

Aberdeen & St. John Mountain Rescue ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



2012 / 2013



Supporting Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team

As well as ongoing training and call outs the Team is busy in other areas. Just a few of the things they have been up to during the past year.....

January 2012

AMRT competed in the Clachnaben Hill Race

January 2012

AMRT acted as marshals at the Glenshee SKIMO race

2012

Mike Dennison gave a presentation to Maryculter Church Group

2012

Roland and SARDA dog Coby, ably assisted by wife Vicky (for demonstrations) have given talks/presentations to:
St. Machar Academy,
Hazlehead Academy,
Huntly Probus Club and Rayne WRI

June 2012

Mike Dennison, Roland Jones and Neil Gauld retained the Highland Cross Trophy for the fastest Mountain Rescue Team for the 3rd consecutive year

June 2012

Scott Stevens gave a talk at GE Safety Day

During 2012

Neil Gauld gave the following talks:

May 2012 - Kingswells Cubs
(assisted by Malcolm Chalmers)

August 2012 -
Aberdeen Round Table

September 2012 -
Stonehaven Hillwalking Club

During 2012

Mario DiMaio has given the following presentations:
Group of Teachers within Aberdeen City Council area on Mountain Navigational Skills

During Active Aboyne Week -
Hill Safety Talk

Cults Hillwalking Club -
Hill Safety Lecture
Probus Club Aboyne

October 2012

Claire Ellis and Thilo Rahn attended the MRCofS Technical Rigging Course, hosted by Torridon MRT

October 2012

AMRT took part in the Bennachie Hill Race

November 2012

The Team's Mountain Biking Team (the Flying Hellfish) competed in the Strathpuffer 24hr Mountain Bike Marathon

December 2012

Flynn, owned by Brian Callaghan qualified as a SARDA Search Dog

January 2013

Brian Callaghan and Jacek Rams attended the MRCofS Avalanche Rescue Course hosted by Lochaber MRT

January 2013

Jacek Rams attended Level 3 Avalanche Rescue Management Course hosted by Braemar MRT

Check out the Team's website at www.amrt.org.uk for ongoing updates and follow us on



Chairperson's Report

Well the snow is here with a vengeance and recent events in the Scottish mountains have highlighted the importance of the Rescue Teams! **It's been a busy year for the Team and the Association.** We continue to raise money in order to ensure the Team can continue with the outstanding voluntary service they provide to the community.

Our main fundraiser this year was the annual sponsored walk held on 9th June, 2012, this was a week later than usual in order to avoid clashing with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. In 2013 we will return to our usual date of the first Saturday in June. More about the walk later on in the newsletter.

Following Mario's resignation of Team Leader in January of 2012, Mike Riddell stepped into the void left by him. Although Mario stepped down as Team Leader he has remained in the Team and been a constant support to Mike in his role. I personally would like to thank Mario and pay tribute to the dedication he has shown to the Team and the Association over the years. His boots were very big ones to fill, but I would like to say that Mike took on the challenge with enthusiasm and integrity.

We have been fortunate this year in acquiring some

new members onto the Association committee and I would like to take this opportunity to thank members old and new who voluntarily give their time and commitment in order to raise the necessary funding required to equip and support a Mountain Rescue Team. The Order of St. John remains a constant supporter of Mountain Rescue and I would like to thank them for their continued support, the Team and Association appreciate the financial assistance given by them.

Above all, I would like to thank the members of the Team themselves. There have been changes recently with some members leaving and moving on to pasture anew and new ones joining the fold. The guys and girls attend regular training and turn out for operational duty completely voluntarily. Their commitment to the Team, despite having busy lives to lead with work and family obligations, is second to none. The service they provide can and does save lives and I for one admire the role they undertake with the Team and rescue service as a whole.

Each year we produce the newsletter in order for you, the reader, to gain an insight into the function of the Team not only in operational duties, but also in training and providing lectures and awareness of mountain safety. Also to help you understand the role of the Association whose primary objective is to raise money to support Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team. It is difficult to portray in a few pages how

much commitment both members of the Team and Association give, but hopefully after reading this you will have some understanding and appreciation of this.

We wish you many happy and safe days in the hills.

If you have any suggestions for fund raising or indeed anything else, please feel free to contact me on association@amrt.org.uk.



Dawn MacKinnon

*Chair
Aberdeen & St. John Mountain Rescue Association*

Sponsored Walk 2012

The 2012 Sponsored Walk was again held on the lovely Invercauld Estate near Braemar. From the starting point in the marquee beside the former estate office, 149 walkers headed NE along the old turnpike towards Knockan.

At the end of the long straight, they then turned north'ish to pass Balnoe en route towards Auchtavan. More correctly, most folk took this route. Those with a taste for the tougher life headed to the summit of Carn Moine an Tighearn before making their way over the Monaltrie Moss and down Glen Feardour to the south of Culardoch before joining the main track.

Meantime, the other walkers passed by Auchtavan and made their way up Glen Feardour before comingling with the "hard men and women" on the path which skirted Tom na h-Eilrig and onwards to join the Culardoch track at the bridge over the Allt Cul.

The last stretch of the walk meandered due south before turning south east to circumnavigate Craig Leek and so to the finish marquee where refreshments and cakes courtesy of Sinclairs of Rhynie in Huntly were available to all.

Grateful thanks are due to the following for helping to make the event a success:-

Shell UK - Sigg bottles for all walkers

Craigdon Mountain Sports, Braemar
Mountain Sports, Cotswold Outdoor, Hilltrek

Aboyne and Nevisport - gifts to be handed out randomly

First Bus - discounted coaches

Town & County Land Rover - for the loan of a Land Rover

Invercauld Estate

AMRT for marshalling the route with good humour

And lastly, thanks to everyone who took part in raising c.£11k for MR funds and making the walk such a success.

Leaders in the various categories were:-

Over 18 yrs — **Cliff Grover - £284.12**

14 – 18 yrs — **Alex Corser - £91.50**

Best Team — **Active Payroll - £1598.24**



Sponsored Walk – Saturday 1st June 2013

This year we are returning to a walk that we last did in 2004. It proved to be something of a hit with walkers and so we thought a return visit was in order.

The route will start and finish at the Keiloch sawmill; just to the east of Invercauld House. The walk will then follow the line of Gleann an t-Slugain, known locally as the “Fairy Glen”, and perhaps one of the most beautiful and serene glens in the Cairngorms.

The glen rises gently through the old Caledonian pine forest of Invercauld, and then on past the ruins of Slugain Lodge to meet the headwaters of the Quoich as they tumble south out of the Beinn a Bhuidh massif. At this point, weather permitting, walkers will have stunning views of the eastern corries of Beinn a Bhuidh, before turning north-east, along the southern flank of Ben Avon and down through the craggy glen between Creag

an Dail Mhor and Creag an Dail Bheag. This section, connecting the head waters of the Quoich and Gairn, sees few walkers and is quite spectacular with a real sense of remote wilderness. Crossing the Gairn the walk will then follow the Bealach Dearg path up to the shoulder of Culardoch, with an opportunity, again weather permitting, for the more adventurous to visit the summit.

The route will then take walkers south towards Invercauld and finally over the shoulder of Creag Leek and down to Felagie before heading back towards the Keiloch and the usual hospitality with tea and sticky buns.

The overall length of the route is approximately twenty-eight kilometres, and it should be remembered that although the route will be marshalled and patrolled by members of the Team, it is a remote mountainous environment and those wishing to take part should be fit and appropriately equipped.

We very much hope that you will be able to join us for what we are sure will be a great day out.

For entry forms visit www.amrt.org.uk or email: walk@amrt.org.uk.



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A Foreigner in the Team!



I've been asked by Dawn to write an article for the Newsletter, giving an insight into the team from a foreigner's perspective. To be honest, there isn't much to say. Yes, I'm a foreigner, having moved to Aberdeen after graduating from my studies in 2009. Three years ago, about six months after the move and whilst climbing at the RGU climbing wall, I noticed a flyer for the annual Sponsored Walk. This, in turn, led me to the Team's website where I read that AMRT was looking for new members. Having always loved the outdoors and having always enjoyed hillwalking, climbing and skiing back home in Germany and on holidays throughout Europe, I decided to give it a go.

Joining AMRT has allowed me to get to know the beautiful Cairngorms and to learn a lot more about mountaineering and mountain rescue techniques. But more importantly, it has allowed me to get to know some very fine people in the Team. Albeit not being Scottish, and not even British, I've never felt like an outsider. I've got the same rights and obligations as everybody else and also get my fair share of being wound up. On a couple of occasions I have found that my knowledge of English, well, Scottish, is limited in places, especially when it comes to jokes, figures of speech ("spick and span"), or Gaelic place names and their pronunciation...

But it is the team spirit that differentiates a mountain rescue team from a hillwalking club or a sports group. The training we do ranges from first

aid over technical belays, off-road driving and winter skills to training with SAR helicopters and is obviously important in order to know what to do during callouts. However, the real benefit for me of participating in the training together with my team mates is the chance to get to know them. It's these training weekends, with the nights spent in the team bothies that really helped me to integrate with the Team. The knowledge that I can depend on my team mates in difficult situations creates a strong bond. This is especially important to me as a foreigner, as I knew very few people when I first arrived in Scotland. Thanks guys!

But even the team spirit aside, I still enjoy the team weekends: Sitting round the wood-burning stove after a long hill day out in the cold and windy mountains, listening to the stories of the day and anecdotes from a long time ago, no mobile phone reception...

It could be the perfect weekend to switch off after a busy week, if the well-earned night's sleep wasn't disrupted by some pretty loud snoring! Also, I don't mind not having proper washing facilities for a couple of days, but the training can get quite intense and arduous, and my girl-friend always demands that I take a shower the minute I step through the door. But then I guess this happens to my Scottish team mates as well...

Thilo Rahn

From My Partner's Perspective

The AMRT are a pretty crazy bunch of people that meet every Thursday in a garage, go to the hill every couple of weeks regardless of the weather and go out to rescue people whatever the hour. It has taken me quite a while to begin to understand why my partner wants to be part of this. In fact, he does not only want to be part, he wants it all. He's hardly missed a Thursday evening, spent countless hours climbing in the cliffs and at Transition and the only reason for not going on a Team weekend is because he is out of the country. To me, initially it sounded like madness. However, after having started climbing myself and a couple of lengthy hillwalks in the Cairngorms, I got a faint notion of what it is, that he is enjoying so much. At least, I started to understand the bit about being outdoors.

I also started to like my quiet weekend, now and again. And then, come Sunday evening, the door to our flat would open, a big blue bag would fill up our whole vestibule and a smelly, often wet, tired but smiling Thilo would try to step through the door, struggling with his big red backback. In 9 out of 10 cases, he would have spent a weekend in the mountains walking through rain, sleet, gusting winds and low clouds at temperatures well below my comfort level. Why? Well, it's called training. And

it makes sense as well because most call-outs don't happen when the sun is shining. In my opinion, all this suffering endured together does not only toughen the guys (and one girl) up but it must also build an incredible team spirit and this is certainly needed when the phone rings at 4am in the morning and you pick up and agree to be in Westhill an hour later. I certainly do have respect for all the people that commit to such a "hobby". Still, the whole mountain rescue team thing was a bit vague for me; so much time that Thilo spent with people I didn't know, doing things I knew very little about.

When I participated in my first Sponsored Walk, the mystery was lifted a little. I got to know a few faces and discovered, they're all human, a bit brash, but friendly. Let's come back to me trying to understand why being part of the AMRT is so important for Thilo. Last year, I was lucky enough to accompany him to a dinner in Mario's honour at Castle Fraser. There, in the great atmosphere of the castle hall, I was introduced to quite a couple of nice chaps (I'm sure they'll insist it was just pretence, but really, I think they are nice) and listened to some very moving speeches. To top it all, Mario's speech. I can't repeat what he said exactly but I started to feel why being part of the Team is special. There and then I decided that I can do my bit to help by accepting all the clutter, sorry equipment, in the spare room, the dirt and chaos that Thilo brings home from the training weekends, as well as trying

not to moan about how we can't do anything together on Thursday evenings.

All in all, I think, Thilo being in AMRT is a positive experience for both of us. When he started I never thought that I would write anything that positive about him being in the Team, but by now I see there are all sorts of benefits for me as well. Whenever we're out in the hills, I feel really safe seeing him carrying all the fancy bits of equipment along with his five pairs of gloves, radio and GPS. I still believe I'm better at navigating than him but if I ever get stuck in a bog or trapped between rocks I'm sure Thilo will know what to do.

Dagmar Urgast



Team Leaders Report 2012



When I took over as team leader in January, I had hoped for a quiet winter. Unfortunately, that was not to be and we ended up with two callouts within the first week. The first was "The Nightmare Scenario", a lone walker missing somewhere in the Cairngorms! After three days searching in some very poor conditions, the search was called off.

Although narrowed down to a smaller area we still had no find and hopes of a successful conclusion had gone. Team Members continued to search either in their own time and/or during team training days for weeks and months after the initial search, in an attempt to try to bring closure for the family. Eventually, when the snow had sufficiently receded, the RAF Search and Rescue helicopter made the find whilst on a training flight. The second shout was to the Glenshee area, again for a lone missing walker. This time the weather conditions were quite appalling with heavy snow, high wind, low cloud and some areas of the highest avalanche risk that I've had to walk in during my 25 years in the team.

Fortunately, our missing person had dug into a snow hole to sit out worsening weather and emerged when conditions had improved to be found quite quickly after that.

We have gone on to have one of our busier years with a number of callouts for a variety of incidents all over the Grampian area: from Auchenblae to Bennachie, from Fochabers to Gartly, as well as the usual Lochnagar and Cairngorms. It's at this point I would like to pay tribute to the Team members and their families, and say thank you for getting up out of a warm bed in the middle of the night to do a difficult and sometimes dangerous job. It is much appreciated, the sacrifices that 'extended' families have to make when a Team member has to miss a family gathering or forgo the day off they had planned together, to attend an actual callout, a training event or deliver a presentation. The amount of volunteer hours that Team members (and Association members) give is incredible and a hidden element of the Teams' success and ability to perform.

Team members continue to promote safety in the hills, by giving talks, presentations and demonstrations to clubs and groups. Although I suspect most of the time they are preaching to the converted, it is always good to reinforce the message. And if there is one message I can't stress highly enough, it is to leave a route plan with a loved one or a friend. It doesn't have to be a major document, just note down the hills you intend doing; which way in and up and which way down and out you'll be walking or climbing. If the unthinkable does happen then this is your best

insurance policy for a speedier find.

Training continues to be a major focus of Team life with a number of members attending avalanche and technical rigging courses. Organised and run by the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland, these are designed to bring together Mountain Rescue personnel from all over Scotland to share fresh ideas, to hear and receive the latest techniques and develop best practice. This information can then be fed into the teams own training programme so we are all up to date in the skills necessary to be as committed, proficient and professional as possible. This year we have had to train the younger members of the Team to pass a driving test which allows them to drive Team vehicles whilst towing a trailer. Previously, when you passed the driving test it allowed you to drive a number of different classes of vehicle. As many of you will probably be aware there are now many more legal and/or Health and Safety restrictions that constrain the way 'business' has to operate. Unfortunately changing the Team vehicles to either a minibus or large van would not help as this too requires a test. This new government tax and restriction has placed a heavy burden on the Team's training time and precious money resources. Again I wish to express my gratitude to Team members, private organisations and donors who have lent us equipment or given us their time to ensure we are 'fit for purpose'.

Modern technology continues to forge ahead with new ways for people to get into difficulties. This year saw the first instance of someone attempting to navigate using a smart phone and Google maps, funny now, but the consequences could have been

so much worse. Being tracked by your mobile phone is now also possible, so 'her / him indoors' can see that you are walking in the hills and not down the pub with mates! The cautionary tale here is that when the computer screen no longer shows a track, it does not necessarily mean that the loved one has had a catastrophic accident; it could be just a flat battery. Personal locator beacons (now legal to use in this country) have not as yet had the effect that was feared by some team leaders, so I will say no more on that front in case fate is tempted.

You may have noticed in the press recently that following a search and rescue call out for a missing walker, one of our members had his car broken into and team equipment stolen from it. I find it difficult to understand the mentality of someone taking stuff that was marked as rescue equipment and can't believe that they would have had use for the likes of an avalanche probe or transceiver. Faith in my fellow human beings was restored a little following this, when an anonymous donation came through the team letterbox to help towards the financial replacement of the stolen kit. Our sincere and grateful thanks go out to this person.

2012 saw the Queen's Diamond jubilee and as well as a day off, members of the emergency services who had over five years service were awarded a medal for their services. We were honoured to have ours presented by Norman Smith, Deputy Lord Provost for Aberdeenshire Council.

'The times they are a changing': It will not have escaped anyone's notice that after April we will move to a single police force for Scotland, currently



Mike Riddell presenting Alan Rae and Russell Stevenson with their 20 year service award.

there are eight police authorities, each deals with mountain rescue and missing persons in their own way. Three of these authorities have their own mountain rescue team, Grampian being one. Assurances have been given that there will be no change to service come the first of April.

Perhaps it is just me, but it is my personal opinion that change will happen, maybe not initially, but once the bean counters get going, perhaps police teams will disappear, placing a greater burden of responsibility on civilian teams and team leaders.

I would like to close my report by thanking Dawn

and the members of the Association who do sterling work to keep the team funded and well equipped, an uphill task at times. To members of the public who come on our sponsored walk, send in donations or simply put some coins in our collecting cans thank you, without your support we could not function.

Now get out there and enjoy those hills safely.

Mike Riddell

Team Leader

Joint Training with Glenshee Ski Patrol

On Sunday 9th September AMRT invited Glenshee ski patrol to train with them during an exercise primarily concerning itself with casualty assessment and management. Although scenarios were geared towards treatment and rescue of casualties in remote mountain settings in a series of ever more complicated and increasingly unlikely situations, it was felt to be a good opportunity for the two teams to share some knowledge and skills, and get a bit bloody in the process! Instructors and casualties were drafted in – a mixture of BASICS paramedics, ex-mountain rescue, doctors and A&E nurses – to make the day as realistic and educational as possible.

The venue was Glenshee ski centre (good land rover access meant more time for play and less for

walking into the scene, as well as bacon rolls before things kicked off!!), the weather was dry and breezy and there was a good mix of ski patrollers, experienced team members and newer team members.

The first three scenarios got underway by 9am and saw teams try to recognize and treat a stroke victim, someone suffering a hypoglycaemic attack and a cardiac arrest.

The next scenarios required a bit more thought. Two mountain bikers suffered serious injuries on Mheall Odhar and another team had to treat a person who had rolled an off road buggy on the Cairnwell. Two teams comprising a mixture of mountain rescuers and ski patrollers were despatched to deal with injuries including fractured pelvis, brain trauma, flail chest, compound fractures, as well as contending with asthma attacks and blood born viruses. Scenarios were guided by the instructors to ensure a supportive learning environment.

Unfortunately, it was shortly after the teams had dealt with one of the above scenarios each that Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team were called to a real incident and brought the day to a premature end.

Big thanks to all the casualties/instructors and to Kate and the members of Glenshee Ski Patrol for participating in our training day and practicing the skills that we hope to never have to use for real.

Claire Ellis



Bear Grylls Visit

In May of 2012, the Team were asked to attend an event for the Scouts at Templar's Park in Maryculter, to which Top Scout and TV adventurer Bear Grylls paid a visit. He was greeted by more than 1500 excited scouts. The Team were on site to give visitors to the event an insight into the workings of a rescue team and the equipment used.

Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Awards

Members of the Team who had completed five full calendar years of service were presented with a Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal at the base in Westhill.

The medals were presented by Norman Smith, Deputy Provost for Aberdeenshire.





Treasurer's Report

2012 Financial Year

After 2011, when our Expenditure exceeded Income (because we had purchased a new Land Rover during the year), 2012 saw the Association back on an even keel with income slightly exceeding expenditure again, making me a happy person!

Main sources of income

Scottish Govt Grant	£12k
Investment income	£5k
Donations/Bequests	£5k
Sponsored Walk	£11k
Gift Aid claims	£3k

Major expenditure

Team	£11k
Equipment	£2k
HQ Expenses	£3k
Vehicle expenses	£1k
Vehicle Insurance	£3k
Miscellaneous	£4k

We received major donations during the year from BAA and Centrica together with a number of personal donations from supporters of mountain rescue.

To all these donors, I offer a **huge thank you!**

The annual accounts will be presented at the Association AGM to be held in March. Let me know if you wish a copy.

After the year end, we were delighted to receive a donation of £5,000 via the Association's JustGiving page. Because of the anonymous nature of the donation, I am unable to write and thank the donor personally, but I do hope he or she sees this acknowledgement. Your generosity is very much appreciated.

Malcolm Lamont

Hon Treasurer

Nick Jack Spirit Award

During 2010 Nick Jack, one of our Association members passed away. His widow Helen kindly donated some money to the Association and we felt that we should do something pertinent and inspirational with it. We wanted something fitting as a reminder of Nick and his contribution to the Association and the Team and also to his wit and sense of humour.

'The Nick Jack Spirit Award' fills all of the criteria. It will be awarded annually to the member of the Team who is voted by his / her peers as giving that little bit extra. A decision was taken to use the money to present the winner with an engraved hip flask and there will also be an Honours Board within the Team's HQ at Westhill, we hope to continue this tradition for years to come.

We would like to thank
**Helen Jack for presenting
the first ever 'Nick Jack
Spirit Award' to Alan Rae
on 19th November, 2012.**

Alan as Team's Vehicle Officer takes care of our Land Rovers, making sure that they run smoothly all the time. Also, as a driving instructor, he keeps a close eye on us as we improve our driving skills, both on and off road, ensuring we keep them at a constant, high level.



Helen presenting the award to Alan.

Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland Conference 2012

Four of our Team attended the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland Conference 2012 at Glenmore Lodge in Aviemore.

Arriving at Glenmore Lodge we unpacked our gear and went to the lecture hall where we caught the end of Greg Boswell's talk on Scottish winter climbing, there were audible gasps and incredulous shaking of heads as Greg talked through some of his more audacious climbs. The hall was filled to bursting with mountain rescue team members from all over Scotland, here for the conference and workshops organised by the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland (MRCofS). After the talk, the hall soon cleared and the bar filled up with everybody chatting, drinking and getting to know one another.

The weekend was split into indoor and outdoor workshops ranging from casualty care to ski touring.

All accommodation and food was provided by Glenmore Lodge with the workshops being run by MR team members or Glenmore instructor staff. Saturday kicked off with brief presentations from Richard Waller, CEO St John Scotland, John Hart, the MRCofS chairman, Stuart Johnston, Training Officer and Andrew Todd, ACPOS MR Manager, the programme was hosted by the then MRCofS Project Manager, Shaun Roberts. The presentations helped give an overview of where mountain rescue in Scotland is today and where it is set on going. I had chosen to split my weekend into a day of indoor workshops and a full day on the hill.

Along with team members from the Lochaber, Hebrides and Ochills teams I attended a workshop on Search and Rescue Location (SARLOC) using mobile phone technology. Using smart phone GPS technology we can pinpoint a missing person's location with greater accuracy, which in turn leads to a quicker locating of that missing person. This highlights the fact that mountain rescue is not only keeping up with current technology but is harnessing it to be used in aiding missing person searches. Casualty care and first aid procedures are constantly being practised, reviewed and in some cases adapted in mountain rescue. Staying on top of the most recent thinking in first aid and casualty care is something that is very important to the team

so Claire, Jacek and I went to the Casualty Care workshop run by Steve Jones who is a paramedic as well as a Boarders Search and Rescue team member. Here we ran through basic first aid procedure and the issuing of analgesia before acting out some scenarios we are likely to come across on the hill, because the more you practice your first aid the better you will be at treating a casualty. On the Sunday I was in a small group for a workshop titled Train the Trainers where we discussed some good ways of teaching winter walking skills before actually going out and practising them in pairs. George McEwan, an instructor at Glenmore Lodge, ran the workshop and was fantastic in explaining his teaching and training methods.

The conference is undoubtedly a great place to pick up new skills or improve existing ones but it is also much more. The social side of it is just as important, team members get to know each other over a few beers in the bar or dancing to the ceilidh band on Saturday night. It's a place to discuss what team is doing what, regarding training of new members or purchasing of team kit or search management, it's a place to discuss best practice regarding casualty care and casualty packaging, it's a place to have fun.

Billy Lindsay

Team Doctor

Being a mountain rescue team doctor sounds exciting and glamorous. Whilst occasionally it can be exciting it certainly isn't glamorous. To come up with a sensible diagnosis in a hospital with fancy scans is hard enough. To do it outside of a hospital in a warm bedroom can be impossible, so on top of a hill, at 2am, in a white out with winds of 80mph can be slightly challenging.

However that is usually not the role of the team doctor. Unfortunately I can seldom drop everything and cancel a surgery of patients to run to the hills. Given the geography of Grampian and the types of callouts Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team are asked to attend, the Team can be out for significant periods of time and it is difficult to justify to my patients and leaving my colleagues alone when a doctor is normally no more use than other highly trained members of the Team.

My main role is being involved in the training of casualty care and ensuring that every member of the Team is competent in managing everything from life threatening conditions, basic life support, medical conditions that have worsened on the hill or simply providing reassurance to a lost and scared walker. I

assist in the teaching and training of these skills along with the many highly experienced more senior members of the Team, who have all seen it and done it for real over the years. I also instruct for BASICS Scotland (British Association of Immediate Care) who provide training for doctors and nurses in rural areas, so am lucky that I can tap into the latest ideas for emergency pre-hospital care and adapt it for mountain rescue.

The other use of a doctor in a team is that they are one of a few professionals that can pronounce life extinct. Unfortunately body retrieval or locating suicide victims is one of the roles of mountain rescue. I would also like to think that if I am not on the hill with the Team, I am always available on a phone should anyone want advice remotely, and also to back up decisions when unfortunately as occurs more often in this litigious world, someone asks questions about why certain treatment was either given or not given.

Unlike someone who has collapsed in the street, the assistance of a well meaning but untrained medical professional on the hill can actually be more dangerous than help. Mountain rescue can be a hazardous place. Every member of the team must be proficient in the core skills of mountaineering, be fit enough to sustain the Cairngorms in winter and



ultimately be able to work together as part of the team knowing each other's strengths and weaknesses. As a doctor there is a tendency to

want to 'stay and play' when usually the best care an injured casualty could get is to 'scoop and run'.

This is often why a mountain rescue team can be cautious about accepting the offer of help from a non mountain trained doctor. First and foremost, regardless of any skills someone brings to the Team, is to be just that, part of the Team. I may not be someone's first choice to rig up a stretcher belay, but it is one of the skills I have tried to learn over the last 3 years.

For me, Mountain Rescue allows me to enjoy my passion of getting out to the mountains with a great bunch of like minded individuals and at the same time help pass on some knowledge that will undoubtedly make a real difference to a fellow mountaineer when they need it the most.

And just occasionally, you get the excitement (and glamour) of being winched into a big yellow Sea King helicopter, or the deep satisfaction of seeing the relief and emotion on the faces of those who have called for your assistance.

Alastair Glennie

19 years as Team Leader

At the Team's AGM in January of 2012, **Mario DiMaio** stepped down as Team Leader after 19 years at the helm.

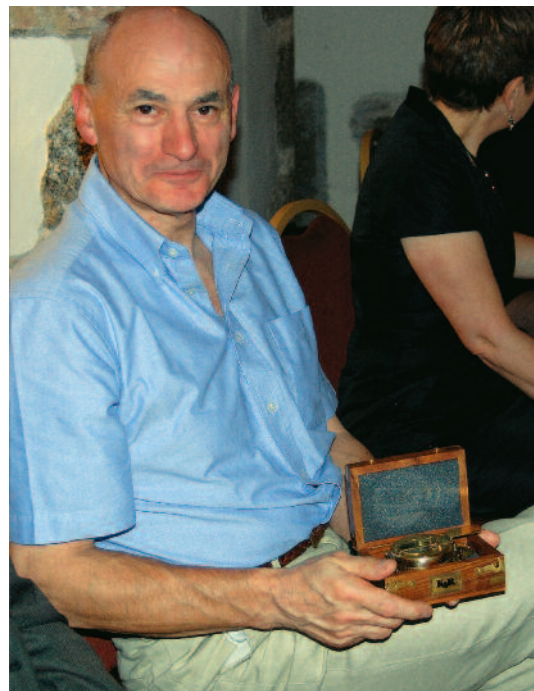
His dedication and commitment to the Team and the Association have been second to none. We felt that we could not let this go unnoticed and decided to hold a celebratory dinner in his honour.

The event was held at Castle Fraser on 6th October, 2012 and was attended by current and former members of the Team, Association, MRCofS, Grampian Police, Order of St. John and Braemar Mountain Rescue Team. Fred Vasquez and his staff provided a delicious meal which was enjoyed by all.

The Team presented Mario with an antique compass and the Association gave him a photo book spanning his time as Team Leader. Mike Rust, Aberdeen Team member and long time friend to Mario acted as MC for the evening and delivered an unusual

and moving tribute to Mario.

Speeches were also given by Mike Riddell, current Team Leader and Graham McDonald from Braemar Team who have both worked with Mario over the years and have longstanding friendships with him.



Supporting Us

www.justgiving.com/aberdeensmountainrescue/raisemoney - a specialised page where you can build your own online fundraising page to achieve sponsorship for the walk

www.justgiving.com/aberdeensmountainrescue/donate - for one off donations

We would like to thank everyone who supports the Association and Team by sponsoring walkers or by donating to our Charity



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