

Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team

NEWSLETTER



£2 Donation
Requested

2021/2022

Team Leader's Report 2022

Stuart Warrender



With the further relaxation of Covid restrictions, 2021 saw a steady number of callouts as well as the welcome return of regular full team training; the latter bringing back a much-needed degree of normality to team life.

However, with callouts, like boxes of chocolates and buses, you never quite know what you're going to get nor how many will come at

once. The second weekend in October was proof of this and saw us called out four times – even for the older hands, this came as quite a shock to the system and by the Sunday evening we were all digging deep.

The first callout came in on the Friday evening and involved an overdue walker thought to be in the area of Jock's Road between Glen Doll and Glen Callater. Mobilising at 1930, AMRT members went in from the Spittal of Muick to search up and over a wet and cloudy Broad Cairn, Cairn Bannoch and Fafarnie.

Braemar MRT had come in from Callater, and Tayside MRT from Glen Doll but in spite of this pincer movement and having over 40 MRT personnel on the hill that night, the teams were unable to locate the missing person.

Searchers came off the hill in the early hours of the morning.

Saturday morning saw the teams return to the hill to continue the search by which time phone contact had been made with the missing walker. Their location, near the summit of Lochnagar, was confirmed and a search party assisted them to safety.

Not long home, and with wet gear hanging up to dry, team members were called out for a second time at 14.00 to assist an injured runner on Bennachie. This time the casualty was packaged and transferred to ARI by Coastguard helicopter but not before news was coming in of another potential incident.

That night a small number of Braemar MRT were out checking likely routes for two walkers who had lost contact with one another on Sgorr an Lochain Uaine. They had become separated the previous day in bad weather and one had now called the police for assistance.

Following an unsuccessful search, a full team callout was initiated with both Aberdeen and Braemar MRTs deploying on the Sunday morning. With one walker accounted for, AMRT members alongside colleagues from the Search and Rescue Dog Association were deployed by Coastguard helicopter from Derry Lodge to search the high ground around Cairn Toul. Having spent two very uncomfortable nights out on the hill, the missing person was eventually located at around noon and teams were stood down.

Back home there was just enough time to repack the sandwiches and stock up on Haribo before the next

text message came through: three climbers had become cragfast on Lochnagar's Eagle Ridge and team vehicles were once again heading out Deeside for callout number four.

A joint party of AMRT and BMRT again made use of the Coastguard helicopter which lifted them and the necessary technical rigging equipment, including half a kilometre of rope, to within easy reach of the top of the route. Anchors were quickly rigged and as further troops arrived, three 600 foot lowers were carried out to pluck the climbers from the ridge. They were then walked back to waiting Landrovers whilst the teams made their way down with the equipment. 0800 and the last callout was put to bed.

That weekend saw the team deployed for a total of 415 man hours between the Friday night and the Monday morning. Events had involved all skills from the summer training programme as well as almost all of our partner agencies. The combination of teamwork and training ensured the safe return of all involved and the weekend again highlighted the professionalism and commitment which we can sometimes take for granted.

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank all of our supporters for your continued donations. Without you we would not be able to continue to provide assistance to those who require our help. Thank you.

The final thank you as always goes to all of the families and colleagues of our mountain rescue volunteers because without your support and understanding none of this would be possible.

Keep safe.



Team Training

Treasurer's Report

Malcolm Lamont

2021 Financial Year



This overview of the team accounts for 2021 is later than usual so I will also provide a brief summary of where we are in 2022.

The OSCR reports for 2020 and 2021 were duly submitted and accepted without any queries.

The team finances are in good order at the moment thanks to various donations but we always have it in mind that replacement vehicles cost an awful lot of money. Quite what we will do now that the Land Rover Defender has gone considerably upmarket remains to be seen.

I would like to thank Anne Pinches for taking over the responsibility for the Collection boxes. The boxes were made a few years ago by pupils of Hazlehead Academy so, if you spot any boxes with a Climbing/Walking theme, please give generously!

Finally, I would like to thank everyone associated with the Team for the unstinting support given throughout the year. It is very much appreciated.



2021

Income	£'000	Expenditure	£'000
Scottish Govt	10	Gear & Equipment	17
Spon Walk – Virtual	5	Base running costs	3
SMR Grants	16	Vehicle expenses	4
Donations	26	Vehicle insurance	3
Investment income	10	Newsletter	1
Bequests	15	Bldgs & Liab insurance	3
Collection cans		Bothies	6
Total Income	£82K	Total Expenditure	£37K

2022 to September

Income	£'000	Expenditure	£'000
Walk income	10	Vehicle expenses	14
Donations	3	Vehicle insurance	3
Investment income	6	Gear & Equipment	10
		Bldgs & Liab insurance	3
		Base running costs	4
Total Income	£19K	Total Expenditure	£34K



Secretary's Report

Dawn MacKinnon



Hello everyone,

There has been a bit of a change to the timing of issuing our newsletter this year. This has been due to a number of reasons, which I won't go into, however it does mean we can give you some news about next year's sponsored walk. This has also had a change of date — it will now be held on Saturday September 2nd, 2023. Next year's walk will be in a different format, which will have as its base our usual c25Km walk. Other aspects will be revealed as soon as we have confirmed them, so do keep an eye on our social media pages and website. We do hope you will be able to join us in 2023, the Sponsored Walk is our biggest

fundraiser and the two years we were unable to run it have had a financial impact on the finances of the Team. As I am sure you are aware, apart from a small grant from the Scottish Government, the Team is self-financing and each one of its members, both Operational and Support are volunteers and do not receive any monies for being part of AMRT.

The Team has had a busy year, of which you can read in our Team Management Report. 2022 saw us trying to get back to a bit of normality with regards to training and call outs. However, there are still a number of processes and restrictions that remain in place.

In an attempt to cut down on costs and reduce our impact on the environment, we will only be producing a small number of printed newsletters, however the full version will be posted online and I hope you see it there.

Winter will soon be with us, so please remember to be prepared if heading out to the hills and know your limits.

Stay safe!



Replacing the Derry Roof

Mario Di Maio



For almost sixty years Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team has been fortunate in being able to utilise buildings on both the Balmoral and Mar Lodge Estates for the purposes of training, and as forward bases for use in callouts. In the case of Balmoral Estate the building is located at the Spittal of Muick and on Mar Lodge Estate

the building is located at the end of the landrover track close to Derry Lodge. Both buildings were originally used by the estates either as pony stables as was the case at Derry or in the case of the Spittal of Muick as a workshop and hay store.

Initially the Team shared these buildings with the estates, however, as the estates need for the buildings to house ponies or store hay declined the Team gradually took over the sole occupancy, and along with that the agreement that they would undertake the ongoing maintenance of both buildings. In the sixty years that the Team has had the use of the buildings much has changed in the context of mountain rescue, however, the importance of the buildings in terms of supporting the activities of the Team has proved absolutely critical to the operational effectiveness of the Aberdeen Team.



In recognition of the role that the two buildings play in supporting mountain rescue activities both buildings have been officially designated by Scottish Mountain Rescue as Mountain Rescue Posts and will be well known to local hillwalkers, climbers and mountain bikers.

Maintenance of these wooden, tin roofed buildings has always been a challenge and of course they are both subject to some of the most dramatic weather conditions Scotland has to offer. With this in mind both buildings have been significantly renovated and improved over the years with the addition of insulation, heating, cooking and sleeping facilities for Team members.

The ongoing maintenance however necessitates regular inspection, re-treating and from time to time the replacement of external timbers.

In the Autumn of 2019, we discovered that the roof on the building at Derry was beginning to leak quite badly. The exact age of the building was unknown but the best estimate was that it was probably about eighty years old and that the roof was almost certainly original. Close inspection of the roof tin indicated that the roof was beyond repair and so a plan was set in motion to replace the whole roof. Essentially this would entail upgrading and improving both the insulation and general water and

wind repelling properties of the roof. Since the building is owned by the National Trust and is of course located within the Cairngorm National Park there were certain permissions and protocols to be sought, granted and



followed. Contact was made with the Trust, National Park Authority and Aberdeenshire Council in order to get consent and advice as to what would be required to undertake the work.

The hope was that we would be in a position to organise and undertake the work in late Spring – early Summer 2020. Unfortunately, we had not factored in a pandemic in our planning and so as 2020 progressed

it became clear that we would not be in a position to get all the permissions we required, or indeed the opportunity, to undertake the re-roofing during the Summer. The best estimate was that we would require four days to strip off the old roof, inspect the underlying

timbers, undertake any repairs or replacements to the timbers and then put on the new roof. Ideally, we would want four rain free days with long hours of daylight. Realising that it was unlikely that we would be in a position to undertake the work in 2020 we were forced to undertake some temporary repairs to the roof and look towards the Summer of 2021 as the next window of opportunity.

The Team has always been very fortunate in that within its ranks we have had individuals who are either tradesmen or reasonably competent amateurs. And so early on a Thursday morning in mid-September 2021 under the watchful eye and direction of the Teams resident joiner Doug Battle we set about stripping off the old roof. Given the general state of the original roof we thought that its removal would be relatively straight forward. In fact, it took us the whole of the first day to remove the old tin and the underlying timbers. We were surprised at just how good the main roofing rafters were and there was very little remedial work required to them. The following three days saw Doug on the roof with Mike Law and myself “feeding” him materials as he laid out the sarking, roof wrap, purlins and finally the new tin. We were very fortunate with the weather but on the Saturday we struggled with the intense attention of the famous Derry midge! We finally brought the job to a conclusion mid-day on the Sunday. I think it would be fair to say that all three of us felt that we had put in a fair effort – I certainly went home on the Sunday looking forward to a long hot shower and a rest.

Hopefully the new Derry roof will keep members of the Team warm and dry for another eighty years.



The Derry's Done!

Sponsored Walk 2022

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, we were unable to hold our fund-raising sponsored walks in 2020 and 2021. This was particularly frustrating as 2020's walk would have been the 50th walk to have been organised by the team. Instead, we suggested supporters did virtual walks and these were remarkably successful in raising £7k and £5k respectively.

The 50th walk was finally held on 11 June 2022 on the Balmoral Estate, starting at Spittal of Muick, heading over the Capel Mounth into Glen Clova where the route turned right and made its way up the glen to the bridge at Bachnagairn, over the hill to Sandyhillocks and down the Streak of Lightning to Loch Muick, finishing with a circuit of the loch. In some ways, it was quite a tough walk as there were two sizeable climbs involved – the Capel Mounth and up the glen to Bachnagairn – but all participants enjoyed themselves, even the first few walkers who tackled the knee-deep ford near Moulzie rather than staying on the dry side of the River South Esk – honestly, they laughed about it afterwards!

The weather was reasonably dry but very windy. Indeed, it took some effort to take down the Signing-on Gazebo at the end of the day!

Fortunately, we were able to hang the marquee up in the garage to dry off.

Entries were down somewhat for this year's walk, probably as a result of no walks being held in the previous two years. Only 85 folk signed on (including a few who simply turned up at the start) but I am pleased to say they raised just short of £10k for MR funds.

This was also the first time we have made a nominal charge of £5 to make use of the coaches out to the start. In view of the relatively limited parking at the Spittal, this was a successful strategy.

One of the participants in the walk had been rescued by the team from Glen Clova earlier in the year and the chap raised over £900 to be split between the Aberdeen and Tayside teams - thank you, sir, for your efforts.

It is planned that the 2023 fund-raising event will be somewhat different to previous years.

It will take place on Saturday 2nd September, so please mark your calendars and diaries and tune in to social media to see what is planned.



Sponsored Walk 2023

We are very excited to announce a few changes to the date and format of our 2023 Sponsored Walk.

We will, for various reasons be changing the date of our Annual Sponsored Walk, which in 2023 will be held on **Saturday 2nd September.**



We will be returning to Glen Tanar and will be adding a variety of different challenges.

Please keep an eye on our social media sites for all the up to date information.



Operational Team Merit Badges

When Operational Team members have completed their two-year probationary period and are added to the 'callout' list, they receive a Merit Badge from the current Team Leader. Here are Derek Meehan (below) and Mike Will (right) receiving theirs earlier this year.



Not all about Call Outs

During the year, Operational and Support Team members give various talks to groups and we also attend evenings at places like Transition Extreme and Mountaineering Scotland Winter Skills talks at Craigdon Mountain Sports or Tiso.

Team members are all volunteers and have work and family commitments as well as representing the Team at these events. Operational Team members are also on 24/7 365 days a year standby for call outs.

So we really appreciate your support especially at our fundraising events.



Thank you to RMS Pump Tools

We would like to thank RMS Pump Tools for financing the sandwiches and cakes which were provided to all the walkers who took part in our Sponsored Walk this year. We are extremely grateful to them for their support.



Volunteering Story

Derek Meehan

At TAQA, we recognise there are many colleagues across our organisation who give their time to volunteer in the local community, across a range of activities from the Royal National Lifeboat Institute to football team coaching and local projects such as food banks.

Volunteering is a huge part of our community so our HR department is here to support you in keeping a healthy and manageable balance between your voluntary activities and your work.



Over the coming months, we'll be highlighting the great efforts of our team, starting with Derek Meehan, ICS Cyber Security Focal Point, who has been an active member of the Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team (AMRT) for over two years.

Derek noted the support he received from TAQA, which has made balancing volunteering with work responsibilities a reality.

"TAQA has given me their full support since I approached HR requesting approval to submit an application.

"I have always been active in the hills - hiking, climbing and skiing through both the summer and winter months.

"You always assume that if something were to go wrong, the emergency services would be there to help and I thought, by supporting this myself, I could give something back.

"As an Aberdeen Mountain Rescue team member, we are on call 24/7 and several of my callouts have occurred during the working week, when my line managers have been supportive in approving my release to attend these incidents.

"Callouts also often come at night after someone has failed to return home. This has meant a few intensive nights of searching the hills and not getting home until 9am. My managers and HR have been great in offering flexibility for me to rest before logging into work.

"Without this understanding from the business, I don't think such a service could be possible."

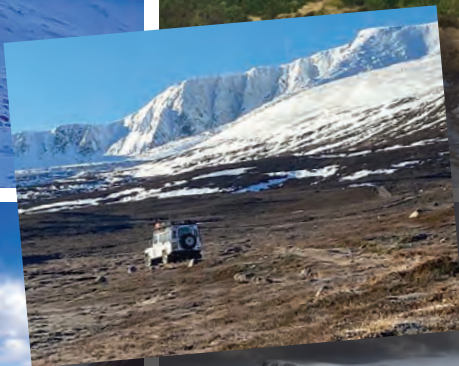
Derek is also proud of how his volunteering activity has helped improve his ability in his role at TAQA.

"Voluntary work allows you to enjoy both your professional and part time interest, keeping you stimulated in both areas. Working within the emergency services has also helped me to work more efficiently as part of a team. You often work in challenging conditions which requires good communication skills and autonomy to complete tasks or make decisions, all of which is applicable to my role within TAQA.

"It also helps motivate me to challenge myself - it's amazing what we can achieve in adversity."

For more information on how TAQA can support you in your voluntary work, please view the TMS Leave of Absence document, [here](#), or speak to your line manager and HR business partner.





JustGiving

We have established a JustGiving Money page for the Team, follow the link on our website www.amrt.org.uk or by visiting <https://www.justgiving.com/aberdeenmrt> and searching for us in the charity box. You can use the page to set up your own fundraising page for the sponsored walk or you can donate directly, by clicking the buttons on the right hand side.

We would like to thank everyone who supports the Team by sponsoring walkers or by donating to our charity.



Contact Details:

Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team
Peregrine Road, Westhill
Aberdeenshire
AB32 6JL

Team Leader:	Stuart Warrender	info@amrt.org.uk
Secretary:	Dawn MacKinnon	secretary@amrt.org.uk
Treasurer:	Malcolm Lamont	treasurer@amrt.org.uk

Visit the Team's website at
www.amrt.org.uk

Follow us on

