

# Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team NEWSLETTER



Cover Photo - M. DiMaio

2016 / 2017

# Team Leader's Report 2016

Scott Stevens



## 'River Deep Mountain High'

It's been just over 12 months since the Team assisted during the flood response action in Ballater and although it seems on the surface that life has returned to normal in the village; the impact of the flood is still being felt by many of those who live there. The Team members who attended certainly embarked on a steep learning curve and thankfully so far, we have not had a similar callout.

Hopefully the disruption to the residents of Ballater, many of whom are our friends will soon be resolved.

The first half of 2016 saw quite a busy period for the Team. We attended 3 separate incidents on Bennachie requiring injured persons to be either carried off the hill or lifted out by Rescue 951. A considerable amount of man-hours were spent on the extended search for Jim Robertson. Our thoughts are still with his family who displayed the highest level of courage throughout. Jim's

Family has gone on to raise fantastic amounts for ourselves and Braemar MRT and also took part in our annual sponsored walk. It's a shame that it took a tragic event to meet such lovely people.

Other incidents throughout the year included separate searches in the areas of Glen Feshie, Bennachie, Glen Dye and Dallas.

## 'Right Here Right Now'

Team members continue to balance MRT commitment alongside "normal-life". Admittedly what is "normal" for a Team member can be very different within the Team, let alone to anyone else. But regardless, we all have jobs and other commitments to take care of. So a big thank you to the significant others and family members who continue to support their own Mountain Rescuer. That support comes in many shapes and forms and can range from making sandwiches, filling a flask in the wee hours, hanging up wet kit, looking after the wee one(s) to just being there. As ever a big "Thank-You" goes out to the following groups: our support members, who help with the running of the Team, fundraising and at public events; St John Scotland, who continue to support Aberdeen MRT and teams across the country; our walkers old and new, who make the annual sponsored walk quite an event and eat record amounts of Haribo throughout the day; and anyone else who supports the Team in whatever way they can.

The Team became a SCIO in the New Year and this was marked by our first AGM as the new organisation. We elected a new Management Team and for most of us, it's business as usual. In fact, we returned to a management structure that most of the Team were familiar with; a Team Leader and Deputies who are now supported by the addition of a Team Secretary and Team Treasurer,

these two new positions formerly being Association Chair and Honorary Treasurer.

Well done to Stef and Nat for attempting to make honest men out of Derek and Chris. Congratulations to Pamela and Warry for the safe arrival of baby James.

To signify successfully completing their probationary period Naomi Dodds & Andy Harrison were awarded their Scottish Mountain Rescue Merit badges; and Stuart Doig was voted as the 2016 recipient of the Spirit of Nick Jack award, reported elsewhere in the Newsletter.

We said sad farewells to Mark Davidson & Mat Keryn who left Team life and we welcomed Martin "Tank" Smith, Billy Burnside and John Rathbone to the ranks. With a somewhat Lazarus style return, we saw Dave Lawrence re-join the Team.

A big part of what makes us a Team is the additional training and events that Team members take part in. 2016 saw us enter teams or individuals in the Strathpuffer, Highland Cross, Etape Royale, Xreid Senja the Illuminator and the Corrieyairick Challenge. We opted not to send a team back to the Dolomite Rescue race due to a clash of training dates, but we do have unfinished business there.

## 'It Came out of the Sky'

As I draw this year's report to an end, we had been experiencing a relatively mild winter with some unusual conditions on the hill. However, during the week of finishing this report it all changed. The hills are now in full "winter mode" and we saw multiple callouts across the country with two separate avalanche incidents occurring on the same day.

It is a timely reminder that the routes you choose and the kit you carry should be appropriate to the time of

year and forecast. Knowing how to use a map and compass will stand you in good stead all year round, as Gerry of Skye MRT said it, "Maps not Apps". Technology is a great back up when it comes to navigation but it should never be your primary means of traveling round the mountains.

Knowing when to "call it a day" is not the easiest of decisions to make; but remember that hill isn't going

anywhere. If you have bitten off more than you can chew or one of your party is struggling a wee bit, adapt your plan and act accordingly. Bear these factors (and others) in mind and you should have a great time on the hills. So go on, what are you waiting for?

*Photos: S. Stevens*

Team training on Lochnagar 2017





# Treasurer's Report Malcolm Lamont

## 2016 Financial Year

Some of you may be aware that the Association charity (SC003177) is being wound up and all assets will be transferred to Aberdeen MRT – SCIO Ref SC046253. The main purpose for so doing is to provide better security for team members involved in callouts. Previous Association members are now members of AMRT albeit in a support, rather than an operational role.

As a direct result of this, there are two bank accounts being administered for the time being and I have provided figures below for the separate accounts.

As the financial accounts for the year to end December 2016 are not yet prepared by our external accountant, I summarise, very roughly, our major Income and Expenditure for the year as follows:-

Income	'000	Expenditure	'000
Scottish Govt Grant			
– pd Feb '17	£11	Team subsidy	£6
Investment income	£9	Equipment	£20
Donations/Bequests	£67	HQ expenses	£3
Sponsored Walk	£16	Vehicle expenses & Insurance	£12
Gift Aid est	£1	Miscellaneous	£3
Sales of Whisky/ Calendars & Cards	£1	Comb. Liability & Pers Liability Ins	£3
Scottish Mountain Rescue grants	£3		
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£108k</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£47k</b>

In early 2017, we received the outstanding balance of our bequest from the estate of the late Miss Joan Robertson amounting to £51k. This amount will be included in the 2016 accounts and it is also included in the above schedule under Donations/Bequests.

We also received £10k from the late Miss Alena Bathie and £5k being the balance of residue from the late Miss Helen Crompton's estate. We do not normally hear why mountain rescue has been named as a beneficiary in executries such as the foregoing but these bequests are very welcome and make a huge difference to our finances. In the main, it enables funds to be invested to produce income on an ongoing basis whilst preserving the capital.

In addition, we also received various donations during the year from: IPM Global Mobility, Westhill DoE, Stocket HWC, Cults HWC, Jaguar Enthusiasts Club. See below for further donations paid into the AMRT bank account.

## AMRT

Again, the final accounts for the AMRT Income & Expenditure have not yet been prepared but the approximate year end position for the SCIO bank account is shown below.

Income	'000	Expenditure	'000
Donations	£15	Vehicle Expenses	£3
		Personal Equipment	£3
		Insurances	£2
		HQ Exp	£1
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£15k</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£9k</b>

The Team was the chosen 2016 charity of the Jaguar Enthusiasts Club who organised a marvellous display of cars at Drum Castle in August. Shortly afterwards, the team was presented with the profit raised from the event, the marvellous sum of £4,500. And towards the end of the year, ExxonMobil kindly donated £2k to provide a defibrillator and five winter jackets for the team.

The team was fortunate to also benefit from a number of donations from the following:- the Bailies of Bennachie, James R Mackay, Ballater Fire Station, Gordon Strachan funeral collection, Jaguar Enthusiasts Club, Travis Houghton.

During the year, the team was asked if it could make use of a young volunteer as part of his DofE project. Travis Houghton proved to be a keen young man and, to give something back to the team, he organised a

“Guess the Bear’s age” competition which raised a magnificent £526 – well done Travis!

The Team assisted Braemar MRT in the prolonged search for Jim Robertson who went missing in the southern Cairngorms in the early part of 2016. Jim’s family was hugely grateful for the effort expended looking for Jim. His daughter set up a JustGiving page to raise funds for mountain rescue in the name of BMRT which raised more than £12k and BMRT kindly shared the proceeds with AMRT and SARDA. Jim’s daughter then organised a group of her friends and relations to take part in our sponsored walk in June and it was a delight to meet them. It must have been a very poignant occasion for the family.

Our grateful thanks go to each and every person and organisation who donates to the team. Without their generosity, we would really struggle to keep the team operational.

After the Ballater floods caused by Storm Frank at the beginning of the year, our ‘08 Land Rover had to be re-fettled a few times. Hopefully all is now well and it will be a strong workhorse for a few years to come.



Photo: A. Rae Team Vehicles

# Sponsored Walk 2016

The 2016 Sponsored walk, held to raise funds for Mountain Rescue, this year started at the Spittal of Glen Muick on the Queen's Balmoral Estate, went over the shoulder of Lochnagar/Conachraig and then via the Gelder Shiel and Ballochbuie to finish at the Keiloch on Invercauld Estate, a distance of approximately 24kms.

The organisation of each walk starts around October when a sub-committee of Team members discuss possible routes for the following year. As you can imagine, suitable routes are quite difficult to find - they need to be about 25km/15mils long, have reasonable access for Land Rovers, be scenic and interesting and preferably be linear as that type of walk is difficult for folk to organise on their own given the problems of retrieving transport at the end of the walk.

We then need to publicise the walk, mainly to previous walkers, but we always like to attract newcomers as well. Coaches need to be booked, entries processed - and they can come via the website, hard copy or by email - and a close eye kept on numbers in case a further coach is required (as it was for 2016). Then the cancellations have to be processed, numbers on the coaches adjusted, info sent to the Bus Stewards and hopefully "It'll be alright on the day"! And, in the end, it generally runs smoothly and is enjoyed by all who take part.

Then we pray for good weather! The weather gods were obviously in a good humour for 2016 as the NE basked in glorious sunshine for a few days. 156 walkers and a good number of dogs started the walk in high spirits and all finished safely.

We were delighted to receive entries last year from Lynn Robertson and a number of friends and relatives who travelled up from Glasgow. Lynn's father Jim had gone missing in the southern Cairngorms in February and his body was not found until May. Lynn's party were determined to raise funds for the Team who had spent many man-hours looking for her father. In addition, Lynn set up a JustGiving page which raised a large sum of money for Braemar MRT who has shared it with AMRT and SARDA. Lynn's generous gesture, and that of BMRT, is much appreciated.

In addition to manning junctions, handing out juice and sweets at checkpoints and dealing with the occasional blister, the Team also discovered that a brush fire had started near the finish. They called it in to the Fire Service and then assisted the fire-fighters to douse and dampen down a sizeable area of moorland. It could have been so much worse. We were happy to provide the fire-fighters with juice and fine pieces at the marquee when they were finished. In return, the local Ballater Fire Station made a donation to our funds.

Finally, many thanks to all involved in the walk, organisers and walkers alike, and thanks also to the "tea ladies" who worked hard to ensure everyone was suitably fed and watered promptly at the finish! It was great to see a number of ex-team members helping out on the day, most of them wishing their

knees would allow further participation!

In addition, thanks are due to the following:-

**Shell UK, Braemar Mountain Sports, Craigdon Mountain Sports, Hilltrek, Tiso and Out There Active Wear** for providing gifts which were given, on a random basis, to a large number of walkers.

And especially to **Alan Duffus of Sinclairs of Rhynie Bakery** for once again providing the fine pieces for the walkers when they reached the finish along with a packet of shortbread for all walkers - this is hugely appreciated - thank you Alan!

Money raised in the various categories:-

Over 18yrs - **Steve Travis £950**

14 - 18yrs - **Alex Corser £85**

Up to 14yrs - **tbc**

Best Team - **Team Robertson** Two Bottles of "fizz"

A small token of our appreciation will shortly be mailed to the individual winners.

Photo: D.MacKinnon

Setting out on the 2016 sponsored walk



# Sponsored Walk 2017

## Linn of Dee - Mar Lodge.

**DATE - SATURDAY 3rd JUNE**

This year's walk will return to a route we did back in 2008. This year will be our 46th Annual Walk and we hope that entrants will enjoy the route which incorporates some of the best mountain views in the Cairngorms.

The route starts at the Linn of Dee and heads west along the north side of the Dee towards the White Bridge. At this point walkers will turn north and follow the path on the east side of the Dee up past the "Chests of Dee" and into the mouth of the Lairig Ghru. As walkers approach the path crossing the southern shoulder of Carn a Mhaim they will be treated to spectacular views of the mountains on both sides of the Lairig. This is a stunning spot which offers unrivalled views of some of the Cairngorm's highest mountains including Ben Macdui, Cairn Toul and the Devils Point. From this vantage point walkers will then turn east and follow the path as it descends to the Luibeg bridge and the wonderful stand of ancient pines trees at the "Robbers Cope". From here the route then follows Glen Luibeg down to the Team's base at Derry Lodge where refreshments will be available.

Following a welcome break at Derry, walkers will then follow the Lui down to the Black Bridge and then up and across the old and little used path running south east to Mar Lodge.

This almost circular route will provide walkers with a great opportunity to glimpse the high tops of the Cairngorms, and also to experience the remoteness of the Lairig Ghru and the tranquillity and beauty of Glen Luibeg.



As always refreshments will be provided at the end of the walk, and the backdrop of Mar Lodge should make for a memorable conclusion to what we are sure will be a great day out.

You can enter our 2017 walk by visiting our website at [www.amrt.org.uk](http://www.amrt.org.uk) and either downloading the entry form or entering online on the Sponsored Walk page.

As ever, we really appreciate the support we get from walkers old and new and hope that you will be able to join us.

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Photo: R. Jones Coby

# COBY HANGS UP HIS BOOTS

## Roland Jones AMRT

It all happens too quickly when you're a dog, one minute you're the new pup on the block, passing SARDA assessment with flying colours (and a 'best dog' trophy – but don't mention that to the Collie owners!); within a few years you're an 'experienced senior' search dog and then, while your mind is still keen, you don't get out on searches anymore. It is relaxing though to watch the young pups crashing about in the heather and peat hags and tearing up and down the crags from down in the Glen.

Having passed the 10 year milestone a few months back, it was an easy decision to make when Coby came back from a full days searching in Glen Dye and slept from the minute the Landy picked us up in the Glen until he got home. Then he ate and went back to sleep until the next morning. Time to move over for younger dogs and enjoy his retirement.

Sometimes I'm surprised Coby has made it totally unscathed to retirement. He has a fascination for edges - not sure if it's the scent-carrying breeze wafting up the cliff or the view, or just a complete absence of fear of the drop. It's been an occasional worry throughout his career, while watching, like a parent, trying not to instil any unnecessary fear into him. Moments stand out; practicing personal abseils with AMRT on Carn Crom, everyone there that day will remember him plummet past me mid abseil when he decided hanging around at the top of the cliff was not for him. In his defence he had done a couple of abseils coupled to me at that exact spot. There was also that overhanging cornice on The Buachaille, front paws went clean through as he stuck his nose out in the breeze, it was then I

found he could reverse using just his back legs, frantically! The worst was probably the 7m freefall onto rocks off an undercut cliff near Dunnottar; dogs are not like cats, they land how they fall off. Although only dazed I did remove him from the search for a thorough check over.

Coby is adept at Grade 1 winter climbs, the Black Spout on Lochnagar stands out, as does Central Gully on the Dubh Loch, it's there he learnt that his own 'crampons' only work in one direction, going down is not an option on his own. Upwards he's happy to use cut steps when it gets too steep and icy.

His search and rescue career has taken him from wind swept sandy beaches (everyone who never had their goggles that day remembers it, a red eyed dog included), to local forests and parks, and into the mountains all over Scotland. Day or night, any weather – usually foul. From an hour search in a local park to three day epics in the Cairngorms, whether missing hillgoers, or distressed locals of all ages, he didn't mind.

Throughout his career Coby never wanted to be left behind, don't come to the house and leave a car or van door open, park up a Landy and he will get in it - must be a search. He's one of the few search dogs that is actually straining at his harness to get into a noisy helicopter, an RAF crewman found that out when he told me to climb in first, he never held Coby tightly enough, that was one big leap into the Sea King!



Photo: R. Jones

Coby in Black Spout Gully - Lochnagar

The vast majority of callouts in a search dog's career do not result in a 'find', it's about clearing out your designated search areas, confirming nobody is there and moving on, whittling down the likely areas with all resources available and focusing in to a find. The majority of Coby's finds were in the summer in local areas for distressed persons, surprising really as his greatest strengths were in foul winter mountainous

conditions, he just kept going and kept working, even when the human 'resources' were flagging and in need of a rest. He is a hot boy in sunny conditions and loves the lochs and streams between and during searches.

Very early on it was clear why Coby had been a 'reject' from Police and Prison Service, he's a softy with folk. He was a great find himself for search work, coming from a working line and being a great 'people dog'. Over his career he has also assisted in a great many talks to schools and various groups, he's still a few lined up but he's definitely more relaxed and less excited about them nowadays. The schools are the best, especially the demos out in the playing fields, that's the bit that sticks in the youngsters minds too.

Coby has had an adventurous life, big days out are a thing of the past but there are many shorter walks on which to stretch his legs. It's now time to rest his paws and wait for a new pup to take on the tougher days out.



# THE BIGGER PICTURE

## Alastair Glennie AMRT Medical Officer

To keep a mountain rescue team running takes quite a bit of behind the scene work. AMRT were lucky to have an association which has recently merged with the team after becoming a SCIO, without whom the running of the team would be almost impossible.

There is also a wider organisation whose purpose is to represent, support and promote mountain rescue teams in Scotland, previously the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland, now 'Scottish Mountain Rescue' or 'SMR'.

The organisation Scottish Mountain Rescue is made up of 9 executive officers plus 2 employees who run the office and day to day workings at Glenmore Lodge. Members of the executive must be members of a team in their own right, and take on the roles and responsibilities as a volunteer in addition to everything that comes with being in a team. There are also many others who support the executive as many of the roles such as equipment, radios and training, require a subcommittee all of their own to carry out the work required to support Scottish teams. Another member of AMRT is

involved in the equipment team.

A year ago, I, one of the AMRT doctors was appointed as SMR Medical Officer. This role is extremely varied and mixes administration, having a medical overview, strategic planning along with supporting teams that may not have doctors plus interactions with the various stakeholders in the medical world.

The Medical Officer is responsible for ordering medical equipment, stretchers and drugs for teams and holding the Home Office Opiate licence to be allowed to issue opiates such as morphine to teams. The casualty care examination which allows non doctors to administer life saving and pain killing drugs is an essential part of providing care to injured walkers and climbers, this is organised and overseen by the Medical and Training Officers. The Medical Officer is responsible for liaising with important organisations such as the Scottish Ambulance Service, the medical committees of UK Search and Rescue group and the International Committee of Alpine Rescue, the international organisation, plus our sister organisation

Photo: S. Gillan Night Navigation



over the border, Mountain Rescue England and Wales.

Trying to balance this along with working full time, being a member of a mountain rescue team and trying to be a father and husband is not easy and unfortunately eats into time on the hill, ultimately the reason most people join a mountain rescue team. However, the potential to help not just many teams in Scotland, but improve medical care for casualties, make change and have a voice within some of the organisations who directly influence government policy, is hopefully worth it.

*Photo: S. Doig  
Call Out*



# TEAM MEMBER TO SUPPORT MEMBER – A Wanderer Returns

## Charlie Hunter Support Member

I joined Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team as a callow youth less than ten years after its foundation. That seems an alarmingly long time ago yet it could be yesterday. I grew up with, and in, the Team. I studied in the Aberdeen area, launched my career here and remain here largely because of being in the Team. Mountain Rescue became a parallel career to my professional one in education and influenced my life's journey for a long time. Gradually, over the years I took on and fulfilled various roles in the Team, the then Aberdeen and St John Mountain Rescue Association and also in the then Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland. Being part of a team and contributing in these ways gave great satisfaction but, added to the weekly Team training evenings, the three-weekly Team training weekends, the constant activity to stay fit, the fund-raising and, of course, the call-outs, eventually something had to give. Life changed for me and, after twenty four years, I bade farewell to the Service. The presentation

to me by my Team colleagues of a quaiich inscribed with, "Charlie Hunter – Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team – 24 Years Man and Boy" meant a great deal and it remains in pride of place at home. Furthermore, I was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the Association and it was this that would surprisingly complete my circle of involvement with the Team.

During my twenty four years, I was lucky to have experienced the incredible camaraderie and mutual support that working together in a mountain rescue team brings. The shared learning, the shared pain and exhaustion of training and operational call-outs, the shared experience of pretty challenging, traumatic and tragic mountain incidents all bound members together in a way that is probably unusual outwith the armed or uniformed services. It was also a privilege to witness the development of the Service from a dedicated but amateur one into a much more professional



Photo: C. Hunter

Charlie Hunter - Team Member

one. My period in the Team spanned the wool, leather, hemp and canvas era and the synthetic, lightweight, breathable, multi-coloured and technological era. It saw the boom in access to the mountains and the expansion of walking, climbing, skiing, mountain biking and other wilderness activities. It also saw the increasing professionalisation of Mountain Rescue. The reliance on obsolete, ex-RAF radios disappeared. Increasing support from the Order of St John provided reliable transport. Mobile phone technology developed. Avalanche safety and rescue techniques emerged. Skiing skills were introduced. High level first aid and medical expertise became a hallmark of AMRT. Sophisticated rope and stretcher techniques were learned, practised and applied. Dedicated time for training with RAF Search and Rescue helicopters became more formal. Also, Team members began to give very high priority to physical fitness and started competing in various mountain and other endurance challenges. By the time I left, the "make do and mend" approach to MR had well and truly gone.

What are my impressions of the Team now? In many important ways, the Team is still totally recognisable. Not only do a few Team members from the olden days remain (they are an important repository of Team history and lore - apologies to Mario, Callum and Kenny if I make you sound like



Photo: C. Hunter AMRT - 1995

dusty ancients!), but the vital spirit of the Team remains obvious too. The banter and the mutual trust and reliance between members are still obvious as is the fundamental love of the hills and outdoors. Obvious too is their personal commitment to stay fit and their dedication to give of their time and energy to the expanding range of tasks required

for the effective running of the Team. The fundamentals of commitment and teamwork have always been as important as technical skills. However, I am astonished by how the modern culture of accountability has impacted on mountain rescue since my own experiences. Members must now log their individual training and skills and take

personal responsibility to gain the wide range necessary. The range of personally issued equipment has broadened to include radios. Increasingly equipment has to be maintained to a schedule and shown to be adequate and within expiry dates. More complex medical equipment and drugs are now carried and administered by trained members with the obvious need for development and maintenance of relevant skills. I've been struck by the number of medical professionals in the Team and how that reflects very positively the expertise in this area. Team drivers are also trained and tested in road driving, off-road driving and trailer driving, something that was much less formal in years gone by. Helicopter Search and Rescue has now been privatised bringing different aircraft, training requirements and equipment testing. The Westhill Base is a fantastic facility provided by St John Scotland and is a far cry from the garages that the Team occupied many years ago, but its maintenance adds to the workload of members. Scottish Mountain Rescue, the National coordinating body, now helps set National standards and liaises with Police Scotland and the Scottish Government as well as addressing issues such as radio replacement and sustainability. So my overall impression is that the whole Service is more complex than it was and that if we want to keep an efficient, reliable, voluntary local Team then we need to find ways of supporting it that are more than financial.

I am now a recycled Team Member - a Support Member. A number of coincidences drew me back into Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team. My retirement from education, the recent amalgamation of the Team and Association and the celebration of the Team's fiftieth anniversary all came together. Suddenly, I found that my Honorary Life Membership of the Association technically made me a member of the Team again so I thought I'd better do something

to justify that. My support role at present is simply to coordinate all the requests for the Team to give talks or attend public events. Other support members act as overall Secretary or Treasurer for the organisation, help out at public events and help organise and run the annual sponsored walk. It's great to be back in the loop and to have a connection again with the organisation that has meant so much to me.

Photo: B. Marshall      Training on Lochnager - Back in the Day



# STARTING THEM YOUNG

The year saw us take on a Duke of Edinburgh Student.

Young Travis decided that he wanted to do his volunteering with a Mountain Rescue Team. We met with Travis and his parents and discussed how we could achieve his requirements for the scheme and how we could best utilise his time.

Travis has helped with the cleaning of vehicles, tidying of stores and maintenance activities around the base. He has also attended training where it has been appropriate to do so.

As part of his voluntary duties, Travis arranged a fund-raiser for the Team and was able to raise over £500. Well done Travis.

*Photo: S. Stevens*

Travis handing over the money from the Bear Competition which he organised



## Nick Jack Spirit Award 2016

Nick Jack was a valued former member of the Association and following a donation from his widow and in his memory, each year one Team member is bestowed with the award. The Team vote to present this award to a member of the Team who they believe has gone that extra mile and showed dedication beyond that required to be a member of AMRT.

Stuart Doig almost won last year with only a single vote of separation. So it is fitting he should receive the award this year.

Stuart is a very active Team member who has a high attendance level at training and callouts. On top of this Stuart attends a high number of the public events and talks that the team provides.

Stuart is also our Equipment Officer, a role in which he has excelled at (as long as you don't include tidiness). He has a strong passion and enthusiasm for this role and is forever endeavouring to find the kit that works best for us. He can be regularly found in the store during lunch breaks and in his own time tinkering, sorting, organising, fixing and checking Team kit. We have even got his filing system (sort of) working.

Stuart's efforts epitomise the reason for the Nick Jack Award, he has very much earned the award and truly deserves it.



Photo: D. MacKinnon

Stuart Doig accepting the 2016 Award

# OPERATIONAL OR SUPPORT MEMBERS – All One Team!

## Dawn MacKinnon Team Secretary



There is always a flurry of media interest when things go wrong and the operational members of the Team are called out. However, there is a lot that goes on behind the scenes in a Mountain Rescue Team. Following the amalgamation of the former Aberdeen & St John Mountain Rescue Association with Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team, some of our titles changed, but our roles within the organisation did not. We are now members of Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team and in a supporting role are still responsible for the fundraising activities of the Team. Over the past year, along with Operational Members, we have attended a number of events. We are always grateful to organisations who nominate us as a beneficiary of their various fund raising activities. Here is just a snapshot of what we have been doing over the past year:-

*Photo: D. MacKinnon*

## May 2016 – Bailies of Bennachie

On Saturday 28th May, the Team were asked along to the Bennachie Centre – a fine opportunity for people to come and speak to us about what we do, see one of our vehicles and the equipment we use. The Team had attended three rescues on Bennachie earlier in the year, it may not be very big, but it's a busy hill. It was a lovely sunny day and the centre had a lot of visitors. We spent some hours talking to the public about who we are and what we do. We would like to thank those who came along to visit us.

The Team were presented with a cheque from the Bailies of Bennachie, for which we are very grateful. It is donations such as this that allow the Team to remain operational. We would also like to thank the staff at the centre who made us feel very welcome and kept us supplied with coffee, it was much appreciated.



## June 2016 – James – A Special Trip

Every so often something special crops up..... During the preparation of the public event at Bennachie we were asked if we could assist in getting a founding member of our Association and Baillie of Bennachie up onto the hill one final time for his 84th birthday. Just five days before he sadly passed away, members of the Team transported James Ross MacKay, MBE of Kemnay up Bennachie for one final trip.

In agreement with James, his family and his health care professionals we managed to drive James as far as we could up the Forestry commission trails along the Gordon Way using one of our Team Land Rovers to a point just below the commemorative plaque on Oxen Craig that James was instrumental in placing. With the cloud clearing and the sun making an appearance we enjoyed clear views of the tops and surrounding area. We were honoured to be part of a very special moment for James and his family, and very grateful for his generous donation to the Team.



Photo: S. Warrender

One Final Trip for James



Photo: A. Rae

Grampian Jaguar Enthusiasts Club

## August 2016 – Grampian Jaguar Enthusiasts Club

Back in August, the Team were invited to attend the Grampian Jaguar Enthusiasts Club day at Drum Castle. We were also lucky enough to be nominated as their chosen charity for 2016. Team members attended what turned out to be a very busy day at Drum, thanks to the weather being kind. We ran a "Guess where the Team is" game which proved to be very popular and the winner was awarded a bottle of our 50th Anniversary whisky. A few weeks later, some of the club's members visited us at our HQ in Westhill to present us with a cheque for £4500. We would like to say a huge thank you once again to the Club and all its members. The money will be put to good use. We greatly appreciate being their charity of choice for 2016. For more information on GJEC please visit [www.grampainjec.co.uk](http://www.grampainjec.co.uk)

## October 2016 – Tiso Outdoor Evening

In October Tiso kindly asked us if we wanted to attend their Outdoor Evening. A few of us went along with some Team literature and also a game of “Guess where the Team Is”, where the winner was awarded a bottle of our Anniversary whisky. We enjoyed meeting people and telling them about the Team and what we do. We would like to thank Tiso for inviting us to this event and giving us the opportunity to raise our profile in the local community.

[www.tiso.com](http://www.tiso.com)



Photo: D. MacKinnon

Tiso Outdoor Evening

## Over the year, Team members have also given talks and attended events:-

### January 2016

St John Scotland - First Aid Demo  
Portlethen Air Cadets  
Farm Women's Association  
Skimo Marshalling at Glenshee

### March 2016

Grampian Jaguar Enthusiasts Club  
Garioch Probus Club  
Drumoak Scouts

### April / May 2016

Emergency Services Day at  
Grampian Transport Museum  
RNLI  
Bennachie Centre

### June / August 2016

Inverurie Round Table  
Grampian Jaguar Enthusiasts Club  
at Drum Castle  
Emergency Services Day at  
Grampian Transport Museum  
Aboyne Games

### September / October 2016

Kintore Scouts  
Tiso Outdoor Evening

### December 2016

Amazon Beavers  
Probus Aberdeen  
Osprey Housing

# THE TEAM

A random selection of Team members were asked a few questions about how they became involved and their life on the outside.



**Name:**

Anne

**Day Job:**

Started as a PE teacher then finished career as a Principal Teacher of Social and Vocational Skills. The day job also involved a lot of extra curricular activities - being involved with hockey, basketball and table tennis teams and also ski-ing, hill walking and Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

**Why Join the Team**

I joined the Association as a Rep from the Cairngorm Club in 2010.

**Time in Team**

7 years.

**Role in Team**

Support member of the Team helping with the annual sponsored walk and other fund raising events. Also helping at events where the team has a presence.

**Life outside the team**

Married to Derek, two step-children, 3 amazing grandchildren. I enjoy cycling (and stops for coffee and cake), hill walking (Cairngorm Club), swimming, gardening. I am also a Duke of Edinburgh Awards Expedition Assessor.

**Great "moment"**

Seeing the expression on someone's face when I told them I was in the mountain rescue team and their obvious relief when I said I didn't go out on rescues, just supported! Also feeling proud to wear the team 'corporate' polo shirt for the first time and showing that I am part of an amazing group of people.



**Name:**

**Clifford**

**Day Job**

Retired Consultant Rheumatologist and Associate Medical Director Grampian HB.

**Why Join the Team**

Outdoor interests and value the work of MR.

**Time in Team**

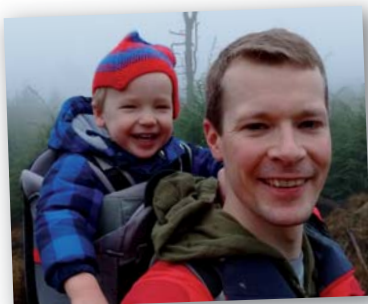
A few years in the Association.

**Role in Team**

Support member as liaison from local Aberdeen and NE Committee of St John Scotland.

**Life outside the team**

Family, especially grandchildren. Downhill skiing, curling, shooting, hill walking with the Cairngorm Club and others, golf, garden, holidays and travel!



**Name:**

**Thilo**

**Day Job:**

Technical Manager.

**Why Join the Team**

Originally from Germany, I saw an advert for the Sponsored Walk 6.5 years ago, and decided to apply. I enjoy the team bond that forms during training weekends and callouts.

**Time in Team**

6 years.

**Role in Team**

Radio Officer.

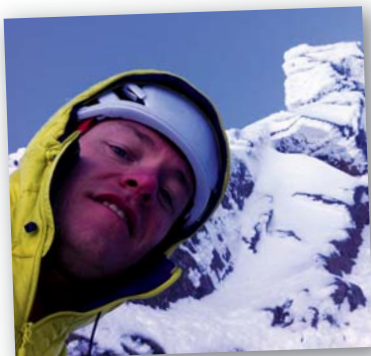
**Life outside the team**

Married, 1 son (2.5years).

**Great "moment"**

Fire breathing at the team Christmas Dinner.

# THE TEAM



**Name:**

**Jamie**

**Day Job**

Engineer, Survitec.

**Why Join the Team**

I've been in Mountain Rescue for 6 years, 2.5 with AMRT and previously with another team in South Wales. Since joining AMRT I've gained experience in lots of subjects such as avalanche rescue, 4x4 driving, winter rigging and passed my casualty care exam in 2016 making me a more useful asset to the team. I've also been lucky enough to join groups competing in the Highland Cross and Strathpuffer events and look forward to more opportunities to represent the team in the future.

**Time in Team**

2.5 years.

**Role in Team**

Operational Team Member.

**Life outside the team**

In a relationship, cats and chickens. Climbing, skiing, mountain biking, long walks on the beach.

**Great "moment"**

Team Dark horse.



**Name:**

**Peanut (aka Stuart)**

**Day Job:**

Subsea Project Engineer at Subsea 7.

**Why Join the Team**

After a few accidents amongst my climbing mates, I thought I'd like to repay those who had helped them out by becoming a MR volunteer myself.

**Time in Team**

4 years.

**Role in Team**

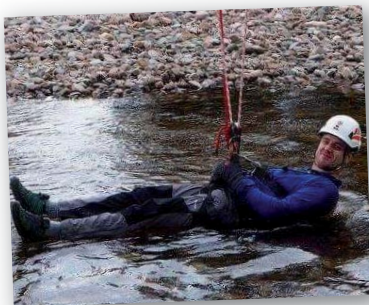
Equipment Officer.

**Life outside the team**

Married to Juliette.

**Great "moment"**

"About chest deep on a 5'11" Mountain Rescuer" was the response given to a police diver who was enquiring about the depth of a boggy water course we were searching. (It took few days to dry out).



**Name:**

**Martin (Tank)**

**Day Job:**

Mechanical Fitter.

**Why Join the Team**

I joined the team last June, I was a keen hill walker looking to give something back to the outdoor community and learn new skills. Since joining the team I've achieved things I never thought I would, been pushed physically and mentally, but its always been rewarding.

**Time in Team**

9 months

**Role in Team**

Probationary Team Member.

**Life outside the team**

In a relationship.

**Great "moment"**

Being dunked in the river while practising rope work.

# Virgin Money Giving

We have established a Virgin Money page for the Team, follow the link on our website [www.amrt.org.uk](http://www.amrt.org.uk) or by visiting <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/giving/> 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.



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