermic and unable to walk. They were rewarmed as much as possible then stretchered down to a small flat area where they could be winched to the helicopter. Llanberis team was also on standby to assist if required.

► 11 team members involved.

april

1 APRIL 15:10: 2 HOURS: IDWAL PATH: **FEMALE. LEG INJURIES**

20

A female walker slipped on a muddy path descending from Cwm Idwal and sustained a painful ankle injury. A small stretcher party carried the lady to a waiting ambulance.

► 15 team members involved.

2 APRIL 16:20: 4 HOURS 10 MINS: TRYFAN: **2 MALES & 2 FEMALES. STUCK**

21

A family of four strayed onto the Eastern Traverse from the North Ridge of Tryfan. They weren't confident to continue or retrace their steps so a hill party roped them down a steep section and walked them to the road.

► 17 team members involved.

4 APRIL 12:40: 2 HOURS 50 MINS: TRYFAN: **MALE & 2 FEMALES. MULTIPLE INJURIES**

22

A group of four friends were scrambling on the lower section of the North Ridge

when one of the party took a tumbling fall of about 30 feet sustaining multiple injuries. Her fall was stopped by one of her friends who then also fell a distance and knocked over his wife, both sustaining minor injuries. Luckily, a Keswick team leader was on scene within minutes and able to assess the situation and secure the casualties. Team members already on the hill were diverted to the incident and 22 Squadron tasked. A back-up stretcher party was also deployed. The two casualties with minor injuries were flown directly to hospital. The third was treated, splinted and prepared for a winch, then flown to hospital and the remaining member of the party walked down to the road with team members. Thanks should be given to several members of the public who provided assistance during the rescue.

► 16 team members involved.

4 APRIL 16:30: 1 HOUR: PEN YR OLE WEN: NOTHING FOUND

23 Several people reported a dog barking above Llyn Ogwen for more than an hour, so a team member went to investigate. He could clearly see the dog on a rocky ledge about 100 metres above the lake but, when a small hill party went to investigate, the dog had disappeared. Hopefully its owner had found it.

► 5 team members involved.

4 APRIL 17:25: 2 HOURS 15 MINS: TRYFAN: FEMALE. ARM INJURIES

24 A couple retreated from the North Ridge, having decided it was too challenging for the female but then strayed on to a steep heather slope. The lady slipped and dislocated her shoulder. Team members and 22 Squadron attended and she was flown to hospital.

► 12 team members involved.

4 APRIL 19:40: 2 HOURS 35 MINS: BOCHLWYD PATH: FEMALE. LEG INJURIES

25 A female walker stepped in a hole close to the outflow of Bochlwyd injuring her ankle. Several people called in that screaming could be heard a distance above them. The lady was found on the Idwal path being assisted by her partner to move slowly downhill. She was cold and in a lot of pain so 22 Squadron were called to fly her to hospital — their 10,000 rescue!

► 11 team members involved.

4 APRIL 20:25: 55 MINS: GLYDERAU: MALE. LOST/OVERDUE

26 The Idwal YHA warden reported that a man had reported his friend overdue from a walk on the Glyderau. They'd last seen him at Castell y Gwynt when two of them took the direct route over the Castell whilst the missing man decided to find his way below it. They continued to the road without seeing him again and were concerned for his welfare. As team members deployed for this, the fifth incident of the day, the man was found just arriving at his car.

► 8 team members involved.

8 APRIL 16:40: 1 HOUR 20 MINS: TRYFAN: FEMALE. LOST

27 A lady was reported missing after her group became separated soon after the summit. The three had limited awareness of the area and minimal equipment. Team members visited the campsite to gather more information and, after a number of messages, some conflicting possibly due to delays and misunderstandings, the group were eventually reunited and no further action was needed by mountain rescue.

► 4 team members involved.

9 APRIL 16:40: 1 HOUR 20 MINS: DEVIL'S KITCHEN: **NOTHING FOUND**

28 A climber on the Idwal Slabs reported hearing a male voice shouting for help, which he thought came from the Devil's Kitchen area. A team leader went to Llyn Idwal to investigate but no-one else had heard shouts. There was no obvious person in distress and goats were seen in the approximate area. No further action taken.
► 12 team members involved.

13 APRIL 15:05: 3 HOURS 50 MINS: GLYDER FAWR: **10 MALES. LOST**

29 A party of ten friends were traversing the Glyderau and became disorientated on the route between Glyder Fawr and Glyder Fach. They spent an hour trying to work out their location but, being aware of the dangerous cliffs in the area, they called for assistance. After some discussion, advice and monitoring, they were able to use their own map and compass to get themselves off the hill. Team vehicles were dispatched to bring them back to their cars.
► 4 team members involved.

14 APRIL 15:35: 2 HOURS 35 MINS: BOCHLWYD: **FEMALE. HEAD INJURIES**

30 A female walker slipped on the Bochlwyd path and tumbled about five metres sustaining head and facial injuries. A hasty team arrived on scene and established that the casualty was stable. The aircraft was unable to position overhead, so the winchman was off-loaded 100 metres below and team members assisted the winchman to the site. The lady was loaded onto a Stokes stretcher but the aircraft was still unable to hold the hover and landed on below again and the Stokes was carried down to it.
► 18 team members involved.

15 APRIL 17:20: 2 HOURS 50 MINS: MOEL SIABOD: **FEMALE & MALE. LOST**

31 A couple went for a walk in the Moel Siabod area with no gear and no knowledge of their route. Not surprisingly, they became lost in the dense hill mist that had been forecast. After six hours of wandering they called for assistance, absolutely no idea of their location. Fortunately, the team was able to get a SARLOC fix and a small party helped walk them off the hill.
► 11 team members involved.

21 APRIL 13:30: 3 HOURS 40 MINS: LLANFAIRFECHAN: **FEMALE. LOST**

32 The team was asked to search for a vulnerable female in the Llanfairfechan area. SARDA and team were assembling at the RV point when a stand down message came in. The missing lady had been found safe and transferred to hospital for assessment.
► 16 team members involved.

25 APRIL 09:55: 5 HOURS 20 MINS: SUMMIT OF GLYDER FACH: **MALE. ARM INJURIES**

33 Three well experienced and well-equipped men were on a day walk from the Pen y Gwryd across the Glyderau when one slipped on wet rock just below the cantilever, put his hand out to stop the fall and dislocated his shoulder. Due to cloud cover on the summits, 22 Squadron was unable to get to the scene but deployed twelve team members high up on the mountain. After pain relief and splinting, the casualty made an amazing effort to walk down to Cwm Tryfan before finally needing the stretcher. The air crew waited for a break in the weather, to return and evacuate the casualty, which didn't occur until the stretcher party had reached the



New partners: Team members training with the new S92 helicopter based in Caernarfon © John Hulse.

lip of Cwm Tryfan where it was gratefully received after a very long, wet stretcher carry. Thanks to RAF Valley MRT who assisted with the carry.

► 21 team members involved.

25 APRIL 16:10: 30 MINS: CARNEDDAU: 10 MALES. OVERDUE

34

A party of ten males were reported overdue whilst traversing the Carneddau from Aber to Ogwen as a practice run for the Welsh 1000m race. Contact was made with the party leader but he was unable to give his location. SARLOC was used to locate them about 400 metres above Oggi base. No need for action by the team.

► 5 team members involved.

may

2 MAY 07:40: 2 HOURS 20 MINS: LLYN DIWAUNYDD: MALE. ILLNESS

35

Two male friends had been camping by the side of the lake and set off uphill to traverse over to Nant Gwynant. One of the men had a pre-existing heart condition and began to have chest pains so, sensibly, they called for help. The ambulance service, 22 Squadron and OVMRO were all tasked at the same time so all went to scene. 22 Squadron were able to reach the incident site despite difficult weather and airlifted the casualty to hospital whilst his friend was brought off the mountain by team members.

► 19 team members involved.

2 MAY 12:40: 2 HOURS 5 MINS: MOEL FABAN: 7 FEMALES. EXHAUSTION

36 A group of walkers found a party of seven Duke of Edinburgh girls cold and wet on the side of Moel Faban. They had no idea where they were and two of them seemed to be suffering from exposure. The walkers kindly put up their tent and got the two worst-affected girls into sleeping bags, then rang for help. Team vehicles managed to get close by and, although cold, the girls were able to walk back to the vehicles and were taken back to their minibus

► 19 team members involved.

2 MAY 14:30: 3 HOURS 45 MINS: PEN YR OLE WEN: MALE. EXHAUSTION/EXPOSURE

37 A party of nine friends was descending from the top of Pen yr Ole Wen to Ogwen Cottage but the weather slowly deteriorated into blizzard conditions causing them to lose their way straying onto the Braich Ty Du face. One of the party began to feel the effects of exposure and was unable to continue on the very steep ground. Three of his friends continued to the road and alerted the attention of the team vehicle returning from the previous incident. Several hill parties made their way to the scene and 22 Squadron was called due to the dangerous nature of the terrain. Expert flying in challenging weather allowed the winchman to snatch the casualty without coming off the wire. The rest of the group walked down to the road with team members.

► 21 team members involved.

4 MAY 10:45: 3 HOURS 15 MINS: LLYN Y FOEL, MOEL SIABOD: MALE. LEG INJURIES

38 A couple were descending Moel Siabod close to Llyn y Foel when the man slipped on a rock and twisted his knee. There

was immediate swelling and he was unable to walk. Although he tried to walk when his leg had been splinted by team members, it soon became clear a stretcher carry or helicopter was needed. Luckily, 22 Squadron was close by so diverted to recover the casualty for a short flight to hospital. Team members walked down with his partner.

► 19 team members involved.

8 MAY 15:10: 1 HOUR 50 MINS: TRYFAN: FEMALE & MALE. LOST

39 Two walkers lost their way on the descent off the North Ridge due to the cloudy conditions. They were very low on the mountain so a small hill party walked up to meet them and found them already making their own way down. Team members accompanied them to the road.

► 12 team members involved.

9 MAY 17:10: 2 HOURS: MARIN TRAIL: MALE. ARM INJURIES

40 A mountain biker was reported as having head and shoulder injuries after falling off his bike on the Marin MTB Trail. The ambulance service called for assistance with getting to him but, as team members arrived on scene, he was already walking down to the ambulance with the crew. Team members were stood down.

► 16 team members involved.

10 MAY 13:15: 3 HOURS 45 MINS: LLYN COWLYD: FEMALE. LEG INJURIES

41 A female walker slipped on wet rock close to Llyn Cowlyd and suffered a leg injury. No contact could be made with the casualty party, so team members approached from both ends of the reservoir to locate her. After treating her injury, the team members were preparing for a stretcher carry, but a short break in the poor

weather conditions allowed 22 Squadron to fly in and winch her aboard for a short flight to hospital.

► 15 team members involved.

10 MAY 15:20: 4 HOURS 30 MINS: NORTH RIDGE TRYFAN: **FEMALE & MALE. LOST**

42 Two people lost the path on their descent of the North Ridge of Tryfan. As so many people do, they strayed onto the broken ground of the West Face and felt unable to continue down or go back up. Team members from Oggi and NEWSAR were deployed to locate them. They were found by a NEWSAR party and walked down to the road.

► 19 team members involved.

14 MAY 15:50: 5 HOURS: FOEL GRACH: **2 MALES. LOST**

43 Two foreign walkers left the train station at Llanfairfechan to walk to Idwal YHA over the Carneddau. Not experienced in the British hills and expected that footpaths on the OS map indicated well-marked trails, they followed the Land Rover track to Drum and stone wall towards Foel Fras, then got lost in low cloud and found the refuge on Foel Grach. One of the men called North Wales Police on his Belgium mobile to ask for advice, stating that they were at the refuge, soaking wet and cold, in low cloud. Comms weren't possible as the foreign mobile number was not contactable. A small hill party set off in the 4x4 to the summit of Drum, the plan to walk to Foel Grach. Meanwhile, the two men contacted police again and were put through to the team. They agreed to stay in the refuge. The hill party located the pair and escorted them down and to the YHA.

► 12 team members involved.

16 MAY 23:15: 2 HOURS: AFON ANAFON: **NOTHING FOUND**

44 A walker returning to the top car park at Aber after a long day on the hill reported flashing lights, a shout for help and three whistle blasts from across the river at the edge of the forest. He tried to make contact with the person but got no response so reported it to police. Two team members went to investigate but could find no evidence of anyone needing help. A false alarm with good intent.

► 3 team members involved.

16 APRIL 14:30: 1 HOUR 45 MINS: TRYFAN: **MALE. LEG INJURIES**

45 A male walker in an organised group pulled a major muscle in his upper leg on the descent of the South Ridge of Tryfan. He tried to continue but was in considerable pain so the group asked for assistance. Team members were preparing to deploy but 22 Squadron were able to locate and evacuate the man back to base for onward transport to hospital.

► 20 team members involved.

17 MAY 14:50: 1 HOUR 25 MINS: GWYDYR FOREST: **MALE. MISSING/OVERDUE**

46 A man was reported overdue back at the Nant BH car park by his partner. The pair had been cycling in the forest main tracks and he decided to try a more direct route back. When he was more than an hour overdue, his partner called 999. Team members drove along the main tracks to locate the man but, meanwhile, he arrived back at Nant BH safe and well. Having found himself in Betws y Coed, he had decided to go back into the forestry to find Nant BH but got lost again, further delaying his return.

► 12 team members involved.

24 MAY 12:00: 3 HOURS 30 MINS: CWM
CNEIFION: **NOTHING FOUND**

- 47** A local climbing instructor reported hearing repeated blasts on a whistle for over five minutes whilst climbing on the Idwal Slabs. He finished the route and responded with his whistle but no further blasts were heard. He thought they had come from the Nameless Cwm area. Other walkers heard the same whistles. A party of two went to investigate but found nothing.
- 10 team members involved.

27 MAY 17:50: 3 HOURS 40 MINS: TRYFAN:
MALE & FEMALE. FATALITY

- 48** Two walkers were descending the North Ridge of Tryfan having decided to retreat from the North Tower area. At some point, both fell some distance and suffered serious injuries. The man managed to walk down to the road to raise the alarm despite his injuries, but the lady had sadly passed away. She was brought down off the mountain by stretcher and family members were cared for at Oggi base.
- 19 team members involved.

29 MAY 15:30: 1 HOUR 15 MINS: SINISTER
GULLY, BRISTLY RIDGE: **MALE. STUCK**

- 49** A solo male walker was attempting to ascend Bristly Ridge by way of Sinister Gully but lost the route and became cragfast. Fortunately, as a hill party was being deployed, the team was contacted by another climber who had assisted the stuck walker and was reporting him safe at the top of Bristly Ridge. The hill party returned to base.
- 10 team members involved.

30 MAY 09:40: 50 MINS: OGWEN: **MALE.
LEG INJURIES**

- 50** The team was called out to a male who had sustained a leg injury, 'about half a mile from Llyn Ogwen and requiring a stretcher evacuation'. RAF Leeming MRT were in the area so deployed into high probability areas whilst Oggi members attended base. A short time later, news came that he had made his way off and was on his way to hospital.
- 8 team members involved.

June

1 JUNE 12:05: 1 HOUR 25 MINS: BRYN
PYDEW: **FEMALE. LEG INJURIES**

- 51** Two girls were out walking locally when one slipped and fell on a path injuring her ankle. The paramedic was unable to extricate her, so asked for assistance. By the time the team arrived, the Coastguard team was on site with sufficient numbers to extract the girl.
- 13 team members involved.

6 JUNE 15:45: 2 HOURS: BOCHLWYD PATH:
FEMALE. LEG INJURIES

- 52** A lady slipped and hurt her ankle but continued to move down slowly herself. A passing team member came across her and called for a stretcher evacuation. The casualty refused analgesia but was treated, loaded onto a stretcher and evacuated to the road, then transferred to her daughter's car and taken to hospital.
- 19 team members involved.

7 JUNE 11:30: 3 HOURS 30 MINS: LLANBERIS
WATERFALL: **2 MALES. FATALITIES**

53

Several male swimmers were reported as having problems in a waterfall near Llanberis. Ogwen team members were asked to assist the other emergency services in the rescue. One swimmer was rescued but sadly the other two could not be saved.

► 8 team members involved.

8 JUNE 19:50: 1 HOUR 10 MINS: OGWEN
FALLS: **MALE. LEG INJURIES**

54

The gentleman was walking from the road around the Ogwen Falls when he tripped, injuring his ankle. The ambulance crew requested mountain rescue support for the short raise and carry to the A5.

► 19 team members involved.

12 JUNE 19:20: 1 HOUR 20 MINS: LLYN
PARC: **MALE. ARM INJURIES**

55

A man sustained a hand injury whilst chopping wood for a wild camp in the forest above Betws. The team was requested to assist the ambulance service as the location was a remote house in the forestry. Team members arrived on-scene just after the ambulance, guided by a community first responder. Team stood down.

► 10 team members involved.

21 JUNE 15:15: 1 HOUR 45 MINS: BRYN
HALL: **MALE. LEG INJURIES**

56

A walker sustained an ankle injury on Moel Lefn above Bethesda. A team vehicle drove up to his location with a small hill party, treated the man then returned him to his car in Bethesda to be taken to hospital by his family.

► 16 team members involved.

27 JUNE 10:15: 1 HOUR: BANGOR:
FEMALE. MISSING FROM HOME

57

A vulnerable lady was reported missing from home with possible indications for self-harm. She was found whilst team leaders were meeting with police for further information.

► 2 team members involved.

JULY

1 JULY 17:55: 2 HOURS 5 MINS: CWM
IDWAL: **FEMALE. LEG INJURIES**

58

An 18-year-old female sustained an ankle injury descending from the Devil's Kitchen into Cwm Idwal. Her friends tried to carry her but had to give up when they reached the Bad Step over Idwal Stream. Several hill parties went to the scene and helicopter assistance was requested. The casualty was quickly treated and winched aboard for a short flight to hospital. This was the first call-out for the new S92.

► 1 team member involved.

3 JULY 23:20 50 MINS: LLYN COWLYD:
STANDBY

59

A DofE party of seven, camping near the dam, grew concerned about a lightning storm in the mountains. Two of them were having panic attacks. They had been unable to contact their assessor so called 999 for advice. By the time the team leader could contact them the storm had passed through and they were feeling better.. so there was no team involvement.

► 1 team member involved.



Princes' Charities Day: Team members with colleagues from neighbouring and Mid Pennine teams with young people and parents from WellChild, Child Bereavement, Centrepont and Place2Be © Andy Harbach.

4 JULY 19:20: 1 HOUR 5 MINS: TRYFAN:
NOTHING FOUND

60 A member of the public in a car park at Llyn Ogwen reported hearing shouts for help from the lower slopes of Tryfan which stopped after about fifteen minutes. A team leader met up with the informant and they agreed the most likely cause was a flock of goats. There were climbers and walkers still on the hill and no sign of anyone in distress.
► 2 team members involved.

4 JULY 22:45: 1 HOUR: TRYFAN: **3 MALES. LOST**

61 A large party of climbers spent the day on the East Face of Tryfan. However, concerns were raised when three males had failed to return to the campsite by 11.00pm. Torch lights could be seen on the summit and East Face. Whilst a team leader was investigating, the climbers turned up so the team stood down.
► 2 team members involved.

4 JULY 23:45: 1 HOUR 35 MINS: CWM
EIGIAU: **FEMALE. ILLNESS**

62 A DofE student began to suffer repeated fainting attacks. As this was a pre-existing condition she and one other of the group were evacuated to an ambulance at the road head.
► 3 team members involved.

5 JULY 01:18: 6 HOURS 47 MINS:
CARNEDDAU: **2 MALES. LOST**

63 Two walkers attempting the '14 Peaks' were overdue at Aber by several hours. They were lightly clad with minimal kit but were advised to wait until dawn as nothing suggested they were in trouble. They turned up soon after.
► 2 team members involved.

9 JULY 16:10: 1 HOUR: GEIRIONYDD GORGE:
MALE. ARM INJURIES

64 A well organised party of about twelve from the local field centre at Betws, were scrambling up the gorge when one of them

slipped, injuring his left hand. The group leaders were eventually able to move him and he had walked back to the minibus just as the first team member arrived. The group agreed to take the injured person to hospital for treatment.

► 9 team members involved.

12 JULY 05:10: 5 HOURS 20 MINS: FOEL GRACH REFUGE: **5 MALES. EXHAUSTION**

65 A party of five attempting the '15 Peaks' challenge arrived at the refuge and took shelter from the weather. After several hours, they were cold and unsure how to proceed. A small hill party walked in from Melynlyn and escorted them back down to the road.

► 7 team members involved.

17 JULY 21:55: 2 HOURS: CLOGWYN CYRIAUI, BETWS Y COED: **MALE. MULTIPLE INJURIES**

66 The team assisted in the evacuation of a man who had fallen approx 10 metres to land at the base of a cliff, in difficult, steep woodland, sustaining rib and leg injuries. He was evacuated by stretcher about 200 metres to the ambulance waiting at the forest track for transport to Glan Clwyd Hospital.

► 9 team members involved.

19 JULY 14:20: 1 HOUR: AFON CONWY: **LOST**

67 The informant reported having seen an empty canoe in the area of the falls, heading downstream. Team members went to check whether any canoeists were in trouble and met two canoeists who had lost their boat and were in the process of recovering equipment from Fairy Glen. The reported canoe was linked with these canoeists and the incident closed.

► 12 team members involved.

2 JULY 20:35: 3 HOURS 45 MINS: EAST FACE TRYFAN: **2 MALES. STUCK**

68 A group of three climbers started up Grooved Arête in the early afternoon.

After the first pitch, one of them wasn't happy to continue so abseiled back to the start and made his way up to the summit to wait for his friends. Five hours later, he called the team because his friends had contacted him to say they were stuck near the top of the route. Team members at base could see them through binoculars and sent directions via text message. The group continued to climb very slowly. Meanwhile, team members walked to the summit to collect the individual as none of the group had torches and it was now dark, and another small party went up to the Eastern Terrace to locate the climbers who had decided to descend Green Gully and got stuck again. They climbed back up to the rescue party and everyone walked off down the North Ridge.

► 17 team members involved.

22 JULY 19:55: 40 MINS: NORTH RIDGE TRYFAN: **NOTHING FOUND**

69 A walker on the A5 at Llyn Ogwen reported whistle blasts and shouts coming from the lower part of the North Ridge. A team member went to investigate but no further whistles could be heard, and climbers descending from the Milestone Buttress had heard nothing. A group of goats close by may have caused the noise. No further action was required.

► 6 team members involved.

23 JULY 12:20: 3 HOURS 30 MINS: Y GARN: **NOTHING FOUND**

70 A walker in Cwm Idwal reported hearing a rock fall followed by apparent shouts for help. Due to the potentially serious nature of

the incident the helicopter was tasked and team members gathered at Oggi base. The helicopter carried out an extensive search of the probable area and then flew five team members to the summit of Y Garn to carry out a further search. Nothing was found but other walkers had heard the same rock fall and believe they saw people scree running. A false alarm with good intent.

► 11 team members involved.

23 JULY 16:05: 20 MINS: NORTH RIDGE
TRYFAN: **MALE & FEMALE. STRAYED**

71

Two walkers with little hill experience tried to ascend Heather Terrace but ended up on the North Ridge. The lady decided it was too steep and they called for help. As team members were gathering information and assembling at base some other walkers turned up and offered to escort the couple down the mountain. No further team action was necessary.

► 5 team members involved.

24 JULY 15:55: 2 HOURS 5 MINS: TRYFAN:
2 MALES & FEMALE. STRAYED

72

A family group of three adults, visiting North Wales and attempting a previous route, left the A5 at 11.00am from the bottom of the North Ridge to go to Heather Terrace. They lost the path in the Little Gully/Piccadilly Circus area and strayed onto steep ground above the Milestone Buttreass, on the west flank of Tryfan. One was not happy on the steep ground and called for mountain rescue help. The team made contact with the party and a spotter on the A5 confirmed their location. The party found a better path and were happy to head back towards the North Ridge where they were met and safely escorted down to base.

► 15 team members involved.

25 JULY 21:25: 2 HOURS 5 MINS:
LLANDUDNO: **FEMALE. ILLNESS, SPINE**

73

A 17-year-old female fell into a disused quarry, banged her head and was witnessed having a fit. Due to the difficult access for the ambulance crew and the serious nature of her condition, both the team and the helicopter were tasked. She was winched out of the quarry and flown to hospital.

► 13 team members involved.

28 JULY 12:15: 2 HOURS 20 MINS: AMLWCH:
FEMALE. NOTHING FOUND

74

A teenage girl was reported missing from home overnight so the team was asked to assist with a search of the local area. Following further information from police, it was decided SARDA was the best resource, so the incident was passed to them and the team stood down. The girl was later found by police.

► 8 team members involved.

29 JULY 17:20: 2 HOURS 10 MINS: GLYDER
FACH: **MALE. LEG INJURIES**

75

A male walker aggravated an old knee injury on the summit plateau of Glyder Fach. A hill party set out to evacuate him but were stood down en route as the helicopter was able to reach him and fly him to hospital.

► 17 team members involved.



Royal visit to North Wales: Top: Ogwen team members and mountain rescue colleagues with the Royal couple © Jo Worrall. Above: The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge © Penny Brockman.

august

2 AUGUST 17:45: 3 HOURS 15 MINS: MOEL SIABOD: **FEMALE & MALE. LOST**

76 A Dutch couple set off to climb Moel Siabod from Capel Curig. After passing Llyn y Foel, decided to walk around the mountain rather than go to the summit. They became lost in steep broken ground and called for help. They could clearly see Dolwyddelan but were reluctant to move so a small hill party found them and walked them down to the road.
► 15 team members involved.

3 AUGUST 20:40: 7 HOURS: FOEL GRACH: **3 MALES. LOST**

77 A party of three set off from Dolgarrog on a multi-day camping trip into the mountains. They were very poorly equipped with minimal skills or experience. When they made the 999 call at the onset of darkness, they had almost no idea where they were and a lot of effort was needed to locate and recover them in the dark and strong winds. Team members went to the summit of Drum by 4x4, then moved along the Carneddau to locate the group between the Refuge Hut and the Dulyn Reservoir cliffs. Given the adverse weather and the poor state of the group, they had to be evacuated down to the Mellynlyn track where they were picked up by a team vehicle and returned to Dolgarrog. Some great flying in difficult conditions by R936 who were able to confirm the approximate location of the group, despite being unable to land-on or approach the site due to the adverse weather.
► 10 team members involved.

6 AUGUST 11:45: 1 HOUR 50 MINS: LLYN OGWEN: **FEMALE. LEG INJURIES**

78 A lady slipped on the path on the north side of Llyn Ogwen, aggravating a knee

injury, and was unable to negotiate the rocky terrain back to the road. With her leg splinted, she was able to walk slowly, with assistance and her husband drove her on to hospital.

► 10 team members involved.

AUGUST 17:05: 1 HOUR 10 MINS: DEVIL'S KITCHEN: **MALE. LEG INJURIES**

79 'Oggie 8' marshals, descending from Llyn y Cwn, came across a man who had sprained his ankle. He was given pain relief and strapping and was able to walk slowly down the hill with the marshals. He was advised to see his doctor.

► 6 team members involved.

14 AUGUST 16:25: 4 HOURS 5 MINS: GLYDER FAWR: **MALE. STRAYED**

80 A gentleman set off alone from the brew shack at 11.00am to walk Y Garn and the Glyderau. He walked the north east ridge of Y Garn then down to Llyn y Cwn, up to Glyder Fawr and on past Castell y Gwynt, intending to drop down to Bwlch Tryfan. However, he was unable to find the path. It seems he'd got to the top of Bristly Scree but didn't believe the path went down that way — having been in the area 20 years before, he recalled a 'proper path' — so retraced his steps to the top of Gribin and called for help. In heavy mist, he couldn't see a way down the scree. A small hill party located him and walked him off the hill.

► 17 team members involved.

16 AUGUST 10:50: 55 MINS: TRYFAN: **MALE. LEG INJURIES**

81 A solo male walker slipped and injured his knee, high on the North Ridge. Team

members assembled at Oggi base but as the Coastguard were already flying in the area they were able to assess the situation, winch the casualty aboard and fly him to hospital.

► 16 team members involved.

17 AUGUST 18:30: 1 HOUR 50 MINS: TRYFAN:
6 MALES. LOST

82 A Gold DofE group of six boys from the college were two hours late to arrive at their campsite at Llyn Bochlywd. The weather was clear, dry and warm. Due to poor comms, one of the leaders met the team at base. The boys turned up tired but safe, some four hours late.

► 1 team member involved.

22 AUGUST 14:45: 4 HOURS 15 MINS: MOEL SIABOD: **MALE & FEMALE. STUCK**

83 Two 18-year-olds with limited mountain climbing experience strayed on to the steep gully area on the south side of Moel Siabod. Unable to descend, they called for help. A small hill party roped them down to safer ground where they could walk off the hill with team members.

► 13 team members involved.

24 AUGUST 12:00: 2 HOURS: CWM IDWAL:
FEMALE. LEG INJURIES

84 A female sustained a leg injury in Cwm Idwal. She was recovered by R936.

► 5 team members involved.

26 AUGUST 09:30: 4 HOURS 30 MINS:
ABERGLASLYN: **FEMALE. LOST**

85 The team was asked to provide water-trained members in the search for a vulnerable female. Whilst preparing to deploy, the lady was found and the team stood down.

► 3 team members involved.

29 AUGUST 05:05: 1 HOUR 15 MINS: DRUM:
3 MALES. EXHAUSTION/EXPOSURE

86 Three male walkers, attempting the '15 Peaks', rang in from Drum to say they were tired and needed help. When contacted by a team leader, they had already decided to keep on walking as daylight was approaching and they were on a good Land Rover track. They were contacted again after an hour, by which time they were on the Roman Road heading towards a taxi at the road head above Rowen.

► 2 team members involved.

29 AUGUST 12:00: 3 HOURS 15 MINS:
DEVIL'S KITCHEN: **FEMALE. LEG INJURIES**

87 A lady slipped on the path from the Devil's Kitchen, suffering a very painful hip injury. A small hill party was dispatched and Rescue 936 asked to assist. She was loaded into a stretcher and flown to the local hospital.

► 15 team members involved.

30 AUGUST 01:55: 6 HOURS 20 MINS: FOEL GRACH: **MALE. LEG INJURIES**

88 A party of five were doing the '14 Peaks' when one of them tripped and twisted his knee on Carnedd Llewelyn. His companions helped him down to the summit of Foel Grach over a two-hour period then felt they could do no more. Due to the distance and time required for a ground party to access the site, and the weather clear with little wind, a helicopter was requested to evacuate the casualty. Meanwhile, three of the party started to walk off to their car, parked in the Rowen area. A small ground party was dispatched by road. When the helicopter arrived, the casualty refused to allow the winchman to examine his injury. He and his friend were dropped off at Oggi base where he

continued to refuse examination or treatment. He was advised he should seek medical care as he was walking with visible difficulty. His three pals walked slowly off the hill but then failed to find their car! The casualty and his friend were dropped at their car, at Pen y Pass, and were last seen driving off to find their companions.

► 4 team members involved.

**30 AUGUST 16:30: 1 HOUR: LLYN
GEIRIONYDD: FEMALE. LEG INJURIES**

89

A couple were walking along the path on the west side of the lake when the lady slipped and injured her ankle. An ambulance was requested but access was difficult. Luckily, two team members were close by, asked the owner of a speedboat to assist, and were taken to the far side of the lake. Her leg splinted, the lady was assisted into the boat and taken back to the road. The couple made their way to hospital in their own car.

► 12 team members involved.

september

**2 SEPTEMBER 15:25: 3 HOUR 5 MINS:
FAIRY GLEN: MALE. MULTIPLE INJURIES**

90

A photographer slipped and fell about ten metres into the gorge, sustaining multiple injuries. He was stopped from falling further by a small tree. A team member and a paramedic were lowered down to stabilise and secure him, he was then extricated by the team and flown to hospital.

► 18 team members involved.

**4 SEPTEMBER 04:40: 11 HOURS 50 MINS:
TRYFAN: MALE. FATALITY**

91

The team was asked to search for a man who had not returned home from a weekend of walking in North Wales. His car was parked in the Ogwen Valley, near Tryfan. After considerable investigation it was felt Tryfan was the best place to search and a ground and air search began. R936 flew with two MR spotters on board whilst several hill parties were deployed. The casualty was quickly located by one of the spotters, in the area of North Gully on the East Face of Tryfan. Due to the precarious position of the casualty he was quickly recovered by the winchman, but had sadly passed away

► 16 team members involved.

**4 SEPTEMBER 18:35: 5 HOUR 20 MINS:
IDWAL SLABS: FEMALE & MALE. STRAYED**

92

A couple with limited multi pitch 'trad' climbing experience started climbing Ordinary Route on Idwal Slabs at midday. They had been told by friends to avoid the normal descent route from the lunch time ledge as it is difficult to find. They continued up Holly Tree wall, went off-route on Lazarus, and then gained a narrow ledge below Continuation Wall but, now in mist and low cloud, they became cragfast. With insufficient skill and knowledge to use twin ropes to abseil, they called for help. A joint hill party of Ogwen and RAF MRT members located and extracted them.

► 14 team members involved.

**4 SEPTEMBER 22:20: 3 HOUR 50 MINS:
TRYFAN: MALE & FEMALE. LOST**

93

A couple had started climbing Tryfan during the late morning and made

contact with a family member at about 1.50pm by text, stating that they'd let him know by 8.00pm that they'd made it back to their hotel. However, they didn't text, so the alarm was raised with police just as the previous incident was closing. Lights were seen on the North Ridge of Tryfan so a small party went to investigate and assisted them off. Their mobile phone battery had failed and they had become stuck late in the day whilst descending. RAF Valley MRT provided support to the team and Rescue 936 attempted to support but low cloud with poor visibility stopped them entering the valley.

► 16 team members involved.

5 SEPTEMBER 16:00: 1 HOUR: GLYDER FAWR: MALE. STRAYED

94 A male walker was following a route description from a magazine but became disorientated in cloud when leaving the summit of Glyder Fawr to head for the top of the Gribin Ridge. He started to descend the top section of Seniors Ridge, then went down steep ground on the west flank. Given the location and difficulty in accessing it, Rescue 936 was requested to attend. As the ground party was building, two team members deployed to spot-assist in winning the casualty from steep ground. He was picked up and returned to Oggri base.

► 13 team members involved.

5 SEPTEMBER 17:45: 2 HOURS 35 MINS: TRYFAN: FEMALE. STRAYED

95 A couple with limited equipment and mountain walking experience attempted to climb Tryfan by the North Ridge route. They turned around at the North Tower area and tried to reverse their route but strayed on to the West Face area above Waterfall Gully. At this point,

the female could not descend or go back up safely. They shouted for help which resulted in multiple reports to North Wales Police. Five USAF men went to assist and provided useful directions to the hill party about the exact location of the stuck woman. She was roped down the steep section of the gully and was then able to walk down to the road with team members.

► 15 team members involved.

7 SEPTEMBER 14:20: 25 MINS: Y GARN: FEMALE. ILLNESS

96 The call-out message advised that a member of an organised party of nine was suffering a severe allergic reaction resulting in breathing difficulties at a location on Y Garn. Given the potential severity of the incident, the support of R936 was immediately requested. The informant was contacted and it became apparent that the incident was on the Nantlle Ridge area and not the Y Garn in the Ogwen Valley. Given this new information, the incident was transferred to the Aberglaslyn MRT. The casualty was evacuated by R936 to Y Garn.

► 2 team members involved.

9 SEPTEMBER 13:35: 1 HOUR 45 MINS: BOCHLWYD: MALE. LEG INJURIES

97 The informant was walking off the hill with five other friends when they encountered a walker who had tripped and fallen, sustaining a penetrating cut to his knee cap. The informant and his group administered first aid and called for help. They said that the wound was bleeding heavily so R936 was requested. They whisked the casualty away to Y Garn and no team members were deployed on the hill.

► 6 team members involved.

9 SEPTEMBER 17:40: 1 HOUR 25 MINS:
CAPEL CURIG: **MALE. LOST**

98 The casualty managed to get lost descending from Crimpiau. He had no idea where he was even though he could see the road. With the aid of SARLOC he was given advice as to the best route down which he initially ignored but, once he realised he'd walked round in a circle, he gave in and followed instructions, arriving safely at the road albeit with very wet feet!
► 1 team member involved.

12 SEPTEMBER 19:40: 5 HOURS: PYG
TRACK, SNOWDON: **MALE. LEG INJURIES**

99 The team was asked to assist Llanberis MRT with a stretcher carry from the Pyg Track of a 38-year-old male with an ankle injury. Team members deployed to the casualty site and assisted with evacuation to Land Rovers and on to meet WAST at Pen Y Pass
► 5 team members involved.

20 SEPTEMBER 14:55: 1 HOUR 35 MINS:
TRYFAN: **FEMALE. ARM INJURIES**

100 A female walker was finishing a guided scramble on Tryfan and down Western Gully when, close to Bochlwyd Butress, she slipped and sustained a painful wrist injury. She felt very faint so her guide asked for help. A small hill party met her just starting to descend. With a splint applied and pain relief, she was able to walk slowly with assistance back to the road and her guide arranged her transfer to hospital.
► 11 team members involved.

20 SEPTEMBER 14:55: 2 HOURS 5 MINS:
MOEL SIABOD: **FEMALE & MALE. LOST**

101 A couple called 999 as they were lost descending Moel Siabod towards Capel

Curig. They were not in danger, just lost with no map. They had old mobile phones without data service so could not be directly located. There was another operation underway which had priority so they were advised to continue walking downhill into the forest, then onward to a track. After some time and several phone calls they managed to find a minor road and made their own way back to their car at Plas y Brenin. No team members were deployed.

► 7 team members involved.

20 SEPTEMBER 15:40: 4 HOURS 20 MINS:
DOLWYDDELAN: **MALE. FATALITY**

102 The team was asked to assist police with an incident in the Dolwyddelan area.
► 11 team members involved.

22 SEPTEMBER 14:00: 1 HOUR: GLYDER
FACH: **MALE. STUCK**

103 A male walker set off from Ogwen to climb Glyder Fach. He got to Bwlch Tryfan, crossed the wall and ascended onto Bristly Ridge, then moved up and right, leaving the ridge and getting onto Glyder Fach face. Because it was loose scree and he wasn't sure exactly where he was, he chose to enter a gully, whereupon he got stuck and phoned for help. Luckily, a passing Ogwen Cottage group were able to lower a rope and extract him. He was then handed on to an instructor from HMS Indefatigable, who escorted him safely down to the road where they were met by the team leader.
► 5 team members involved.

25 SEPTEMBER 12:05: 3 HOURS 55 MINS:
MILESTONE BUTTRESS AREA: **MALE. STUCK**

104 A father reported his eleven-year-old son stuck in a gully on the West Face

OCTOBER

of Tryfan. Due to the difficult location and age of the child, the helicopter was requested. Two passing scramblers were able to get to the boy to secure him but did not have the confidence or equipment to extract him, so four team members were flown to an area close to the site. They lowered the boy to safer ground where he was met by other team members. The scramblers and remaining team members abseiled the gully and walked off to the road.

► 11 team members involved.

29 SEPTEMBER 15:00: 1 HOUR 20 MINS: GLYDER FACH: **MALE. MULTIPLE INJURIES**

105 The casualty was walking the Gylderau with a friend when he tripped and fell onto rocks sustaining facial injuries and some broken fingers. Due to the location and injuries, assistance was requested from the helicopter which was granted. They quickly arrived on scene and managed to land on and get the casualty and his friend on board. A hill party was about to deploy and a party was available to be flown if required. No MR troops were deployed.

► 10 team members involved.

29 SEPTEMBER 17:40: 1 HOUR 50 MINS: BOCHLWYD: **MALE. FACIAL INJURIES**

106 Two male walkers were descending from Tryfan via the Bochlwyd path when one of them tripped and fell causing facial lacerations. They dressed the wounds and carried on slowly walking down but asked for MR assistance. A ground party was deployed immediately and Rescue 936 was also tasked in case of possible head injury. The casualty was winched on board the helicopter and flown to hospital for further treatment.

► 17 team members involved.

3 OCTOBER 15:25: 3 HOURS 25 MINS: CWM BOCHLWYD: **FEMALE. LEG INJURIES**

107 A female walker sustained an ankle injury on her descent into Cwm Bochlwyd from Bwlch Tryfan. Team members attended, treated the casualty, then carried her on a stretcher to a suitable place to load on to the helicopter.

► 15 team members involved.

6 OCTOBER 20:10: 5 HOURS 50 MINS: Y GARN: **MALE & FEMALE. EXPOSURE**

108 A young couple set off very late in the afternoon to climb Y Garn by the North East Ridge. They had limited equipment and were not dressed for the forecast very wet weather. They became lost in the dark and were unable to give a reliable description of their general location. They became increasingly cold and incoherent but finally managed to get a grid reference from their iPhone. Hill parties had been deployed and the Coastguard helicopter tasked but the aircraft could not approach the location due to severe weather conditions. Back-up from RAF Valley MRT was also deployed. They were located on the summit of Y Garn, rewarmed and then walked slowly off the mountain.

► 14 team members involved.

11 OCTOBER 09:00: 2 HOURS 30 MINS: ANGLESEY: **FEMALE. MISSING FROM HOME**

109 Police reported a missing fourteen-year-old high risk female who had absconded from Brynisiencyn. Due to the nature of the case, late on Saturday night, it was decided to wait until Sunday morning to deploy a trailing dog and team members. Search managers were called on Sunday morning to begin the process and support was also requested from SARDA for a trailing dog and RAF Valley for troops to assist

with the search. Mobile 3 was deployed to act as a forward planning base. The search team was just completing the planning phase when the missing person returned and all resources were stood down.

► 14 team members involved.

14 OCTOBER 19:20: 2 HOURS 25 MINS:
MOEL SIABOD: **FEMALE. HEAD INJURIES**

110 A student in an organised group tripped and hit her head on a rock at Llyn y Foel, Moel Siabod. Initially, she was happy to continue with the wild camping trip, but her instructor became concerned when the girl later felt dizzy and faint. The team was deployed and R936 tasked due to the possibility of a serious head injury. The casualty was evacuated to hospital by helicopter and team members met up with the rest of the group who were planning to stay overnight on the mountain.

► 18 team members involved.

18 OCTOBER 14:25: 2 HOURS: CWM IDWAL
FEMALE. LEG INJURIES

111 A female walker slipped on the path close to the Idwal Slabs and injured her ankle. An off-duty doctor stopped to help her and called the team for assistance. Some other walkers helped carry the lady to the outflow of Idwal where she was met by team and RAF MRT members who stretchered her to the road. Her husband then took her on to Ysbyty Gwynedd.

► 16 team members involved.

18 OCTOBER 23:50: 8 HOURS 10 MINS:
TRYFAN: **3 MALES. STUCK**

112 Three male walkers set off to climb the North Ridge of Tryfan at 7.00pm. They were well-equipped but possibly over-confident

of their ability. They rang for help from high on the ridge just before midnight, surrounded by very steep terrain. As they were in a safe place and had survival bags they agreed to wait until daylight and reassess their situation. A team leader spoke to them at 8.00am. They had reached the summit and were happy to make their own way back off the mountain. A good learning experience for them!

► 2 team members involved.

25 OCTOBER 10:30: 1 HOUR 45 MINS: NORTH
RIDGE TRYFAN: **MALE. ARM INJURIES**

113 A male walker fell a short distance on the North Ridge of Tryfan sustaining a possible dislocated shoulder. No contact could be made with the informant so a hasty party set out from Oggi base to locate and stabilise the casualty. However, the gentleman walked off by a different route, helped by his group, and was met at the road by the second hill party who were about to deploy. An ambulance also arrived on scene, so all team members returned to base.

► 13 team members involved.

27 OCTOBER 12:45: 2 HOURS: MOEL
SIABOD: **MALE. LOST**

114 A male walker reported himself lost in a forest above Capel Curig. Phone calls were limited and broken but the team leader established he was safe. He was encouraged to walk down to a track, then follow it. He found his own way down to Roman Bridge and was then going to retrieve his car from Capel.

► 2 team members involved.

29 OCTOBER 13:35: WEST FACE TRYFAN:
MALE & FEMALE. LOST

115 A well-equipped couple strayed onto the West Face on their descent of the

North Ridge and became stuck on steep ground. The team was able to spot them from the A5 and guide a small hill party to their location. Although the ground was easy terrain they had lost the confidence to continue alone but were able to follow team members back to the North Ridge and then to the road.

► 10 team members involved.

31 OCTOBER 15:30: 1 HOUR 30 MINS: LLYN CRAFTNANT: **FEMALE. LEG INJURIES**

116

The ambulance service requested help to evacuate a lady with a suspected ankle injury from a woodland track above Llyn Crafnant. A small hill party assisted with the evacuation, supported by further team members travelling from base with a team vehicle.

► 11 team members involved.

november

1 NOVEMBER 13:20: 2 HOURS 20 MINS: TRYFAN: **FEMALE. LOST**

117

A minimally equipped couple were descending the North Ridge and got lost straying off the main path. The lady became very frightened and could not move up or down so they called 999. A small team party quickly located the couple, secured the lady with a confidence-rope and escorted them off the hill to safety.

► 8 team members involved.

2 NOVEMBER 17:50: 7 HOURS 10 MINS: TRYFAN: **MALE & FEMALE. STUCK**

118

Two climbers, one of them a novice, attempting 2nd Pinnacle Rib on the

East Face, tried to escape off the route after the second pitch but became cragfast as darkness fell. Helicopter support was unavailable due to fog, so a large hill party was tasked to the summit area. They set up a rope system to extract the climbers from their ledge and the pair were assisted to the summit and walked off down Western Gully. The late start on the climb certainly contributed to the situation.

► 18 team members involved.

7 NOVEMBER 09:00: 2 HOURS 30 MINS: AFON LLUGWY: **LOST**

119

North Wales Police received a report of an overturned canoe in the river at Betws y Coed. RAF Valley MRT was in Betws and was asked to start searching the river upstream in case there was a person in the water needing help. They found a red drybag but were unable to retrieve it before it was swept further down river. Ogwen team was asked to search for a possible missing person and R936 were tasked to fly over the river with nothing found. Further information, that a canoe was lost in this area the previous day, had been posted on Facebook. The team was able to contact the owner of the canoe and it was believed to be the same one. As no-one had been reported as missing, team members were stood down.

► 20 team members involved.

7 NOVEMBER 12:45: 6 HOURS 45 MINS: IDWAL SLABS: **FEMALE. LEG INJURIES**

120

A female climber slipped on the walk off from the top of Ordinary Route, Idwal Slabs and sustained an ankle injury. RAF Valley MRT members who were at Oggi base after the previous incident were deployed immediately to the scene and R936 was called. Unfortunately,

due to turbulent weather, the helicopter tried but could not assist so more team members were deployed with ropes to extract the casualty party from the crag. The lady was lowered to the base of the crag and then carried in a stretcher back to the road for transport to hospital.

► 15 team members involved.

7 NOVEMBER 17:25: 1 HOUR 10 MINS:
GWYDYR FOREST: **NOTHING FOUND**

121 Several flares were reported to be seen over the Gwydyr Forest near Llanrwst.

As it was a popular evening for firework displays and no-one had been reported missing, it was decided no action would be taken by the team.

► 2 team members involved.

14 NOVEMBER 15:05: 1 HOUR 25 MINS:
CONWY FALLS: **FEMALE. LOST**

122 A female kayaker was witnessed falling out of her boat into the river above the Conwy Falls. With good intention, a member of the public rang the police as there was concern for her safety. However, two members of her own group managed to rescue her before team members arrived on scene.

► 10 team members involved.

15 NOVEMBER 10:30: 6 HOURS: HEATHER
TERRACE, TRYFAN: **MALE. FATALITY**

123 Two walkers on the Heather Terrace discovered a man's body and called the police. OVMRO was tasked to investigate and recover the body so immediately sent out a hasty party to assess the situation. In atrocious weather conditions, team members located the casualty, then lowered him into Cwm Tryfan for a stretcher carry to the road.

► 21 team members involved.

21 NOVEMBER 17:15: 4 HOURS: CWM
IDWAL: **NOTHING FOUND**

124 A walker reported a male voice shouting for help in the Cwm Idwal area. A small hill party walked up to investigate but could not find anyone needing assistance. As there had been no other reports of the shouts and no report of anyone missing, the team stood down.

► 7 team members involved.

december

5 DECEMBER 13:25: 2 HOURS 20 MINS:
TRYFAN: **FEMALE. STUCK**

125 North Wales Police informed the team that a man was stuck on the roof of his car after being washed downstream, having attempted to cross a ford and being swept away. In the event, he was rescued by fire and rescue services — team members had been ready to deploy but weren't needed. There was initial confusion as to the location.

► 13 team members involved.

5 DECEMBER 13:30: 57 HOURS 30 MINS:
CUMBRIA: **FLOOD RESCUE RESPONSE**

126 During Storm Desmond, exceptional rainfall in Cumbria overwhelmed flood defences and resulted in severe flooding in many areas. As part of a national response requested by LDSAMRA on the Saturday, OVMRO mobilised a swift water team in conjunction with members of NEWSAR to create and deliver a DEFRA 'Type C' team capability in Cumbria. The rescue



Preparing for flood rescue work: Ogwen team members at work during the flood rescue effort in Cumbria, following Storm Desmond © OVMRO/NEWSAR.



operation continued for several days with the North Wales teams returning late on Monday.

► 11 team members involved.

7 DECEMBER 10:20: 1 HOUR: TRYFAN: MALE. LOST DOG

127 Two people went for a walk up Tryfan and separated on the ascent. Their dog went missing and the owner started to search the mountain despite having no equipment or mountain experience. The owner then returned to the mountain at night and started searching again in very poor weather conditions. He did not contact home the following morning and so his parents raised the alarm. The team was asked to advise and the owner was soon located safe at the road having failed again to locate the dog. Later that day, his son went back onto the mountain to continue the search despite advice. The dog was found the next day safe and well.

► 3 team members involved.

10 DECEMBER 17:20: 4 HOURS 25 MINS: LLANRWST: FLOOD RESPONSE

128 The team was asked to assist the RSPCA with the recovery of eleven sheep stranded by flood water in the Conwy Valley. In a joint effort, five sheep were rescued by boat but, sadly, the other six had already perished.

► 11 team members involved.

17 DECEMBER 17:20: 45 MINS: CONWY MOUNTAIN: FEMALE. LOST

129 A vulnerable female walked up onto Conwy Mountain in a distressed state. Other family members went to locate the person but were overtaken by darkness. They were very close to steep crags and so called for help. The team was asked to assist and talked with family members by phone. The issue was soon resolved as the group were able to locate a safe path and find their way off the mountain to be met by the ambulance service and police. No further action was required from the MRT.

► 8 team members involved.

20 DECEMBER 14:50: 2 HOURS 20 MINS:
CWM PENMACHNO: **FEMALE. ILLNESS**

130 A group of six people were walking near Cwm Penmachno when one of them suffered a severe asthma attack. The ambulance was unable to drive to the location on a quarry track so both the helicopter and the team were called. The casualty was located in a quarry area and a team member met with the paramedic at the incident site who administered treatment. The casualty was winched into the aircraft and flown a short distance to the ambulance.

► 13 team members involved.

26 DECEMBER 12:20: 1 HOUR: IDWAL PATH:
LOST DOG

131 A member of the public found a dog on the Idwal path and was concerned its owner may be in trouble. Three team members met with the informant and carried out a quick search of the immediate area with nothing found. The dog was brought back to base and reunited with its owner after a few calls to local people.

► 4 team members involved.

26 DECEMBER 09:38: 13 HOURS 52 MINS:
CONWY & GWYNEDD: **FLOOD RESPONSE**

132 The team was asked to assist with a number of flood events in Trefriw and Llanrwst, including checking road access for WAST and transporting medical staff to a patient.

► 14 team members involved.

27 DECEMBER 16:10: 4 HOURS 15 MINS:
Y FOEL GOCH: **MALE. LOST**

133 A well-equipped walker was disoriented in failing light on the ridge between Y Foel Goch and Gallt yr Ogof. He was located using SARLOC and a small hill party deployed

to extract him. Although very cold he was able to walk down to Oggi base with team members.

► 9 team members involved.

27 DECEMBER 07:00: 31 HOURS: YORK:
FLOOD RESPONSE

134 The team was asked to assist with the flooding in York. The team carried out many taskings over a 24-hour period, whilst two other team members joined the 'command and control' team for the area.

► 9 team members involved.



Idwal Slabs: Rescue of a lady with leg injuries, early November
© OVMRO.

Light work: Torches at the ready © Judy Whiteside.



THE 'COST
NEUTRAL'
SCHEME TO
SUPPORT OUR
VOLUNTEERS
BECOMES
EMBEDDED.

Dave Jones
Equipment Officer



The Kit Issue and Replacement Scheme was introduced in 2014 to try to allow membership of the team to be as 'cost neutral' as possible by saving our volunteers having to buy their own equipment in order to stay safe and warm on the hill. This scheme doesn't just cover the usual waterproofs and fleece but includes personal items (base layers, gloves etc) and boots, in particular, ones that they have chosen and that work for them. All the major items have been spread over five years with the main focus in 2015 having been boots, fleeces and waterproofs. In 2016, we'll see the main focus on rucksack issue with personal items and wear and tear items running in the background. This scheme is only possible because of the kind donations we receive, which help to ensure team members go out in atrocious weather properly equipped. I'd particularly like to thank Joe Browns and Cunninghams for working in partnership with us by supporting our team members.

As mentioned, the replacement team fleece was a specific project in 2015. We've maintained the red theme and ended up opting for the Berghaus Choktoi in our usual distinctive red. Following which we were very pleased to welcome the Berghaus sales team to our base where they had an eye-opening introduction to the whole range of our capabilities and equipment.

This year, we have seen the very smooth transition from RAF SAR to the HM Coastguard helicopter which, in our area is the S92 and has



Ankle injury: Rescue of an injured climber on Ordinary Route, Idwal Slabs, in November © OVMRO.

meant three significant equipment issues: stretcher recertification, eye protection and rope gloves. All three Bell stretchers have now been tested by Lyon Equipment and re-certified for another five years and, therefore, are safe to be winched by the Coastguard helicopter. Our thanks go to Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) for their financial support with this.

With the S92's downdraft being significantly stronger, this brought new safety considerations regarding flying debris which could easily result in damage to eyes. Across the country, teams have introduced eye protection when working around the new aircraft. However, the North Wales teams set the safety bar slightly higher by providing recognised safety glasses ensuring increased protection. Our thanks go to North Wales Mountain Rescue Association (NWMRA) for their support and funding.

Thirdly, the winch mechanism on the S92 runs faster than on previous aircraft and team members were getting very warm hands when managing

a support line (high-line) held by the winchman to prevent spinning as they ascend more quickly. We've ended up issuing slightly thicker leather palmed gloves to accommodate this. Only a slight change but it prevents injury.

The big project for 2016 is to replace all 2.5km of our low stretch ropes but, as with any change to a system component, a review of the system itself also needs to be carried out to ensure compatibility with other equipment and materials used. A subgroup has agreed the requirements for the new rope and have set up the testing programme. At the time of writing we are awaiting delivery of various ropes with a view to starting the testing very soon.

The role of equipment officer has been very demanding on time, so I'm extremely grateful to the specialist subgroups (Casualty Care and Swift Water) for checking and managing their equipment and to the equipment group for their support with all the other jobs.

TRAINING IN 2015 WAS DELIVERED LARGELY IN-HOUSE BY OUR TEAM MEMBERS ON REGULAR WEDNESDAY EVENINGS, AND BY FOLLOWING THE 'FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH' ROUTINE.

Chris Onions
Training Officer



This was augmented at times by courses provided by commercial training providers. As I look back in the events log, I am reminded about the high level of in-house expertise that resides in OVMRO and the wide range of subject matter delivered by our members. These sessions included a local recce of the Afon Ddu Gorge (a local venue used widely by educational groups), technical rescue core skills (ropes, knots and devices), vehicle systems familiarisation (radios, snow chains and welfare), on-going casualty care updates (diamorph and scenario-based training), to name but a few. Feedback from the members would confirm that these sessions are usually very well attended and create a 'buzz' around Oggi base.

In February, seventeen team members went to Scotland for the annual winter skills training. The three-day event included a refresher to get used to moving in crampons and other winter equipment, navigation and winter belays. There followed a climbing and mountaineering day and a winter scenario based exercise before departure back to Wales. This event was very well supported and benefited from instruction from our in-house winter mountaineering instructors. Thanks to Tim and Kim for all of the hard work with the organisation.

New team members represent the future of OVMRO and we are always happy to receive enquiries and applications from prospective trainee members. We conducted two intake

events last year during which we welcomed Joe in March and later, Tarquin and David in May into the organisation. The intake events consist of a day on the hill to allow the team to assess mountaineering skills and determine how new members would fit into the team and their availability for operations and commitment. The assessment days follow an agreed format and include an easy rock climb, followed by a navigation assessment and some tasks including building a rock anchor. Candidates are also asked about their local area knowledge, particularly local climbs and winter routes on the Ogwen patch. Joe, Tarquin and David have started their trainee membership and encouraged to attend as many training events and rescues as possible to gain the skills and knowledge required before undertaking a final assessment (hopefully in 2016).

Last year, four trainee members completed their trainee induction period and went on to their final assessment before becoming full team members. Alex, Craig and Chris were successful during their final hill day in June, and later in the year, Tim was successful despite being interrupted by a water rescue half way through the event.

The summer of 2015 saw the transition of helicopter rescue being conducted by the RAF to a civilian contract, during a phased SAR-H migration. This new private contract came with additional online training requirements as well as conventional practical helicopter familiarisation and winching practice. This process has been managed efficiently via a single point of contact, Pauline, who manages the training and liaison for the whole of the North Wales region.

External training provision is an important component of the training process, and for a number of years we have contracted Kirk Mauthner from British Columbia to critically

review our rope rescue operations and provide us with updates to our practice. This year, Kirk managed to provide us with a two-day workshop in October, while over in the UK visiting our colleagues in the Lake District and attending a technical rescue conference in Ireland. We prepared for Kirk's visit by conducting in-house training with multi-stage stretcher lowers down the headwall of Cwm Lugwy using our lightweight Titan stretcher with its sliding sheet to assist with movement over steep ground. Kirk had recently conducted some testing on the vulnerability of ropes over edges which he proposed should influence the way we do things. This challenged our conventional view of how ropes should be managed but has the fortunate consequence of being physically more straightforward to operate. Kirk's visit left us with a number of actions, not least to bed-in the new practice and update our rope rescue field guide drawn by illustrator and mountaineer George Manley.

Two members received an invitation to visit Iceland to see the activities of SAR teams in glacial and boat based rescue situations. OVMRO supported Paul and Chris to undertake the visit and share the experience as it is always beneficial to look beyond the confines of our own team. I gather learning took place on both sides and an excellent report was produced from the trip (also reproduced in this annual report).

Further external training was undertaken by Tom Parker during an externally certificated Swiftwater Rescue Technician Advanced (SRTA) course in November. This training provided an opportunity for rescue technicians to up-skill in time for the anticipated water rescues in the winter. Tom conducted a revisit of the national arrangements for flood response before getting stuck-into the practical content of the course. Hiss take on the advanced nature of the course



Swift water rescue: Advanced training in November proved invaluable during the floods which followed in December, which saw team members deployed to Cumbria and York as well as the Conwy Valley © OVMRO.

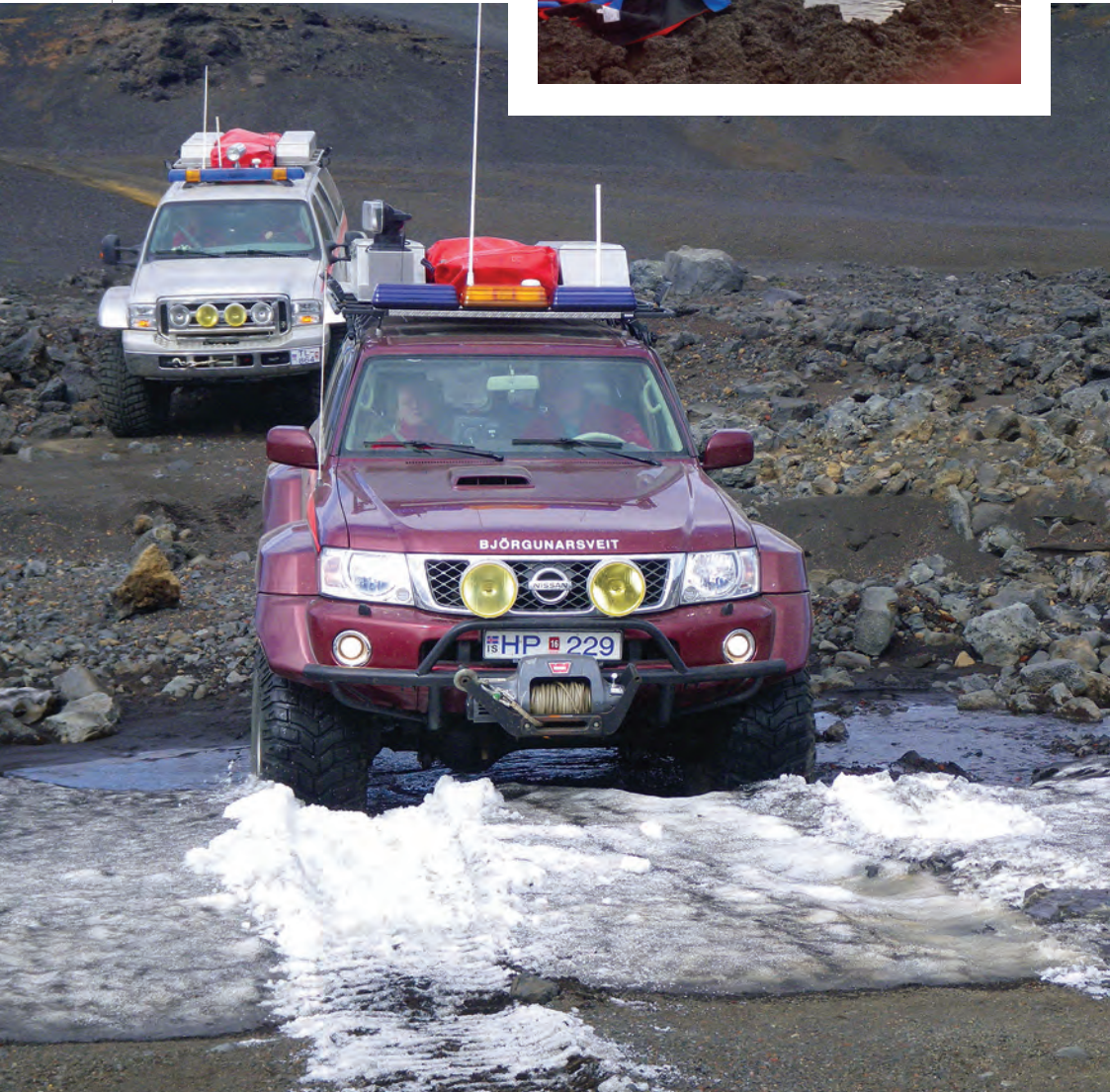
was that we should concentrate on doing conventional practice at a higher level of finesse. We certainly had plenty of water in the rivers following a deluge of rain that would eventually lead to flooding events elsewhere in the UK. Little did we know at the time but this training would prepare our members well for regional deployments to Cumbria, York and closer to home in the Conwy Valley.

As we look ahead to another busy year for rescues in OVMRO we must ensure that the training continues to be aligned with operational requirements. I must thank all those within the team who have delivered and otherwise assisted with training, especially those members who are busy within the specialist groups, water, rope, search, casualty care, equipment and transport.

Rescue Icelandic-style:

Below: Super Jeeps in action.

Right: Getting into hot water, Paul (left) and Chris (right) join their hosts in a warming dip © Paul Smith.





ICELAND AUGUST 2015

FOLLOWING MY INVITATION TO PRESENT AT THE ICE-SAR CONFERENCE, I DISCOVERED THAT THEIR ORGANISATION ORGANISES 1-WEEK HIGHLAND PATROLS FROM EARLY JULY TO LATE AUGUST.

**Paul Smith
& Chris Lloyd**



Each team around the island tries to contribute resources, so there is a local Landsbjorg presence in the main tourist areas of the interior during high season.

Our first port of call was the Landsbjorg office in Reykjavik. The building is shared with the 112 call handlers and other emergency services to facilitate coordinated response. The full-time staff coordinate the activities of the organisation at a national level. Dagbjatur, head of training, gave a presentation about Landsbjorg, its funding, training and operational roles.

The organisation is voluntary like ours and fundraising happens in the community. Importantly, they have exclusive rights to import and sell fireworks, which accounts for a large proportion of their annual income. Centralised fundraising like this is distributed nationally using a formula taking into account team size, location, busy-ness etc. It appears the Reykjavik teams (four in total) have access to more funds than other teams due to their populous location.

The organisation provides varied search and rescue services, with more civil resilience activity than our mountain rescue service. As the whole population is small (around 300,000 of which 2/3 are in the immediate Reykjavik area) the statutory services are similarly limited and so there is much more need for help in incidents requiring manpower or specific skills; securing storm damaged roofs, accessing and evacuating motorists in severe snow, RNLI type coastal

rescue, mountain rescue, water rescue, urban and wilderness search.

The Icelandic economy is now heavily reliant on tourism (following the banking collapse in 2008). As a result they have more tourists getting into trouble, so they are putting a lot of effort into their SafeTravel.is initiative, providing travel information, warnings and allowing people to log their intended routes.

Another initiative is statutory training for all Icelandic seafarers. Landsbjorg set this standard and are the sole providers of this training and so can raise funds running the courses. As a result of this mandatory training, their accidents at sea have fallen dramatically.

We were able to stay at the Reykjavik HSSK Kopovogur base (hssk.is/english/) for a couple of nights. On arriving, we joined them taking one of their boats out (9.5m RIB with twin 225hp outboards!) to provide event safety cover for a cross harbour swim. The team is obviously well off. Base is a modern industrial unit on the harbour, with kitchen, bunkroom, training room and offices plus garages packed full of toys; Haglunds, skidoos, two Super Jeeps, a 4x4 minibus, a normal minibus, two RIBs, an Iveco pallet-loading 6x6 truck and a container for international disaster response.

All ICE-SAR volunteers have to go through the same basic training (ropes, water, cas care) but then they tend to specialise in one or two areas eg. ATV or boats or ropes or vehicles. Kopovogur currently have about 160 names on the list but like us, only a limited number are regulars in each discipline.

Following Reykjavik, we moved to Hvamstangi and stayed in their base. They also had an industrial unit but on a smaller scale: two Super

jeeps, a team car, trailer and RIB. When needed, they call on personal snowmobiles and ATVs. In their much smaller community, they are not as well funded but they are creative. In winter, they lend out the Super Jeep to telecoms engineers who need to get to snowbound faults. For a donation, of course!

One of their swiftwater/rope technicians took us to recce a nearby gorge, as more tourists mean more people walking near the edge to take photos and they are planning for the inevitable. After a couple of hours checking the site, where we looked at waterflows, eddies, downstream access, anchors and target locations, we concluded the exercise would almost certainly be a body recovery. A person would be extremely lucky to make it to an eddy. More likely they would be flushed through, drowning or sustaining fatal injuries on the way. Any search for a body that was not flushed through would be very limited. Given the high water flow and loose gorge sides, we recommended a vehicle anchored hi-line as the lowest risk to the rescuers and the most accurate way of positioning into/out of the gorge.

Following a day walking the local area, we set off for the patrol — an eight-hour Super Jeep drive from Hvamstangi to Dreki. Along the way we met another rescue team (Strond) with their Super Jeep, who were joining us for the patrol.

TETRA in Iceland is widely used as a commercial system not just for police. Landsbjorg have their own talk groups but also have common talk groups with the police etc. Coverage is very comprehensive across the entire island, including the interior. Mobile signal at 3G level is also very good, so rescue vehicles have 3G-WiFi routers installed so occupants can be online all the time.

Spectacular: Stunning views but the landscape didn't lend itself to Ogwen-style searches © Paul Smith.

Vehicles also have VHF for marine and/or non-TETRA comms. They are also fitted with two satnavs. The primary is a Garmin 192 or 526 GPSMAP with full topo mapping, the secondary a Tom Tom — although this often shows a blank screen in the highlands! One vehicle had Ozi Explorer mapping installed on a Sony tablet.

Off-road driving is illegal, but you can drive anywhere when the ground is covered in snow.

The Patrol base at Dreki was a campsite, with warden and accommodation huts. There was a caravan for the National Park wardens, a converted shipping container for the Lansbjorg patrol and two containers for the police patrol.

The patrol was treated more as a holiday by the participants, with a serious side of local area familiarisation (usually a 4-6 hour Super Jeep ride every day) and being on-call. In fact the number of incidents was small (6?) and the severity was also minor. No injuries were seen and all incidents were vehicle-related. Many were over before they started as a passing motorist would help out or the issue was so minor it was fixed with gaffer tape or cable ties.

There were the usual discussions about kit and rescues and, amongst other things, the following info was exchanged at the time or after the patrol:

- PS ran a two-hour first aid/vac mat training session as they were unfamiliar with their new vac mat
- Smart Triage system
- Drugs, nasal protocols and MAD
- Smell gel
- SARLOC
- Blizzard coat/blanket/bag
- Training manager
- Intro to DMM sales manager



- Water rescue rescus protocol
- Rescue 104 water video

In summary, as with all first visits, there was much to learn about the set-up.

The Hvamstangi team admitted themselves that they were 'hillbillies' doing few jobs compared to some teams but because there is structured national training, they still had much to discuss about rope rescue, water, FIP and so forth. It would almost certainly be a different team if the visit was repeated, so this would present similar or more opportunities for knowledge sharing.

The location of Dreki was spectacular but did not lend itself to OVMRO-style searches or rescues. There are two other patrol bases — one at Landmanalauger and one at Nyjidalur. The latter is quiet and remote, so probably similar to Dreki, however, Landmanalauger is a tourist centre and has an incredibly busy trekking route nearby. I would recommend this as the destination of choice for future participants as it is busier and has more OVMRO type activity.



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FORTUNATELY FOR OUR CASUALTIES, 2015 HAS BEEN AN AVERAGE YEAR WITH RESPECT TO NUMBERS AND THE TYPES OF ILLNESSES AND INJURIES ENCOUNTERED.

John Carrie
Casualty Care Officer



All team members now have a basic level of casualty care training, providing them with the foundation skills to maintain life and support more advanced casualty carers on the hill.

Training has continued both in-house and across the region, providing the Mountain Rescue England and Wales Casualty Care syllabus. Plans are afoot to move our training to an external training agency to provide a more rigorous pathway, supported by robust, progressive training models that will develop casualty care within the team and the care given to our patients. It is hoped this will prove a national lead on shaping the future of casualty care underpinned by sound clinical governance. It also brings us in line with other agencies such as Bristow, the RAF MRS and the Fire Service.

The team has continued to benefit from the knowledge of the three paramedics, with their front-line clinical knowledge, and our team 'Doc'. We have delivered a wide range of training for both trainees and full team members. The level of training has significantly improved with the recent investments in training equipment.

We have also seen the transition from RAF SAR provision to the HM Coastguard SAR framework. Fortunately, a number of ex-RAF SAR crew moved across and this has made interoperability on the hill seamless. They have worked with us in the past and know our abilities and how we can support if needed.

As usual we'd like to thank other agencies for their support throughout the year and, in no particular order, thanks to Linda Dykes and staff of the Emergency Department at Ysbyty Gwynedd, the crews of HM Coastguard Rescue 936, Welsh Ambulance Service and our neighbouring mountain rescue teams.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE NAME OF OGWEN VALLEY MOUNTAIN RESCUE ORGANISATION STAYS IN THE IT HELPS ATTRACT MUCH NEEDED DONATIONS TO THIS CHARITY, AS MANY OF OUR 'CLIENTS' – AND THE PUBLIC – STILL DO NOT KNOW WE ARE VOLUNTEERS AND THAT THIS IS A CHARITY.

Chris Lloyd
Press Officer



With the assistance of our Welsh-speaking press officer, Gerwyn Lloyd, our two social media enthusiasts, John Carrie and Jim Langle, and our team leaders who update the website, we do our best to maintain this profile. And, once again, our scrapbook is filled with newspaper cuttings.

This year, like many recent years, the team has been busy with 'mountain rescue' activities throughout the year. In addition, this anniversary year has given us the opportunity to publicise other activities and events.

Sir Chris Bonington was the VIP guest at our annual dinner in March. At Easter, 'C' Flight, 22 Squadron RAF Valley achieved their 10,000th rescue whilst assisting OVMRO. Eryl Crump of the Daily Post joined us when we illuminated the whole of the Tryfan skyline with 100 torches in April. Again, we attracted publicity with our 'Extreme Dine' on the summit of Tryfan in May. In June, we hosted the Mountain Rescue England and Wales 'Mountain Adventure Day' for the Princes' Charities on behalf of North Wales. On 1 July, the first operational day for the new S92 helicopter, it carried out its first rescue in Snowdonia in the shadow of the Devil's Kitchen with OVMRO. The annual 'Oggie 8 Mountain Challenge' was held on the first Saturday of August. In September, we had an interview for BBC Radio Wales regarding government funding for mountain rescue teams. In November, the media descended on The Towers Outdoor Education Centre, where representatives of the North Wales teams met the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Early in December, we made front page of The Times and other national newspapers for our work in the floods of Cumbria. Our water



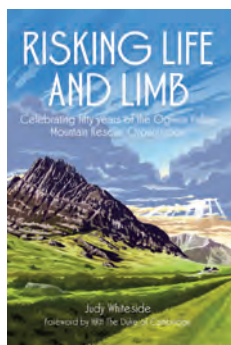
Risking life and limb: Chris Lloyd, Brian Robbins and Dave Worrall show off the newly published book at the Pontio Performing Arts Theatre in Bangor © OVMRO.

rescue capabilities were newsworthy later in that wet month when team members assisted with rescuing sheep from the flooding River Conwy. 2015 ended with floods in York where once again Ogwen members assisted along with members of other teams.

In between all this, a small group of team members worked to help Judy Whiteside to write the book celebrating the first fifty years of OVMRO. 'Risking Life and Limb' was launched at Bryn Poeth on 18 December 2015.

Our sincere thanks go to the Grough website; the North Wales daily newspaper and blog, The Daily Post, BBC Wales and ITV Wales, and the father and son partnership of freelance journalists, Derek and Glyn Bellis. Finally, we thank Judy Whiteside for the numerous articles about OVMRO published in Mountain Rescue magazine.

THROUGHOUT 2015, THE TEAM CELEBRATED THEIR FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY WITH CREATIVITY AND ENTHUSIASM.



Judy Whiteside



What with a Grand Dinner, a lovingly revived 'Ogwen raft race', a Black Tie dinner on a breezy Tryfan, Hawaiian shirts and inflatable palm trees for an even breezier beach party by the lake, the spectacular Tryfan Skylight and a 300-page book commissioned, nothing was too ambitious. It was a fitting celebration for a team which has made it their fifty-year mission to innovate, develop and improve the delivery of mountain rescue to those who need it, in one of the harshest environments in Snowdonia.

The story of Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation reaches back to the late-1800s, when the main rescue centre for the Ogwen Valley was Idwal Cottage. Things changed when the Climbing Club moved their rescue kit to Ogwen Cottage, where the formidable Mrs Williams was in charge. Her parting words of advice, in case of a call-out, were unequivocal. 'Fire a red flare from the car park — get the climbers together and put the one with the cleanest boots in charge!'

In the late-1950s, three young men began hatching a plan to set up their own mountaineering school and the seeds of today's team were sown. The idea of a private school began while Anthony Mason-Hornby, Ron James and Trevor Jones were climbing in Snowdonia. They were convinced that many climbing accidents could be avoided if climbers were properly taught and advised and, in spring 1959, they had each resigned their 'comfortable' jobs to realise their vision.

'Og Cott', as it would become known, opened during Whitsuntide 1959 and quickly gained a reputation for excellence. By August, it had become the first privately-owned school to be granted official recognition as a mountain rescue post, the first fully-manned post in Wales. Notices were posted in hostels, hotels and police stations in Snowdonia, informing people what to do in an



Bryn Poeth, the early days: Before the garage extension and a wealth of other repairs and modifications © OVMRO.

emergency: a two-starred red flare would be fired to break high above the Nant Francon Pass to signify that someone was in trouble and 'call' the three 'leaders' back to base.

Sadly, financial pressures led to the sale of the school to Birmingham Education Authority, in April 1964. Tony Mason-Hornby and Ron James remained in charge, with James as warden and chief instructor, and Mason-Hornby as senior instructor. The agreement was that the rescue team would continue and from then on, the number of team members would grow significantly.

With new ownership came many changes, not least that the instructors could now enjoy the same school holidays as other education providers. The long six-week break provided the glorious opportunity to explore mountains further afield. During that first summer, when most of the instructors had fled to the Alps and the RAF Valley team were training elsewhere, an accident happened which had a significant effect on how

mountain rescue would be delivered in the valley.

John Glews was left to 'house-sit' at Og Cott for the summer, with instructions to call Plas y Brenin if necessary. While he was attempting a new route on Clogwyn Ddu, a crag at the top of Nameless Cwm above Idwal Slabs, a peg came out and he fell. He was, says Ron James 'badly smashed up'. Someone ran for help but whilst he was waiting, it occurred to Glews that the current rescue service provided, dependent as it was on the availability of Og Cott staff and the RAF, was insufficient. What Ogwen needed was continuous mountain rescue cover, delivered by an independent group of rescuers available throughout the year.

When the hastily gathered rescue party arrived, Glews was unimpressed by their lack of skill and attempted to tell them what to do even as he lay on the stretcher. He was so badly injured that when colleagues visited him in the orthopaedic hospital at Gobowen in Shropshire, he was still

in intensive care. They resolved there and then that the need for a permanent rescue team was a priority.

By autumn 1964, that team had been conceived, guided by James and Mason-Hornby. It would consist of a number of team leaders, mainly the instructors from Og Cott, with a pool of skilled rescuers at their disposal, on call round the clock and it would be an entirely voluntary enterprise.

The inaugural meeting of the Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation was in March 1965 with Mason-Hornby in the chair, James as senior team leader and his then wife Barbara as secretary.

During the next five years — indeed, ever since — the team continued to experiment with kit and ways of doing things. There would be experiments with a split Thomas stretcher, developments with radios and collaboration with Plas y Brenin and Glenmore Lodge to refine team member skills. A significant change came with the arrival of Dr Ieuan Jones at the Caernarfon and Anglesey Hospital in Bangor, where he worked as the senior accident officer. Like Wilson Hey before him, he realised that the skills of mountain rescuers, and the treatments they could offer, were inadequate for the bigger emergencies they might face and set about improving them — often by exposing team members to the shocking reality of trauma.

They were interesting times, to which hindsight lends a wry humour, as Chris Lloyd explains. 'In May 1965, OVMRO purchased a small caravan for £5 which was sited at the rear of the Cottage. But it wasn't long before eagle-eyed authorities thought its presence might encourage travellers and the council ordered the caravan to be removed — an exercise which cost more than it had to purchase it!

'In February 1966, Birmingham Education Authority kindly dedicated a room (the old garage/generator room) to mountain rescue. However, there were strict rules about use of this room;

no overnight stays and certainly NO girlfriends or women permitted, at whatever time of day or night!' We can only speculate whether any wife or girlfriend ever actually harboured a burning desire to spend any time in said garage/generator room.

Long-standing members Roger Jones. KC Gordon and Neil Adam have been involved since the Ogwen Cottage rescue team days. Roger Jones recalls how Mason-Hornby's Roll's Royce would be pressed into service, often taking team members away from their pints at the Douglas Arms in Bethesda to go rescue someone. As an 'ambulance' it certainly seemed better from a casualty's point of view than being slung in the back of a coal truck! 'The boot folded flat,' adds Neil Adam. 'The stretcher stuck out a bit but we could slide it in and two people would sit in the back holding onto it'.

The school's first five years set a template for the innovative, forward-thinking team that Ogwen continues to be. At the time of the team's Silver Jubilee in 1990, Ron James recalled that the team 'got hold of a film of rescue in the Alps by Mariner and practised, for the first time in Britain, many of the improvised techniques now very much part of guide and instructor training'. There was also a Tragsitz from Austria, a Perche Barnarde from Frenod in Grenoble and later the Mariner stretcher and wire lowering gear.

The methods of calling out were varied. There were no telephones to speak of. The local 'bobby' would go round knocking on doors, gathering known volunteers. KC Gordon tells how news of an injured climber frequently disrupted his Saturday evening plans, 'just as we were heading off to Bangor to chase after the college girls!'

Og Cott served the team well, but they quickly outgrew the space. When Birmingham Education Authority revealed plans for an extension which meant the loss of storage, fundraising began in earnest for an 'Oggi base'. Whilst they had already

begun looking at Bryn Poeth as a potential home, in the short term, the team's only choice was to move into the generator shed behind the old school at the back of Idwal Cottage, courtesy of the Youth Hostels Association. It was a space which afforded even less room than before. There was barely room to stand upright and served only as a dump — in more ways than one — but it would be 'base' for two years. Some repair work was required but, by August 1975, it was weatherproof and team kit was relocated from Ogwen Cottage to Idwal Cottage and the garages of team members Tony Jones and Roger Jones.

Meanwhile, Bryn Poeth, once employed as the Water Bailiff's cottage, stood empty. Owned by the National Trust, it was a primitive building but the location was ideal, just 200 yards from the main road with space to land a helicopter behind. And so began a long and tortuous road to acquisition and refurbishment, via costly legal wrangles and often in the face of strong opposition from some quarters of the local community. The Snowdonia National Park Society, led by Esmé Kirby, and Chris Briggs (who led rescues from the Pen y Gwryd hotel) believed there to be no need to base a mountain rescue team in the Ogwen Valley. They objected to the National Trust applying for planning permission to turn the building into a mountain rescue base.

In 1975, planning permission was granted. The National Trust refurbished Bryn Poeth and, on Sunday 2 October 1977, the team moved in. The original proposal had been for full occupancy but the agreed lease only allowed for use of a small operations room at the front of the building and a newly-constructed lean-to shed at the back, for use as a store. There was no facility for the team to use any other parts of the building except in an emergency. In fact, the remainder was available to the National Trust conservation parties.

The electrics were hit and miss, there was neither heating nor hot water — just a cold water

tap out the back. A kitchen sink and two toilets were located in the current kitchen but accessed from an external back door. There was a potato patch some two metres below the existing car park and room for two 4x4 vehicles in front of the building. Nothing else could get up the track. Parking was limited to the grass verges of the A5. It was primitive. But it was home.

As the years passed, it became increasingly evident that Bryn Poeth was unfit for purpose. Clearly suffering the ravages of its environment, it was cold. Very cold. So cold, 'there was more chance of getting hypothermia in Bryn Poeth than there was on the Carneddau'. Renovation would cost £55,000. The accounts held just £3,000. And thus began three years of fundraising.

By February 1989, planning consent had been granted, full working plans had been drawn up and the team was in a position to start work, but not before another round of musical chairs with the local planning department. By Christmas, the keys were back with OVMRO. Totally gutted, Bryn Poeth had doubled in size, there was a new kitchen, two showers, wash basins, two toilets, a new electricity supply, hot water and radiators. And the potato patch had become the car park. At last, a building fit for use and one to be proud of! On 12 May 1990, the new base was formally opened by Bob Borradaile, the Master of the Worshipful Company of Drapers of London.

The team had made huge strides forward, but there were still a few hurdles to leap. The National Trust, impressed by the vastly improved facilities now available at Bryn Poeth, decided it would be ideal as accommodation for their Acorn holidays. It was a further two years before an agreement for shared use was made, but it wasn't easy having a building that served two purposes. For the next fifteen years, all those hard-working conservation workers risked being woken up in the night by team members on a call-out!

The Trust eventually backed out because the

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property no longer suited their use (although they do still own the building), and the lease was renegotiated when OVMRO became a charitable incorporated organisation in June 2015.

Despite being forced to share their space, Ogwen continued to invest heavily in Bryn Poeth. In the late 1990s, transport options were limited. Team members were forced to make do with Tony Jones's own vehicle during rescues. That, or share the backs of Land Rovers with bales of hay, whilst the local farmers transported them up the mountain. It was time to invest in a vehicle and, in January 1995, they took delivery of their first Land Rover Defender 110, at the cost of £18,000. So now they needed a secure, weatherproof home to house it in!

Cue yet more wrangles, this time with Sportlot who thought Ogwen's garage was outside their remit, despite — some might say — a clear connection with physical activity of the highest order. Not to be beaten, Ogwen set about challenging the decision. A good number of telephone conversations and some 350 letters later, Sportlot agreed it may be in their interests after all and offered £17,500, including VAT, towards the £40,000 project to not just build a garage, but refurbish and convert the loft space. 'During the work,' says Chris Lloyd, 'we realised that if we called it an annexe rather than a garage, it would be zero-rated for VAT. We duly informed Sportlot, only to be told we'd now be receiving just £14,000 towards the garage!

'Then, shortly afterwards, they advised us we had been overpaid by a thousand due to the grant being given as a percentage of the overall project and that by saving the VAT, the percentage was effectively reduced and we owed them a thousand pounds!'

This seemed somewhat unfair and a meeting was called.

'It was a memorable meeting,' recalls Lloyd. 'Feelings were running high. So much effort by so many and now this. At one point, one team

member reached across the table towards the Sportlot representative, clearly intent on making the man see sense, before being swiftly reminded we might need them again! But he had a good point — we'd saved three thousand pounds on the project and now they wanted a thousand back!'

Work on the new garage finally began in September 1996 and, the following May, the garage and loft extension were officially opened.

Oggi base and the Oggi team themselves remain a work in progress, as the team adapts to ever-increasing demands for their assistance — both on the mountain and in the swiftwater environment. It's a story with which every single team is familiar. What began as a local resource, catering for the needs of a very specific section of society, is now a fully-fledged 'community resource', sometimes called to work far outside the bounds of North Wales (notably, in the December floods, in Carlisle and York).

But it's safe to say that, over fifty years, Ogwen team members have been instrumental in driving forward standards in casualty care, swiftwater rescue, technology (SARCALL and SARLOC), training, rescue rigging and equipment design which have spilled into the national consciousness. They've developed a thriving model for support membership with Treble Three, offered themselves up for audit and inspection (long before the idea of peer review really took hold), and continued to exchange ideas with experts and teams from around the world.

Their anniversary book, 'Risking Life and Limb', was launched in late December 2015. Written and designed by Yours Truly, it carries a foreword from HRH The Duke of Cambridge, who often worked with the team during his time at RAF Valley, and is beautifully illustrated by George Manley. It's available to buy from the team via shop.ogwen-rescue.org.uk and it's chock full of stories. Yours for just £18.50.



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Chris Lloyd, Ogwen Press Officer and Trustee

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LAST YEAR, AS WE KNOW, WAS THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FORMATION OF OGWEN VALLEY MOUNTAIN RESCUE ORGANISATION. ON BEHALF OF TREBLE THREE, I'D LIKE TO EXTEND CONGRATULATIONS NOT ONLY FOR FIFTY FANTASTIC YEARS BUT ALSO FOR THE WAY IT WAS CELEBRATED.

Clive Swombow

Honorary Chairman 333



You will all be aware of the numerous events organised and the way the team involved 'C' Flight 22 Squadron in what was their last year as helicopter support for search and rescue. Farewell to our friends from 'C' Flight and welcome to the Coastguard crews, who I am sure will maintain the standard of excellence of their predecessors.

It is now nineteen years since 333 was formed and I have had the privilege of being its chairman since its inception. It is becoming difficult to find the adjectives to describe my pride and express the exceptional standards of the group, without repeating what has been said over the years. So I will just say 'Thank you'. You have all made a contribution to this great team and taken over a number of responsibilities which, in the past, were done by team members. As a group, you have come a long way. Many years ago, the idea of a fundraising team, in line with the RNLI, was considered anathema by some, but Ogwen realised that, in order to meet the increased workload and the need for technical equipment, something had to be done. Now fundraising is an integral part of mountain rescue. As I've stated many times, Ogwen was in the vanguard of this idea — recognised around the world — and I believe Treble Three is the standard by which support groups are formed.

Once again in 2015, members of SAR Sweden visited base for a number of days to see how the team and 333 operate. Another visit is anticipated this year.

So there it is. Thank you once again, please visit base and don't forget to check the team website to find out the activities laid on for you. Suffice to say you are, and will always be, an integral part of the team, now and in the future.

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The figures provided are as a result of official manufacturer's tests in accordance with EU legislation. A vehicle's actual fuel consumption may differ from that achieved in such tests and these figures are for comparative purposes only

WELL, IT'S BEEN A BUSY YEAR FOR THE TEAM. IN ADDITION TO THE USUAL DAY-TO-DAY THINGS, WE'VE HAD THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS AND ONE OF THE LONG TERM AIMS FOR THE TEAM ALSO CAME TO FRUITION WITH REGISTRATION AS A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION.

Jo Worrall
Honorary Treasurer



Operationally, we have run as the CIO since June, but we've run accounts for both charities through the year. We still have the same number of transactions but into two organisations. It was a challenging time dealing with the financial institutions that the team banks with — some were straightforward, others less so!

Our funds are now transferred over to the CIO and the Independent Examiner has given both sets of year-end accounts a clean bill of health, which is always a relief.

On the following pages you will find the Trustee Reports for both organisations and the accounts for both. My thanks to Pete Frost and Russ Hore for preparing these on behalf of the respective trustees.

A part of my role is receiving donations in memory. Sad to say, as you can see from the accounts, we receive a large amount from donations in memory and bequests. This year these have included:

Derren Barber	Clifford Frank May
Shirley Bowden	Stewart Phipps
Stephen Chilton-Jones	Ronald Pratt
Gerald Doig	Mair Powell
Alan Evans	Emyr Roberts
Miss D E Flynn	David Smith
J D Griffiths	Mrs C Timperley
Susan Hawkins	Mark Turner
Dr John Bowen Hughes	Michael John Willcox
Rodney Hughes	David Williams
Sean Laxen	Kevin Williams
Stephen Longfellow	James Wiltshire
David March	Bruce Woodland

On behalf of the team, our thanks to these people, families and friends.

And how could I finish without thanking the Treasurer's Assistant? A huge thank you to Dave for all the help he gives me with our accounting software.

OGWEN VALLEY MOUNTAIN RESCUE ORGANISATION
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR
THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

	2015	2014
RECEIPTS		
<i>Recurring items</i>		
333 Support Group	18,233	21,923
Donations	10,084	34,321
Oggie 8 Event	1,041	6,597
Collecting Boxes	2,144	5,123
Investment income	1,284	1,242
Other recurring income	8,101	9,096
Total receipts (recurring)	40,887	78,302
<i>Non-recurring items</i>		
In Memory, bequests and legacies	36,486	61,685
Gift Aid recovery	5,884	431
Total Receipts (non-recurring)	42,370	62,116
Total Receipts	83,257	140,418
Payments		
Base expenses	6,258	14,889
Communications	2,388	10,923
Equipment	4,315	29,777
Transport	1,758	3,895
Training and conferences	1,997	3,441
Team kit allowance	–	359
Other charitable expenses	31,114	36,943
Governance costs	5,266	2,240
Transferred to Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation CIO	469,521	–
	522,617	102,467
Net receipts (payments)	(439,360)	37,951
Cash funds at last year end	441,633	403,682
Cash funds at this year end	2,273	441,633

OGWEN VALLEY MOUNTAIN RESCUE ORGANISATION CIO
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2015

	Note	2015
INCOMING RESOURCES FROM GENERATING FUNDS		
Recurring items	2	30,498
Non recurring items	3	76,027
Transfer from Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation		721,041
Total Incoming Resources		827,566
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
Provision of rescue and related services	4	68,454
Governance costs		840
Total resources expended		69,294
Net movement in funds for the period		758,272
Fund balances at 31 December 2015		758,272

OGWEN VALLEY MOUNTAIN RESCUE ORGANISATION CIO
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2015

	Note		
Tangible fixed assets	5		225,520
Current assets			
Stocks		18,400	
Cash at bank and in hand	6	515,312	
Creditors – amounts falling due within one year		533,712	
Accruals		960	
Net current assets			532,752
Total assets less current liabilities			758,272
Total assets			
Unrestricted funds			758,272

OGWEN VALLEY MOUNTAIN RESCUE ORGANISATION CIO
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2015

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Basis of preparation

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting for Charities' issued in July 2014.

1.2 Incoming resources

Income is recognised at the point where the charity has an identifiable right to it.
During the period the charity operated a single unrestricted income fund.

1.3 Resources expended

Liabilities are recognised on the accruals basis and include, where appropriate attributable VAT which cannot be recovered.
Governance costs comprise professional fees and similar costs attributable to the governance of the charity.

1.4 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life as follows:

Garage annexe	5%	straight line
Motor vehicles	20%	straight line
Rescue equipment	10%	straight line

2 Incoming resources - recurring items

	Note	
333 Support Group	7	5,504
Donations	8	10,920
Oggie 8 Event		5,835
Collecting boxes		3,291
Investment income		559
Other recurring income	9	4,389
		30,498

3 Incoming resources – recurring items

In memory	76,027
-----------	--------

4 Provision of rescue and related services

	Note	
Base expenses	10	12,348
Communications		749
Equipment replacement	11	4,496
Transport	12	2,277
Training and conferences		6,732
Team members' PPE scheme		1,465
Team members mileage		6,129
Other charitable expenses	13	9,778
Depreciation		24,480
		68,454

5	Tangible fixed assets				
		Garage Annexe	Vehicles	Rescue Equipment	Total
	From unincorporated charity	75,000	50,000	125,000	250,000
	Depreciation				
	Provided for the period	2,188	5,833	7,292	15,313
	Impairment		9,167		9,167
	As at 31 December 2015	2,188	15,000	7,292	24,480
	Net book value 31 Dec 2015	72,812	35,000	117,708	225,520
6	Cash at bank and in hand				
	Current accounts			24,043	
	Deposit accounts			490,997	
	Cash in hand			272	
				515,312	
7	333 Support Group				
	Memberships			625	
	Other income			4,879	
				5,504	
8	Donations				
	Clubs			1,768	
	Companies			376	
	Personal			7,319	
	Rescues			1,008	
	Other contributions			449	
				10,920	
9	Other recurring income				
	Annual report sales			40	
	Sale of used stamps			279	
	Goods purchased from team members			143	
	Team member events			1,022	
	Honesty box			93	
	Other income			2,812	
				4,389	
10	Base expenses				
	Catering			658	
	Rent, phone and repairs			5,219	
	Insurance			5,572	
	Other expenses			899	
				12,348	
11	Equipment replacement				
	First Aid			1,710	
	Other equipment			2,786	
				4,496	

Trustees: ovmro

12	Transport	
	General transport costs	2,277
13	Other charitable expenses	
	Administration	3,969
	Postage and stationery	402
	Bank charges	270
	Fund raising costs	4,796
	IT and website	341
		9,778
14	Trustees	
	None of the trustees received any remuneration during the period.	

THIS REPORT,
FOR THE **OGWEN
VALLEY MRO**, IS
PREPARED FOR
THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2015.

THE TRUSTEES
WHO SERVED
DURING THE YEAR
WERE:

W H B DEAN
R HORE
K DE SILVA
R J LEWIS

On behalf of the
Trustees
Russ Hore
Trustee

Trustees are appointed by election at the AGM. The organisation is a charity registered in England and Wales, registration number 502442. The charity is governed by means of a constitution dated March 1994, as subsequently amended.

The organisational structure is simple, policy decisions being determined by the members in general meeting with specific tasks co-opted to individual members.

The constitution makes no specific instructions limiting the Trustees' authority to make investments. OVMRO is affiliated to the North Wales Mountain Rescue Association and Mountain Rescue England and Wales.

Enquiries regarding OVMRO should be addressed to the Chairman at the undernoted address: Bryn Poeth, Capel Curig, Betws-y-Coed, Conwy LL24 0EU.

Objects

To search for and to rescue people in difficulties in inhospitable terrain and in furtherance thereof to develop search and rescue techniques and to disseminate information about the activities of the organisation.

Reserves policy and risk management

Future activities of the charity are to be funded

by future income and liquid assets currently held. The organisation is not bound by any financial commitments for which funds do not exist.

The trustees have reviewed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and they are satisfied that the charity's established systems mitigate those risks.

Trustees responsibilities

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of its financial activities for that period and adequately distinguish any material special trust or other special fund of the charity. In preparing those financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- a) select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- b) make judgements that are reasonable and prudent
- c) state whether the policies adopted are in accordance with the guidance issued by the Charity Commission and the accounting regulations and applicable accounting standards, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- d) prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure the financial statements comply with applicable accounting standards and the regulations made under section 130 of the Charities Act 2011 as well as the charity's governing document. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable

steps for the prevention and detection of fraud or other irregularities.

Review of the year and plans for the future

The role of the Trustees is to ensure that the charity carries out its objectives as agreed in its registration as a charity and that it is run in accordance with charity law and the regulations of the Charity Commission. The stated objects of the charity are noted at the start of this report.

Operationally

The team continues to get ever more busy both within their area of operations and further afield, attending a total of 134 incidents.

Of note is the use of our water-skilled troops in the major flooding. Our troops were deployed to both the Lakes and York.

There has been a good influx of new members, which will be needed to take over from the old hands' in the future.

50th Anniversary celebrations

2015 was of course the team's 50th anniversary and many events were held in celebration. One very visual event involved team members and supporters covering the skyline of our most popular mountain, Tryfan, and waiting for the dark. Each member then lit a torch giving a string of lights outlining the ridge. As Chris Lloyd said 'Drivers entering the Ogwen Valley from Capel Curig were stunned by the spectacle, several of them stopping to capture this unique moment on their cameras and mobile phones. As the skies darkened, the spectacle improved. For 40 minutes the 90 people involved stood motionless, unable to appreciate the scene that they were creating.'

Another celebration involved a large number of members, 'C' Flight crew and team supporters carrying all that was required to hold a black tie dinner on the summit of Tryfan.

The Princes' Charities

In June, Ogwen hosted for the NWMRA region

a visit by some of the Princes' Charities for the Mountain Rescue England and Wales Day of Adventure.

There was a special visit in November by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge visiting young people from Holyhead High School who have worked with MIND. This visit took place at The Towers Outdoor Centre where activities such as tree climbing, abseiling and zipwire runs took place.

THE TRUSTEES PRESENT THEIR REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2015 FOR THE **OGWEN VALLEY MRO CIO**.

On behalf of the
Trustees
Peter Frost
Trustee

The future

The Trustees wish the CIO all the best for the future and we are sure you will carry on going from strength to strength.

Public Benefit

In deciding the activities that the organisation should undertake, the Trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission.

This report is presented in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' (SORP) published on 16 July 2014.

The Charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) governed according to a constitution dated 10 November 2014 and a rule book dated 2 June 2015. It was established on 1 June 2015 to take forward the work of the Unincorporated Organisation registered charity number 502442.

The CIO's annual reports are published on the Charity Commission website, with effect from the year ending 31 December 2015. The Unincorporated Organisation's reports are also published and provide a clear comparative of the financial activities and financial position with this, and previous accounting periods.

The CIO is affiliated to the North Wales Mountain Rescue Association (NWMRA) and Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW).

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Charities Act 2011 requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of the resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these

financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- a) select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- b) observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP 2014
- c) make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- d) state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- e) prepare the financial statements on the ongoing concern basis unless it is inappropriate to do so.

The trustees are responsible for keeping sufficient accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011 as well as the charity's governing document.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Organisation

The Trustees who served during the year were:

- Mr Andy Harbach (Chairman)
- Mrs Jo Worrall (Treasurer)
- Mr Peter Frost (Secretary)
- Mr David Jones (Equipment Officer)
- Mr Chris Lloyd

Trustees are appointed by election at the AGM.

There must be at least three and not more than seven elected Trustees. The Members of the CIO are individuals who undertake to act in good faith to further the purposes of the CIO.

The affairs of the CIO are managed by the Charity Trustees with day-to-day management devolved to a management committee elected by the members of the CIO at the AGM.

Objectives and activities

1. To search for and rescue people in difficulties in mountainous regions and in furtherance thereof to develop rescue techniques, and to disseminate information about the activities of the organisation.
2. The provision of grants to charities which support the mountain rescue community.

Activity and performance

The role of the trustees is to ensure that the charity carries out its objectives as agreed in its registration as a charity and that it is managed in accordance with charity law and the regulations of the Charity Commission.

The CIO was entered on the register of charities on 16 February 2015 and began operating on the 1 June 2015. The achievement of this long-standing strategic objective coincided with the 50th anniversary of the establishment of OVMRO, a fact celebrated during the year by a series of formal events:

- Tryfan Skylight
- Extreme dining on Tryfan
- Llyn Idwal beach picnic
- Raft race on Llyn Ogwen
- The publication of 'Risking Life and Limb', a book telling the story of OVMRO.

These activities, together with attendance at community events, an enhanced website and an appropriate level of media engagement helped maintain OVMRO's high public profile. As a result the CIO benefits from a strong flow of charitable donations and remains in a strong financial position to deliver its charitable objectives.

Operationally the Organisation has experienced another busy year, responding to 134 reported incidents, including deployments to Cumbria and York as part of the national flood response. Team members have assisted, and been assisted by, neighbouring mountain rescue teams and have worked closely with 'C' Flight 22 Squadron

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RAF Valley, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, RAF Mountain Rescue Team, North Wales Police, Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. This year, authorised members of the 333 support group have extended the range of support provided to the team to include driving team vehicles and providing base operations cover at weekends and Bank Holidays. This appears to be working satisfactorily and supplements the valuable fundraising activities customarily performed by 333 members.

Team members continue to train to a high standard in various skills, including technical rope rescue, casualty care, swift water rescue, search management, fatal incident investigation, bereavement counselling, defensive driving (on road), off-road driving, winter search and rescue techniques and working with helicopters.

In July 2015, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency took over responsibility for the provision of SAR helicopter services from the RAF. This required additional training for team members, as the change involved working with a different aircraft. Team members were involved nationally and regionally in planning for this change; making a significant contribution to the smooth transition between the two service providers.

Team members participating in training events and operational incidents are supported by the reimbursement of travelling expenses and the periodic issue of essential kit items. This initiative, introduced last year, appears to be working successfully and within budget prediction.

OVMRO continues to be represented at both national (MREW) and regional (NWMRA) level by team members who make an active and valuable contribution to the mountain rescue community. In June 2015, the organisation was delighted to host the Princes' Charities day on behalf of the NWMRA region. Assisted by colleagues from other teams, members provided

children nominated by several charities with an opportunity to participate in outdoor and simulated rescue scenarios. The event was very well received and its success recognised by the delivery of a similar, smaller event later in the year, attended by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

The organisation continues to attract a healthy level of trainee team members a satisfying proportion of whom go on to achieve full team member status. Job descriptions for the various roles within the organisation have been prepared to aid succession planning by encouraging team members to develop into management roles.

The Trustees are pleased with the performance of the CIO during this period. We wish to thank everyone who has supported the organisation, in particular the team members and supporters who worked on the administrative aspects of the CIO and who organised, coordinated and participated in the 50th anniversary events and charity days.

Public Benefit

In deciding the activities the CIO should undertake, the Trustees have paid regard to the public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission.

Reserves Policy and risk management

Future activities of the charity are to be funded by future income and liquid assets currently held as shown in the accounts below. The organisation is not bound by any financial commitments for which funds do not exist. The Trustees are currently seeking professional investment advice to identify risk free opportunities to generate income from funds not currently required for short-term expenditure.

The Trustees have reviewed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and they are satisfied that the charity's established systems mitigate those risks.

THE BLACKEST WEEK

ON 15 MARCH 1950 THE 'DAILY MAIL' FOR HULL RAN THIS HEADLINE: 'BLACKEST WEEK IN BRITAIN'S AVIATION HISTORY'. THE THREE SEPARATE EVENTS WHICH SPARKED THIS SHOCKING HEADLINE WERE IN SOUTH WALES, NORTH WALES AND LINCOLNSHIRE.

The first incident was on Saturday 12 March. By Wednesday 15 March, 91 people were dead. Britain's worst ever air accident occurred when 75 Welsh rugby fans and five crew were killed on a return flight from Dublin. Having watched Wales win the Triple Crown, the Avro Tudor V in which they were travelling home crashed while trying to land at Llandow aerodrome, witnessed by relatives and friends who had gathered at the airport to meet their loved ones. Naturally, this terrible disaster received national and international coverage as did the investigation into the crash.

Two days later, and amidst the ongoing news coverage of the tragedy in Wales, a four-engined Avro Lincoln Long-Range Heavy Bomber took off from the RAF Station at Scampton, Lincolnshire on a training flight. The Lincoln, a development of the Lancaster, had an armament of six machine guns and 6,350 kg of bombs. It could fly higher, faster and further than the Lancaster and carried

Hazel Robbins



The Avro Lincoln RF511: The Lincoln had a wingspan of 120 feet.

In memory: Top: View from the crash site
© courtesy of aircrashsites.co.uk. Above:
Memorial plaque © the Shore family.

a greater payload but did not go into service until after the war when it became the RAF's standard heavy bomber — 604 were built and four survive to this day¹. The crew on board that night were part of 230 Operational Conversion Unit stationed at RAF Scampton, set up to convert crews onto the new bombers including the Avro Lincolns and Avro Lancasters².

At 7.10pm on Tuesday 14 March, powered by its four Rolls Royce Merlin engines, the Avro Lincoln RF511 took off. The standard number of crew was usually seven: two pilots, the navigator, radio operator, bombardier/nose gunner, dorsal gunner and a tail gunner³. However, that night six crew were on board: the pilot, Squadron Leader John Talbot Lovell Shore, the navigator Flight Lieutenant Cyril Alfred Lindsay, Engineer Ronald Albert Forsdyke, Gunner 1 Robert Henry Wood, Gunner 2 Godfrey L Cundy and Signaller Harold H Charman. All were young men. Charman was just twenty-two and Shore, at thirty-two, was the oldest. Most of them would have served during the war.

Shore had an exemplary military record. On 27 March 1941, whilst returning from a successful night sortie his aircraft, a Wellington Bomber R1335, was shot down in Heusden on the river Meuse. As captain of the crew of six Shore, then aged just 23, was the last to leave the plane barely giving his parachute time to open. Although all six crew baled out before the plane went down, they were taken prisoners and interred in Stalag Luft I. Using his PoW knife, Shore and a fellow prisoner, took four days to dig a 25-foot tunnel and on 19 October he effected his escape. Travelling only at night and avoiding capture by a hair's breadth, he covered fifty miles in four days before eventually reaching Sweden. He was one of the few RAF POWs that managed a



successful escape and for his heroism he was awarded the Military Cross⁴.

Engineer Ronald Forsdyke had received the DFC (Distinguished Flying Cross) after completing a tour of duty with Bomber Command No 61 Squadron. The DFC was specifically awarded for 'an act or acts of valour and courage or

devotion to duty performed whilst flying in active operations against the enemy'⁵.

Gunner Robert Henry Wood lived in Sunderland with his wife and seven-month-old baby daughter. During the war he had flown though the Burma campaign and other theatres of operation before being demobilised in 1946. Following a period of three years as a bus driver, he had re-enlisted in the RAF just three months previously and this flight was his first after a weekend's leave⁶.

At first the flight proceeded without incident but, on the return to Scampton, Shore was informed that they couldn't land there due to bad weather. They were instructed to divert to the RAF Station at Valley, Anglesey, over 200 miles away. This they did but it was as they approached Valley that the problems started. According to Squadron Leader J B Hewitson, the Senior Controller at Valley, the Lincoln 'approached Valley with a defective radio and there was some difficulty obtaining bearings on the aircraft on the normal DF frequency. This necessitated communicating with the aircraft on two frequencies.'

On reaching Valley, it was instructed to turn to port and given a bearing of 180 degrees. Due, probably, to the defective radio this was misinterpreted as 080 degrees. However, a message from the plane acknowledged this mistake and accepted the correct bearing. The plane had reduced its height to 2,500 feet in preparation, Flight Lieutenant W Woital, Air Traffic Controller at Valley, saw and heard it overhead. Using the radio telephone, they gave instructions as to the height and direction to be taken. The crew at Valley stood by and waited for the plane to make its approach. It was now 2.20am.

Twenty-five miles away in Gerlan, above Bethesda, Mr Owen Williams, Water Bailiff at Bangor Corporation Reservoir, and his wife were

in bed. At 2.30am they were suddenly awakened to the roar of a plane's engines. Looking out of his bedroom window Williams saw the navigation lights of a large plane. The huge bomber, with a wingspan of 120 feet, was on a steady course but, according to Williams, 'it looked to be too low in such a mountainous area.' He was one of the last to see the Avro Lincoln RF511 in flight.

William's judgement was sadly correct and the destruction of the great plane and its six crew was only minutes away. 'We heard an explosion within a very short time and a sheet of fire leapt into the night sky at the far end of the Llafar Valley'. Also witness to the terrible explosion were upland farmers who described it as 'a ball of fire in the valley with burning fragments scattering in all directions.'

Mrs Williams immediately telephoned the police station at Bethesda. Within ten minutes, the police headquarters at Caernarfon, the Fire Brigade at Bangor and the RAF Station at Valley, who were still trying to make contact with the plane, had been informed. The Fire Brigade set out from Bangor bringing a pump, a tender and two ambulances. Also there were members of the police force. In the meantime, Mrs Williams continued to play a part in the rescue operations by placing a light in her bedroom window as a guide for any survivors.

On arriving at the waterworks the firemen found they could go no further and decided to split into two groups. One group was guided by Owen Williams, the water bailiff, the other by Mr John Ogwen Thomas, of Tyddyn Du Farm above Gerlan. These local men possessed the detailed knowledge of the area that the firemen lacked and would be able to identify the safest and quickest route to the crash site.

Taking blankets, a first aid kit and portable

**Squadron Leader John Talbot Lovell
Shore, MC, AFC** © the Shore family.

searchlights, the rescue parties had to cope with an arduous terrain of boggy, boulder-strewn ground compounded by darkness, strong winds and heavy showers of rain. One of the firemen later told a reporter, 'We found it very rough going in the dark, and there were snow drifts in places, but they were not deep enough to check progress'. Whilst they slogged their way through four miles of moorland, bogs and rain, the aircraft continued to burn⁷. In addition, they could see flares being set off from the plane giving them hope that there might be survivors.

It took the parties two hours to reach the plane and first on the scene was the group led by John Ogwen Thomas. The hope generated by the flares seen on the way up was completely dispelled. As dawn's early light slowly unveiled the wreckage at the scene, it became clear that no-one could have survived such an impact. The fuselage of the great plane was a charred and smouldering shell inside which they could see bodies. As they further assessed the devastation they saw that the point of impact was a mere few hundred feet below the level of the ridge. As there were no survivors, the two parties stood by to await the arrival of the RAF mountain rescue unit from RAF Valley which was also en route to the scene.

The RAF Mountain Rescue Service had been established in 1943, trained and equipped for such incidents. The members of the RAF unit made their way to the scene in just two hours. Arriving in Jeeps, they were accompanied by a radio car and brought walkie-talkies. They were also equipped with 'first-aid kit, ropes, irons and stretchers'⁸. Using the walkie-talkies they were able to relay information from the crash site to the radio car, which then passed on the reports to the RAF station at Valley⁹.



On arriving at the crash site, the RAF unit took charge and found the remains of four bodies in the smouldering wreckage almost immediately. However, two were missing and a search had to be made in a wide, extended line before the remaining bodies were located, quite some time later¹⁰. Having accounted for all six crew, the RAF unit had the unenviable task of extricating them from the wreckage and transporting them by stretcher down the mountain. Battling against gale force winds, this took several hours and it wasn't until 1.30pm that the first stretcher party arrived at the waterworks with two of the bodies which were then taken on by ambulance to Bethesda Mortuary¹¹.

The inquest into the deaths of the six airmen was at Bethesda on Thursday night, 16 March. The coroner was Mr E Lloyd Jones. First to give evidence was Flight Lieutenant L J L Green, Deputy Squadron Commander of Scampton

who testified to the pilot's considerable experience. He informed the inquest that Squadron Leader Shore had 1788 flying hours, had been flying for many years and had quite likely flown in North Wales before. He could give no explanation for the accident.

Squadron Leader J B Hewitson, Senior Controller at Valley, told the inquest that it was a mystery why the plane came to crash where it did. Having explained that when the Lincoln approached Valley it had 'a defective radio', he added that although there was an initial mistake in believing the bearing to be 080 degrees this mistake was acknowledged by the crew and the correct bearing of 180 degrees accepted. After that point, however, Hewitson testified that there was no further contact with the aircraft. He didn't understand why it had flown 25 miles in the wrong direction, but suggested that 'something might

have gone wrong with the gyro-compass'.

Recording a verdict of accidental death, the coroner remarked that 'how it happened that the pilot found himself in the hills was a puzzle and would obviously remain a puzzle', adding that 'it was an extremely tragic affair coming so soon after the civil aircraft catastrophe in South Wales'. Expressing deep sympathy with the relatives of the deceased he also 'conveyed his personal thanks to all who had been engaged on the mountainside in an effort to aid the aircraft's occupants'. The coroner's thanks were echoed by Squadron Leader J B Hewitson who stated that he had dealt with aircraft crashes in the area during the war and 'how much was appreciated the assistance always given and kindnesses shown by the people of Bethesda district to RAF personnel engaged in crash rescues'.

References

¹ Virtual Aircraft Museum: Avro 694 Lincoln 1944: aviastar.org/air/england/avro_lincoln.php

² No 230 Operational Conversion Unit RAF: Wikipedia: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No._230_Operational_Conversion_Unit RAF

Find a Grave: findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=57574844

³ Avro Lincoln Long-Range Bomber (1945): militaryfactory.com/aircraft/detail.asp?aircraft_id=957

⁴ Wg Cdr Ian Shore 'A Personal Odyssey: Escape from Stalag Luft 1' in *Spirit of the Air*, vol. 2 no. 1, 2007 (RAF), pp. 29-31 [raf.mod.uk/rafcms/mediafiles/](http://raf.mod.uk/rafcms/mediafiles/COED9565_1143_EC82_2E9DFB417A930B19.pdf)

COED9565_1143_EC82_2E9DFB417A930B19.pdf

⁵ [ww2awards.com: en.ww2awards.com/award/5](http://ww2awards.com/en.ww2awards.com/award/5)

Royal Air Force: raf.mod.uk/history/bombercommandno61squadron.cfm

Aircrew Remembered: aircrewremembered.com/squadron-leader-john-shore-mc-afc.html

⁶ *Hastings and St Leonards Observer* 18 March 1950

⁷ It was reported as still burning at 4.00am. *The Hull Daily Mail* 15 March 1950

^{8,9} *The Hull Daily Mail* 15 March 1950

¹⁰ *The Derby Daily Telegraph* 15 March 1950; *The Hull Daily Mail* 15 March 1950. This states that they searched in an extended line before locating the Lincoln, but the Lincoln had already been located by the advance party of firemen. So this search in an extended line must relate more realistically to the search for the missing two bodies.

¹¹ The length of time taken to bring the bodies down was also due to the fact that the RAF Unit had to wait at the crash site until it had been visited by a senior police officer, Inspector R C Morris of Bangor. The Deputy Chief Constable, Superintendent T W Roberts,

The plane came down just above the source of the Afon Llafur on the scree to the side of the Black Ladders. A few hundred feet below the ridge a cairn marks the point of impact which, sixty-six years later, is still clear from the heavy scarring and evidence of burning, a testament to the merciless ferocity of the blaze¹².

Parts of the aircraft still lie scattered, like bleached bones, in the vicinity of the accident in and around the Afon Llafur. Walking in this still place, the unsuspecting walker finds themselves suddenly tripped, especially when there is snow on the ground, by a protruding piece of metal¹³. These fragments and charred stones were all that remained in that lonely spot to remind of what happened that night until, in 2002, Squadron Leader Shore's sons placed a memorial plaque near the impact point¹⁴. In the shadow of the

Black Ladders, this black granite plaque reminds us of the six young men who lost their lives during the blackest week in Britain's aviation history¹⁵. Along with the plaque and the eviscerated remains of the great bomber, the mountain itself is their eternal memorial: *'There is a hill that stands for me. Beyond the sunset and the sea. A ladder of light ascending'*.¹⁶

The Crew of Avro Lincoln RF511¹⁷ were:
Squadron Leader John Talbot Lovell Shore, 32
Flight Lieutenant Cyril Alfred Lindsay, 26
Engineer Ronald Albert Forsdyke, 29
Gunner 1 Robert Henry Wood, 27
Gunner 2 Godfrey L Cundy, 27
Signaller Harold H Charman, 22.

also attended but waited at the waterworks.

¹² Military Aircraft Sites:
militaryaircraftcrashsites.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/Avro%20Lincoln

¹³ This page shows photographs of the debris, the cairn marking the impact point and the memorial plaque:
walkingforum.co.uk/index.php?topic=19405.0

¹⁴ The memorial plaque is at grid ref SH 67992 63776 (peakwreckhunters), apparently sited at the impact point.

¹⁵ In tandem with this tragedy in Wales, another crash occurred at Hemswell, Lincolnshire half an hour earlier at

2.00am when an Avro Lincoln, which was also returning from a training flight, tried to land in fog. It hit a wheat field, causing it to bounce and slither across the field, cut through a hedge, cross a road and through another hedge before overturning in a barley field with both wings torn off. All but one of the six crew were killed. Hartlepool Mail 14 March 1950.

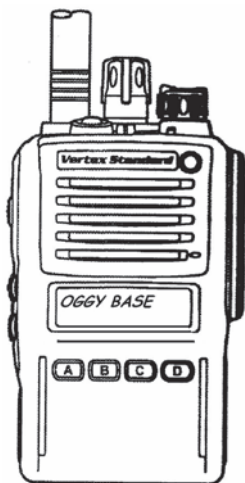
¹⁶ Beacons by Geoffrey Wynthrop Young.

¹⁷ Most of the information relating to the accident and inquest is taken from the following newspapers: The North Wales Chronicle 17 March

1950; The Caernarfon and Denbigh Herald, 17 March 1950.

Thanks are due to Ian DB of aircrashsites.co.uk for the use of his photograph and for providing valuable information about the crash site, and to Kate Tame and Kelvin Youngs of Aircrew Remembered for their help with photographs. Most especially I would like to offer sincere thanks to the Shore family for allowing me to use their photographs and to Squadron Leader Shore's son, Mark, for reading a draft of this article.

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THANK YOU TO ALL THE PEOPLE THAT DONATE TO THE TEAM VIA THE COLLECTION BOXES. ALSO, TO THOSE FOLK THAT EMPTY THEM AND TO MAGGIE AND NEIL ADAM THAT OVERSEE THE WHOLE PROCESS.

Jo Worrall
Honorary Treasurer

If you would like to have a collection box, please contact Neil and Maggie at our base on 01492 720333 and leave a message on the answering machine. Similarly, if you have a box that needs servicing, please contact Maggie or Neil.

During the year we collected from boxes at:

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- Country Cooks
- Joe Browns
Capel Curig
- The Gwydyr
Dolwyddelan
- Spar, Dolwyddelan
- Eagles, Penmachno
- Field and Trek
- Ty'n y Coed
- Pinnacles Café
- Rohan
- Cotswold
- Cotswold Rock
Bottom
- Stables Bar
Royal Oak
- Hawkshead
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- Judges Gift Shop
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- Pont y Pair Hotel
- Ellis Brigham
- Plas Power Adventure
- Café Ty Tan Lan
- Douglas Arms
- Moel Siabod Café
- Soul of Snowdonia
Gallery
- Information Centre
Betws y Coed
- Information Centre
Dolgellau
- Groes Inn, Conwy
- Royal Mail
Colwyn Bay
- Geldrid Stores
- Bhodhi Movement
- Ellens Castle
Dolwyddelan
- Riverside Chocolate
House, Pentrefoelas
- Llyn Crafnant
Tea Room
- Senate Electrical
- Snow & Rock
- Plas y Brenin
- Ogwen Falls
Brewshack
- Vaynol Arms, Pentir
- Ty Gwyn, Rowen
- Cunninghams
- Bull Inn, Llanbedr
- Vagabond
Bunkhouse
- Tryfan Organics
- Glenwood
- Bridge View

THE IT GROUP CONSISTS OF TIM RADFORD, ANDY HARBACH, JOHN CARRIE AND MYSELF. I HAVE BEEN THE IT OFFICER SINCE THE LAST AGM.

Jim Langley
IT Officer



I am neither a computer wizard nor technical expert in any way shape or form, but became involved with the group through my interest in social media.

The IT group is responsible for the purchasing and maintenance of all the IT equipment in Oggi base. We also manage the team website and online presence.

WEBSITE

This year saw the team reach its 50th year and we thought it fitting to update our website to reflect this milestone. We have restructured the main website whilst retaining the original team member log-in area.

The new look website has a cleaner and more visually stimulating appearance and hopefully is easier to navigate around. From feedback received it has gained positive reviews. There are many improvements, with bigger and brighter widgets informing of current weather, webcams, incidents, online shopping and social media feeds. It is also easier to make a donation to the team which is simple to achieve and is linked to the online shop. You can find us at ogwen-rescue.org.uk

ONLINE SHOP

The online shop is a new function, cleverly and beautifully created by our very own Andy Harbach. There is a secure trading platform for authorising online payments and, once a purchase has been made, an email is generated to our merchandising officer, Sara Jackson.

Sara has volunteered to fulfil this position and, with the online shop gaining interest and usage, she is finding a steady increase in the sale of merchandise.

WEB HOSTING

We have simplified our webhosting for the various domain names we own and have them all under one roof with a British-based provider. The company is TSOHost and they have been very helpful in the transition. We have also been given a 50% reduction in hosting charges due to being a charity.

SOCIAL MEDIA

As a mountain rescue team, we are in the news fairly often. We have official social media streams and our presence continues to grow and the work we do continues to gain recognition. On Twitter we have, at the time of writing this report, 4,289 followers and have generated 1,123 tweets. This is largely due to the efforts of John Carrie.

On Facebook, we have a rapidly growing following with 3,559 followers and a reach of almost 10,000 Facebook users.

Coupled with these two media streams we have spent considerable time developing our online photo repository on Flickr. We have organised the photos into albums and any member has the ability to log-on and add image files or create albums. <http://ovmro.uk/fl>

Our YouTube account hosts nine videos which can be found on the following link: <http://ovmro.uk/yt>

We've also created a business profile for the team on LinkedIn, providing updates on a different platform which is used mainly by working professionals as a networking tool.

WEATHER STATION

The maintenance agreement on our Davies weather station came to an end this year. It is an

aging weather station and in one of the country's harshest locations! We are currently in discussions with a national research organisation, the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH), who have an office in Bangor about an on-going monitoring and maintenance agreement. CEH do a lot of research regarding weather and the environment across the UK and have a 'community commitment' for which this collaboration would benefit them greatly. We hope to establish this before too long as the data we gather is updated on the website and we have a need for it to be accurate, current and reliable.

DOCUMENTS

We also have a document repository in the team member section which now contains over 400 documents under various categories. This is a living repository with a search function and the ability for any member to add new documents or edit existing ones.

A huge amount of effort is put in by the IT gurus (Tim Radford and Andy Harbach) who make this side of our operations run smoothly but I'd also like to thank everyone else who has helped with IT projects this year.



Alan 'Ginger' Farrar

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