

Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team

# NEWSLETTER



£2 Donation  
Requested  
—  
2020/2021

# Team Leader's Report 2020

Stuart Warrender



Reading through last year's report it's hard to believe what was to come. 2020 has been a challenging year for everyone. However, the pandemic has brought its own unique challenges to the Team.

How we train and operate has had to be continually adapted to the ongoing restrictions. Online training and small hill groups have become the new normal. The Team have adapted to these challenges with

the same level of professionalism that I may have taken for granted in normal times and for that I am extremely grateful.

There has been no shortage of Team members going the extra mile to ensure everything is in place to allow the Team to run in the most safe and efficient way possible. I'd like to say a special thank you to Dr Alastair Glennie. As Scottish Mountain Rescue's current Medical Officer he has been instrumental in providing guidance and advice to not only our Team but all Teams at a national level at a time when he could have been forgiven for concentrating on his job as a GP.

Luckily, with the exception of a three-week period during September and October I am for once glad to

say that our callouts have been lower than average. Credit goes to members of the public who have followed government guidance. When we have had a call out the Team have deployed in smaller groups. This ensures we can keep the Team operational even if one group has to self-isolate. This has been logistically challenging but the safety of Team members is paramount. This way of attending a call out does increase the time it takes for the Team to get to a casualty and safely evacuate them from the hill; something that should be considered by hill goers when packing a rucksack.

2020 should have seen the Team celebrate our 50th sponsored walk. However, like most others organising events we have had to postpone for another year. As the Team's main fundraiser, it is an obvious blow however we look forward to welcoming everyone back for an even bigger walk in 2022.

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

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

I for one will not take for granted the ability to enjoy our hills in future and I look forward to seeing everyone out there again.

Keep Safe





# Treasurer's Report

Malcolm Lamont

## 2020 Financial Year

Well, 2020 has been quite year!

Due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, we were unable to organise our 50th sponsored walk in June 2020. We were extremely disappointed at having to cancel it but it will happen eventually! 2022 anyone?

A number of folk took part in a virtual walk instead and raised £7,000 which was just fantastic – thank you all.

Because I had no walk entries to process in the first half of the year, I was able to submit our financial report to OSCR much earlier than usual and it was accepted by the OSCR office with no comments. I was a happy bunny!

Income	£'000	Expenditure	£'000
Scottish Government	10	Gear & Equipment	6
SMR Grants	21	Base Utilities etc	5
Virtual walk	7	Vehicle expenses	17
Donations & Bequests	12	Vehicle insurance	3
Investment income	10	Newsletter	1
Collection cans	1	Liability insurance	3
		Portfolio mgmnt	3
		Misc exp	3
		VAT (to be reclaimed)	6
Total Income	£61K	Total Expenditure	£47K

The table to the left is the big ticket Cash entries for 2020. The actual accounts, which are being finalised at this moment by an external accountant, also include items such as Notional Gain/Loss on investments and Depreciation so they are not comparable on a line-by-line basis but this gives a feel for our fiscal position during the year.

See elsewhere for a breakdown of the Donations/Bequests

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supports the Team by fund-raising in some way or another. It is very much appreciated by all concerned.

As mentioned previously, everyone connected to AMRT does so in a purely voluntary capacity and receives no payment for their efforts in supporting mislaid hillgoers in Deeside and the surrounding areas.





# Secretary's Report

Dawn MacKinnon



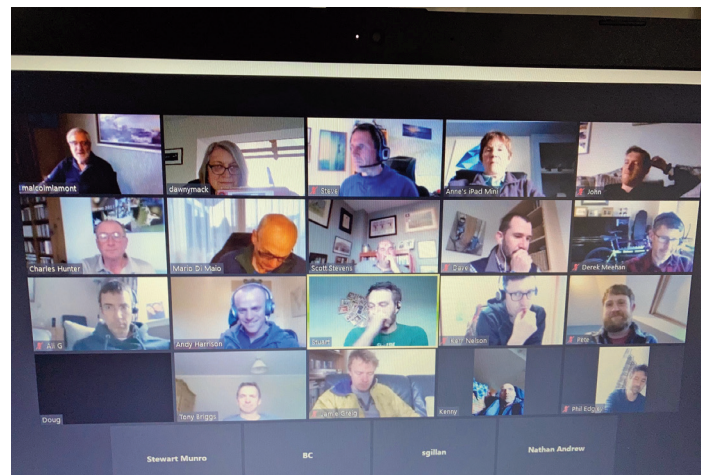
2020 has been a very unusual year in more ways than one. The newsletter this year is slightly later and a lot less comprehensive than normal. COVID 19 has had a huge impact on the Team, which you can read about in other articles.

From an administration perspective, this has meant holding all our meetings via Zoom and no fundraising events to attend. We were forced to make the decision to cancel our 50th Anniversary walk in 2020, which was a disappointment as we had planned some extra special activities. We have now had to make the hard decision to cancel our 2021 walk too, as restrictions have still not fully eased and we could not leave the decision until the last

minute. We were very grateful to everyone who took part in our virtual walk last year and thank them for helping to raise around £7,000. We are hopeful that next year our walk will go ahead on Saturday 11th June, 2022. A delayed 50th celebration of our Annual Sponsored Walk and our biggest fundraiser of the year. Please keep an eye on our social media platforms for updates.

With more and more people visiting the hills, either walking, running, mountain biking, skiing etc, mountain rescue teams are becoming even more important. With only limited government funding, our Team can only continue to operate with donations from supporters, both business and private. We are very grateful of any financial support which you, the public give us. Whether it is by popping a few pounds into our donation boxes which are scattered around the area in various shops, supporting us on our annual sponsored walk or by any other means.

We look forward to seeing you, once things get back to normal, thank you again on behalf of the Team as a whole.





# A Year Like No Other.

Like so many people and organisations at the start of 2020 Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team had a lot to look forward to. We had a full winter training program in place, and Team members were as always keen to get into the hills and looking forward to taking part in the challenges that almost inevitably come with rescues. June 2020 would also see the Team staging and celebrating the running of its fiftieth Sponsored Walk. Always a significant point in the Teams calendar, the walk is a major fund raising event for the Team and helps to offset the escalating cost of running and equipping the organisation. Rescue Teams tend to have a certain rhythm to their year with the start of the year through to late Spring given over to working on winter skills and generally quite a few callouts. This usually transitions into a quieter period over the summer, followed by gearing up for the coming winter through late Autumn, and then back into full winter mode at the end of the year.

It's true that at the start of 2020 we were all aware that there was something going on in China, and indeed that there were concerns that we might be on the verge of a major outbreak of what appeared to be a very serious disease. The reality for most of us in the UK, however, was that it was a problem on the other side of the world and was unlikely to have a significant impact on Team members or the operation of the Team. As February transitioned into March it was becoming clear that the problem was not going to pass us by, and by the time we got to the first lockdown in late March

it was obvious that our lives were about to be radically changed.

Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team is somewhat unique in how we organise our year. In a normal year we would hold roughly seventeen training events at approximately three week intervals. These events would generally see the Team operating for the weekend out of one of our forward bases either at Derry Lodge on the Mar Lodge Estate or the Spittal of Muick on the Balmoral Estate. In addition to these hill weekends the Team would meet every Thursday evening at our Base in Elrick. The combination of weekend training and evening sessions allows the Team to blend together both practical and theoretical training events.

Because of the nature of the virus, it was clear that having significant numbers of Team members gathered together in our bothies for the weekend, or indeed at our Base on a Thursday night, was not going to happen, and so a decision was taken to effectively cancel all training. This decision was replicated across the country by all the Mountain Rescue Teams, and since lockdown also meant that the hills were in effect out of bounds it was hoped that our services would not be required.

The problem that all Mountain Rescue Teams faced was how could they ensure that if they were called out to an incident that they could respond in a manner which did not jeopardise the safety of Team members, but still allowed them to carry out an effective response. The reality of this situation soon became evident and discussions centred on sourcing appropriate protective equipment and drawing up plans for transporting Team



members to incidents without compromising safety. For the Aberdeen Team almost all of our callouts entail Team members being transported in Team vehicles out Deeside to either Ballater or Braemar and beyond. Clearly this posed a problem and a system was developed whereby Team vehicles together with rescue equipment would have a single occupant, and all other Team members would travel in their own vehicles. Although this sounds relatively easy to achieve the problem arises when you then have to transport Team members beyond the end of the tarred road and into the hills. We developed a "bubble" system whereby the Team would operate in discreet groups and where necessary they would travel as a group when travelling into the hills and operate in that group on the hill. All of this was designed to try and ensure that should a member of the Team become infected with the virus that the whole Team would not then either become infected or be required to self isolate, thereby effectively compromising the operational capability of the Team.

Transporting Team members to an incident was obviously going to be a big challenge for us but equally there was the issue of what happens when we have to bring a significant number of Team members together to deal with a casualty. Given the circumstances and situations under which many mountain accidents occur, close contact between Team members and the casualty is obviously something that cannot be avoided. If for example a casualty required to be carried on a stretcher this would result in six Team members being in very close contact possibly for a lengthy period. There is also the problem of Team members having to wear effective personal protective equipment such as masks and goggles when dealing with casualties and being in close proximity to other Team members. Social distancing is impossible to achieve when you have to interact with an injured casualty or when Team members are crowded around a stretcher when carrying it. The nature and timing of mountain incidents often means that Teams are called out at night and frequently in poor weather, using and wearing masks, protective goggles and other items of PPE in these situations is to say the least challenging.

Then on top of all that there is the problem of what are Team members required to do following a callout. If there was interaction with a casualty, who may of course be positive for the virus, then how do they ensure that they do not take home any contaminated clothing. Stripping off and bagging clothing at the end of a callout and before getting in a vehicle to travel home was the obvious, if not the easiest thing to do. There was also the requirement for those Team members charged with driving a Team vehicle to



systematically and thoroughly sanitise the vehicle when they returned to our Base in Elrick.

Thankfully, with a few notable exceptions, the vast majority of the hill going public heeded the lockdown restrictions and stayed away from the hills. Pleas from Scottish Mountain Rescue and Mountaineering Scotland for people to behave responsibly and not venture into the hills proved to be very effective. The lockdown, and indeed for some time after it had ended, saw the longest period in Scottish mountain rescue without a callout.

As 2020 came to a close it was clear that 2021 would almost certainly see a need to continue with the protocols and restrictions which the Team had implemented during the early stages of the pandemic.

We are all aware that it may be some considerable time before we are able to get back to a normal training regime, and individually we are trying to maintain our skills and of course our fitness.

Lockdown fatigue however has now seen an increase in the number of folk out and about on the hills and Rescue Teams across the country are reporting a rise in callouts. The fact is that we all miss the hills but we would ask that before you make the decision to venture into the hills you consider the potential consequences of an accident, not just for yourself, but for the Mountain Rescue Team members who will come to your aid.

**Mario Di Maio**







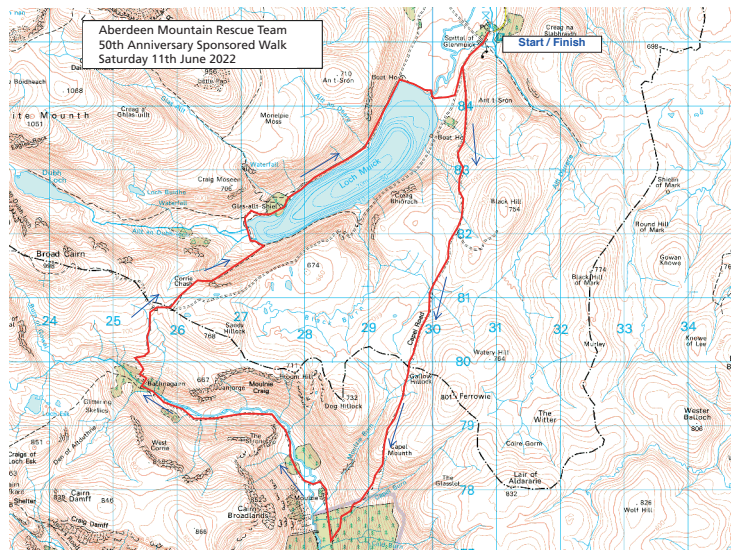
# Sponsored Walk 2022

DATE - SATURDAY 11th JUNE

As we were forced to cancel our walk in 2020, which would have been our 50th Anniversary one, then again in 2021, we have decided that in 2022 our walk will be the one we had planned in 2020. The 2022 sponsored walk marks a significant milestone in the history of Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team. In 1970 the Team decided to hold a sponsored walk as a means of raising funds to support the work of the Team and also to help raise the Team's profile within the local community. The first walk held in June 1970 started at the Team's Base at the Spittal of Muick and then crossed into Glen Clova by means of the Capel Mounth track and then up to Bachnagairn. The route then took walkers back into Glen Muick by means of the hill track up to Sandy Hillocks and then down the "Streak of Lightning", through Corrie Chash to Loch Muick. From the head of Loch Muick the route crossed to Glas-alt-Shiel and then along the side of the loch to the Boat House and back to the Spittal. This route proved very popular with walkers and became the standard route used for the annual sponsored walk for many years with a few minor variations.

The decision to seek other routes for the walk resulted over the years in walks that ventured into and across all the Estates in mid and upper Deeside with several routes taking walkers into the heart of the Cairngorms. In many ways the routes used for the annual walk were a means of giving the Team's supporters the opportunity to see first hand the area where the Team operates. Over the fifty years that the Team has been running its annual walk we have tried to vary the routes and the format of the walk. Many of the folk who come on the walk have taken part in multiple iterations and we have participants who were first introduced to the walk as children who are now participating as seasoned hill walkers with their own children in tow. There is a very strong "family" feel to the walk with many of the same faces appearing each year and a healthy number of new participants helping to keep it fresh.

So, 2022 will finally see the 50th edition of the walk, and we have thought long and hard about the selection of an appropriate route that gives something of a nod to the original. So, after much debate we have decided that the 2022 route will return to



the route taken by the first walk back in 1970. As with all our walks the route will be marshalled by Team members who will provide support and any assistance required by walkers as they make their way round the route. The walk will start and finish at the Spittal of Muick where on completion walkers will be able to avail themselves of refreshments.

We very much look forward to seeing you in June and thank you for your support in helping to celebrate the 50th edition of the Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team annual sponsored walk.

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# AMRT 2021 Ceilidh

## - A Date For Your Diary



In November 2018, Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team members, friends, family and guests enjoyed a lively and successful ceilidh at the Aberdeen Altens Hotel. Two years later and we were planning a repeat for November 2020. However, as everyone now knows, the coronavirus pandemic intervened and the event had to be ditched like every other social event. Nevertheless, with the flexibility afforded us by the hotel, we are tentatively planning another ceilidh for Saturday, 20 November, this year. We are

optimistic that the event will be able to go ahead as long as the national situation and advice allows. Caution and safety will remain our watchwords but the good music, good food and drink and good conversation will make for an enjoyable and memorable evening.

If you are a current or past Team member, family member, supporter or friend or simply enjoy a ceilidh, keep an eye on our website at [www.amrt.org.uk](http://www.amrt.org.uk) or follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram for further details and advice.

Charlie Hunter



# Donations

AMRT relies on donations from members of the public and supporters to make good the shortfall which often exists between our fundraising from the sponsored walk, Scottish Government funding, Scottish Mountain Rescue grants and investment income.

We are very grateful to everyone who donates to the team and especially so if Gift Aid Relief can be claimed on the donation!

The larger donations for 2020 are shown below.

**The larger donations for 2020 were: -**

The Ina Scott Sutherland Charitable Foundation	6,000
Helen H Wilson decd	1,000
Total Exploration & Production	928
Burnside Brewery	742
St John Scotland	500
Garioch Road Runners	400
Cairngorm Club	300
Langside Mountaineering Club	293
The Mountaineering Club	265
North East Mountain Trust	200
Stocket Hillwalking Club	200
DW & Mrs I Sinclair	200
Several smaller donations totalling	650

Burnside Brewery continue to support us with a donation from a special beer, Thirst Aid, brewed to support the team. Please think about purchasing some bottles, but as always, drink responsibly!





# Sponsored Walk 2020

Due to the ongoing COVID19 pandemic in 2020, we were forced to make the decision to cancel our 50th anniversary walk. We were disappointed, as we had planned an extra special event, but there were more important things happening across the world. Our lives were being rocked by the pandemic and the restrictions placed upon us.

We decided to organise via social media, a virtual walk and were delighted when people rallied round and participated during lockdown. In their local areas, everyone who participated committed to walking, running or cycling 25km and asking for sponsorship. We were thankful with the amount of people who took part and raised around £7,000 to support the Team. It was different from the normal walk where we get to meet our supporters, but nevertheless we want to thank you all for your continued support.

As this newsletter is going to print, we have again had to make the decision to cancel our 2021 walk and again will be organising a virtual event. We hope that in 2022 we will be able to go back to our face-to-face sponsored walk and look forward to seeing you all then.



## 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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Visit the Team's website at  
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