

Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team

# NEWSLETTER



Photo: Scott Stevens

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2019/2020

# Team Leader's Report 2019

Stuart Warrender



When you look back at the calibre of not only the Team Leaders but the Team members themselves that Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team has had since its founding in the early 1960's I'm extremely humbled to be sitting writing this report. I took over from Scott as Team Leader in March of this year and thanks to everyone in the Team, it's not been too painful an experience so far!

Scott's decision to step down last year has left some extremely big boots to fill and on behalf of all of us at Aberdeen MRT I would like to say how grateful we are for all the time and effort he has put in during his time as Team Leader. I'm glad to say however it isn't goodbye, and Scott is still an active member of the Team. Recharging his batteries for a second term perhaps...?

This year, I'm glad to say, has been a relatively quiet year for the Team with members tending to be deployed in smaller groups to a number of separate incidents in the areas of Bennachie, Scolty, Clachnaben, Forbes and of course the Cairngorms. Despite this quieter period the Team has remained committed to a high level of training facilitated by our weekly Thursday night sessions and monthly team weekends.

There must be something in the Derry water at the moment as 2019 has seen more than its fair share of babies and romance. We were pleased to hear of the safe arrivals of babies Nelson and Munro, whilst we have also celebrated the marriages of Jamie and Naomi and Andy and Ailsa. Congratulations to all of you.

I'm pleased to welcome Richard Gill, Phil Edgley and Derek Meehan to Team life as probationers. We do however say goodbye to Chris Hind this month as he sadly moves out of the area. His love of Land Rovers and white chocolate will be sorely missed. We wish him all the best for the future.

In May we were extremely proud to see our very own Mario DiMaio receive his MBE at Buckingham Palace. This year will see Mario mark his 50th year in the Team, 19 of which were as Team Leader. He continues to be an integral part of our Team, always willing to pass on his knowledge and experience to those around him. Well done and congratulations Mario.

Throughout 2019 the Team has continued to undertake a large number of talks and event support for local clubs and organisations. Whilst this is great at helping deliver an important message on hill safety, they also play a key role in raising the awareness of the Team, as well as raising the vital funds required to maintain and replace rescue equipment.

The support team deserves a huge thank you for their commitment to meetings, events and talks. They are invaluable and very much appreciated.

I'd like to say an enormous thank you to all our supporters and everyone that took part in our sponsored walk this year! A special thank you must go to

Apache, Total, Burnside Brewery, The Bailies of Bennachie, Hillgoers and the Bennachie Hill Race amongst others - see page 16.

I just have one final thank you for this year and it's a big one. This one is for all the family and colleagues of our mountain rescue volunteers, because without your support and understanding none of this would be possible.



Photo: Stuart Doig



Photo: Stuart Doig





Current Team Leader Stuart Warrander (L) with his predecessors Scott Stevens (R) and Mario DiMaio (M)



# Treasurer's Report Malcolm Lamont

## 2019 Financial Year

Once again, it is time to provide a quick overview of the Team's financial year for the Newsletter. The official numbers, which are prepared by an external accountant, won't be available for some time yet, so I show below the larger ticket items of Income and Expenditure.

The OSCR reports for the year ended 31 December 2018 were duly lodged and accepted by OSCR without comment. Aberdeen & St John Mountain Rescue Association was duly wound up with all assets being transferred to AMRT. The Report for the year to December 2019 is due to be submitted before end September 2020.

2019 was a Subsidy year when Team members are able to replace gear which has been destroyed on Call Outs. The replacement gear was on an "as needed" basis and the expenditure has largely been incurred in 2020. I will pull it into 2019 for accounting purposes.

| Income              | £'000       | Expenditure              | £'000       |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Scottish Govt       | 10          | Gear & Equipment         | 7           |
| Sponsored Walk      | 15          | Base Running Costs       | 5           |
| SMR Grants          | 11          | Vehicle Expenses         | 21          |
| Donations           | 13          | Insurance Vehicle        | 3           |
| Investment Income   | 10          | Courses                  | 2           |
| Collection Cans     | 1           | Bothy Repairs etc        | 2           |
|                     |             | Radio Spares & Batteries | 37          |
|                     |             | Newsletter               | 1           |
|                     |             | Misc                     | 1           |
|                     |             | Other Insurance          | 2           |
|                     |             | Laptop                   | 1           |
|                     |             | Ropes                    | 2           |
|                     |             | Misc                     | 4           |
|                     |             | VAT (to be reclaimed)    | 8           |
| <b>Total Income</b> | <b>£60K</b> | <b>Total Expenditure</b> | <b>£61K</b> |

Following on from an incident involving a Land Rover being used by a Lake District team, it was decided to have roll over protection systems (ROPS) installed in our vehicles. The cost of the equipment is included in the Vehicle expenses shown opposite but the installation charges won't be incurred until February/March.

The finances for the year are reasonably healthy and larger items of expenditure (like the ROPS systems) are the subject of debate at Support meetings.

See elsewhere for a note of the larger donations received by the team.

Thanks are due to the many folk who fund-raise and donate to the team each year – we are grateful for your support.

# Secretary's Report Dawn MacKinnon



As the years fly by it becomes more and more difficult to raise funds for voluntary organisations and charities. There is a lot of competition out there, especially from the large organisations who have a wealth of marketing, PR, admin staff and are able to use massive marketing campaigns in order to reach out to the public for donations. I became a member of Aberdeen & St. John Mountain Rescue Association back in 1998 in order to help the Team with vital fundraising. The Association has since been dissolved and Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team has become a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) and we now have Operational and Non-Operational members.

A large part of the fund raising for the Team is left to myself and my Support Members group. We organise the Annual Sponsored Walk, which is our biggest fund raiser of the year and along with Operational Team Members who marshal the walk on the day and try to make this event enjoyable for all who participate each year. You can read more about the walk later on in this newsletter. In addition to this, we support the Team by organising public talks and events and I'd like to thank Charlie Hunter for administering this for us. We also run other fundraising events and this year are planning a ceilidh, so do keep your eyes peeled on our social media pages.

I'd like to thank Malcolm Lamont for diligently preparing the Team's accounts each year. Also, a big thank you to Anne Pinches, Pamela Paton, Clifford Eastmond, and Peter Galloway for their input and assistance over the past few years.

We are always open to new suggestions, and on that note, if you have any bright ideas you would like to tell me about, you can contact me on [secretary@amrt.org.uk](mailto:secretary@amrt.org.uk)

The Team currently receives a donation from the Scottish Government and we usually raise around £15K from the Sponsored Walk – however the cost of keeping the Team operational is around £40-£45K per annum. This brings me around to thanking you the public and the local business community for supporting us. Without you it wouldn't be possible to continue.



Photo: Brian Callaghan



Photo: Jamie Greig



# Sponsored Walk 2019

Once again, our major fund-raiser for the year was our sponsored walk on Saturday 8 June.

To date, the walk has generally been held on the first Saturday in June. This was chosen at a time when there were few competing activities that day/weekend. Lately, we have been up against Westhill Gala, Taste of Grampian, the Kilt Walk and other smaller events so we decided, with some trepidation, to move to the second Saturday in June. We had more entries for the 2019 walk than for the 2018 walk but only time will tell. It is very difficult to find a weekend nowadays without competition from one organisation or another.

The route started beside the church in Ballater, headed over the River Dee and into Glen Muick for a short distance before turning south east over the shoulder of Craig Vallich and on into Glen Tanar. Here, the route headed east past Red and Black Craig before skirting Clachan Yell and making tracks for the Water of Tanar,



St Lesmo's Chapel and the finish marquee set up beside the Bridge of Tanar and the Visitor Centre.

We received 125 entries of whom 107 started the walk and raised c.£15k. Thank you to all who took part and raised funds for the Team.

In an effort to be "green" and to cut down on the use of plastic or cardboard cups, we issued soft, re-usable water bottles to everyone who took part. These could be refilled at the checkpoints and were very well received by participants.

On the 25km walk, Team members dispensed the usual corny jokes, juice and Haribo sweets at the various checkpoints where they ensured that no one slipped past unrecorded! As usual, the Team managed to man ALL road and track junctions to ensure that everyone stayed on route and had an enjoyable time.

Many thanks are due to everyone involved in the walk, organisers and walkers alike, and thanks also to the "tea ladies" who worked so 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 greater participation!

In addition, thanks are also due to the following:

**First Group** for providing discounted coaches and **Braemar Mountain Sports, Craigdon Mountain Sports, Hilltrek, Tiso and Out There Active Wear** for providing gifts which were handed out, on a random basis, to a large number of walkers.

Special thanks to **Alan Duffus of Sinclairs of Rhynie Bakery** for once again providing the fine pieces for the walkers when they reached the finish and for providing a packet of shortbread for everyone - this is hugely appreciated - thank you Alan!

Due to the COVID19 pandemic we had to cancel our 2020 sponsored walk. We do hope that you will be able to join us on Saturday 13th June 2021 for what will be a very special 50th Anniversary of the walk.

Details on Page 7



# Sponsored Walk 2021

DATE - SATURDAY 12th JUNE

Our 2021 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 Bachnagain. 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.

Over the years, the decision to seek other routes resulted in walks that ventured into all 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. 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 offspring 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, 2021 will 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 2021 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.

The overall length of the route is approximately 25 kms, 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 adequate and appropriate clothing and footwear should be worn.

For entry forms, please visit our Sponsored Walk page on the website [www.amrt.org.uk](http://www.amrt.org.uk) or email [walk@amrt.org.uk](mailto:walk@amrt.org.uk)

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# Support Member Anne Completes the London Classics

Every member of AMRT is a volunteer, whether they be an Operational or Non Operational member, they all have a life outwith their responsibilities as a Team member. I asked Anne Pinches to write an article for this year's newsletter after her successful completion of the London Classics in 2019 – here is her very own story. **Well done Anne!**

"The London Classics is a multi-event challenge which started in 2017. The requirements to gain a place in the London Classics Hall of Fame and receive the rather large medal are to complete the London Marathon, the RideLondon-Surrey 100 mile bike ride and a two mile swim in the Serpentine lake in Hyde Park. The events can be completed in any order and over any period of time.

The first event I completed was the London Marathon in 1982, followed by the bike ride in 2018 and the swim last year. It was only on completion of the bike ride that I found out about the London Classics, it seemed too good a challenge not to at least try to complete it. When finding out about the swim the advice was to attempt the one mile swim first, I decided that I didn't have time to hang about and I'd just enter for the two mile swim and work on that.

I had not done any outdoor swimming in this country since I was a child so this was going to take some getting used to! By sheer coincidence a friend had signed up to do a different challenge - to swim across the Firth of Forth - so fortunately I had a buddy to train with. Our first step was literally just that, a paddle at Aberdeen beach in late March. We bought wetsuits, tried them out in Stonehaven harbour and then joined Knockburn Loch near Strachan where we did most of our training. We were both staying with family near London in August and had a few swims in the Serpentine Lido, less cold than Knockburn. On one day I swam the required two miles so I knew I could cover the distance.

Kathleen completed her swim alongside the Forth Bridge successfully two weeks before my swim and that inspired me. The Forth swim was a shorter distance but a much greater challenge than my swim in the calm waters of the Serpentine. On the day of the swim I was looked after very well by my family and they were there at the finish to help me celebrate. Derek had come home from hospital with a new hip joint only one week before my swim. I offered to stay at home to look after him but he wouldn't hear of it, so another reason why I had to complete the swim and therefore

the challenge.

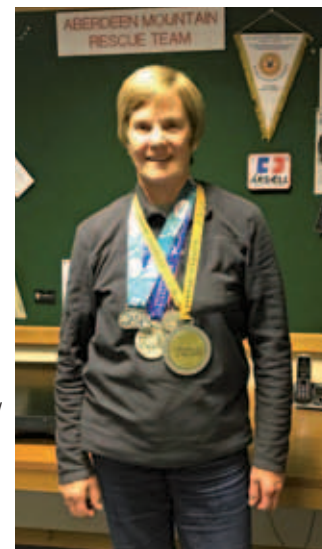
The swim was two laps so in my head that was easy, round once and the next time it's done. I didn't realise till I'd finished just how much this whole thing had meant to me. The challenge was completed and I didn't ever need to do such a crazy thing again! Then the results came out.. I wondered if I did it again could I improve my time? I was 10th in my age group and if I did it again, I'd be in a different age group, could I get better than 10th? So.. I have registered my interest for the next Serpentine swim in September 2020!

In the Autumn I had a walk to the Dubh Loch and found myself thinking it would be a lovely place for a swim, after all I have a wetsuit to wear out. The benefits of outdoor swimming are well documented so I'll keep going for a bit longer, I need to get in the training again, after all.

At present there are 2,717 people who have completed the London Classics, six of those used the first ever London Marathon in 1981 as their first event and seven of us used the 1982 Marathon as our first event. Many people complete a triathlon over similar distances in the same day, I have just taken a bit longer than usual in transition between events!

I hope that before too long I'll be joined in the Hall of Fame by Scott who just has the bike ride to complete. Due to heat wave and a knee injury he had a tough time in the marathon, followed by a wetsuit malfunction during the swim. I wish him success in the bike ride."

**Anne Pinches and Dawn MacKinnon**





# Callout - One from the Archive.

Some callouts are more memorable than others and that can be for a variety of reasons. Sometimes it's because a callout has involved a long and protracted search in challenging conditions or a particularly difficult evacuation of a badly injured casualty. Callouts like these pass into the folklore of a rescue team for all the right reasons. They exemplify all the positives in terms of the hours that team members put into training and the commitment necessary to ensure that we are fit and able to help when called upon to put in the effort required to undertake the task – no matter what it is. On the other hand, there are callouts that are remembered and discussed for years after the event for reasons that if not exactly negative, certainly don't bring a warm glow to the heart or mind.

One such callout took place in February 1994 when a party of three got into difficulties in the Cairngorms which resulted in a lengthy search operation involving almost one hundred rescue team members. The party, two males and a female from Greater Manchester, had been traversing the side of Derry Cairngorm when the two males fell when the cornice they were walking on collapsed. The weather conditions at the time were not good, heavy snow over the previous week had covered the Cairngorms in a thick blanket of loosely consolidated snow and on the day of the incident visibility was poor. Fortunately, the two walkers who fell through the cornice suffered only minor cuts and scrapes, largely due to the fact that the snow on the slope below the cornice was deep and soft and provided some protection from

rocks. However, when they collected their thoughts at the bottom of the slope, they realised that they had lost contact with the third member of the party. They were of course unsure as to whether their colleague had fallen with them and was lying buried under the avalanche of snow that had followed them down the slope, or whether having avoided the collapse of the cornice she was still above them on the side of the hill.

This is not an unusual scenario in situations where walkers are caught in avalanches or cornice collapses. It is made all the worse because those walkers who are unfortunate enough to be the victims of the collapse or avalanche may be disorientated and possibly injured and so effecting a search for their missing colleague is likely to be compromised. The two males realised that their best option having failed to establish the whereabouts of their friend was to seek the assistance of mountain rescue. Of course, in 1994 smart phones were still a thing of the future and in order to raise the alarm one of the walkers had to make his way to Derry Lodge where he was able to use the public phone.

The accident occurred late in the afternoon and by the time mountain rescue teams arrived in the area it was dark and the temperature had plummeted to well below freezing. A preliminary search of the slopes around Corrie an Lochan Uaine on the eastern side of Derry Cairngorm found no sign of the missing walker. Rescue team members assisted by specialist search dogs combed through the debris of the cornice collapse and scoured the base of the Corrie. The search went on into the early hours of the following morning with team members seeking shelter from the deteriorating weather in snow holes at the base of the corrie. By the middle of the following day search teams were sure that



Photo: Mario DiMaio

the missing woman was not in the corrie and it was believed that she had not been involved in the cornice collapse and that she had been left stranded at the top of the corrie, somewhere on the eastern slopes of Derry Cairngorm. This resulted in a change of focus for the search teams who were now convinced that the missing walker, having been left stranded high on Derry Cairngorm, had become disorientated and lost in the darkness and deteriorating weather.

There was a real sense of urgency amongst the rescue teams as the weather forecast was for a major winter storm to hit the Cairngorms over the following thirty-six hours and this would significantly reduce the chances of survival for the missing walker if lost high on the Cairngorm plateau. Over the following two days a massive search involving five mountain rescue teams and RAF search and rescue helicopters searched the area from Derry Cairngorm across to Ben Macdui and the Cairngorm plateau, in what can really only be described as arctic conditions with heavy snowfall, high winds and sub-zero temperatures.

Everyone involved was acutely aware of the fact that survival on the plateau in these conditions would be extremely difficult for all but the strongest and best equipped mountaineer. By the end of the second day we were all of the view that to survive two nights lost and disorientated in the Cairngorms in the midst of a winter storm was all but impossible and as exhausted team members continued to search the high plateau and corries we were resigned to the idea that we were now looking for a body.

Early afternoon on the third day of the search operation saw me leading a party of rescuers from the Aberdeen Team searching the area round Loch Etchachan when one of the Team members shouted that he thought he had heard part of a radio message saying that the missing walker had been found alive and well. We initially dismissed this but shortly after a message was broadcast from the control in Braemar that the walker had indeed been found and that the search teams should return to Braemar.

Late in the afternoon the rescue teams began to arrive back at the rescue centre in Braemar and although exhausted the Teams were all delighted by the outcome – against all the odds the missing walker had survived three days and two nights in the Cairngorms in what we all agreed was a very significant winter storm. Amazingly, apart from being exhausted by her ordeal, she was fit and well and only suffering from mild hypothermia and a bit of frostbite.

On the face of it this callout had a positive outcome and given the length of the search operation and the challenging weather conditions, and of the course the fact that the missing person was found safe and well, we all went home on the evening of that third day satisfied that it was a job well done. It certainly



Photo: Mario DiMaio

had all the hallmarks of a rescue that would long be remembered for all the right reasons by those involved. In the days and weeks following the incident however, there began to develop some disquiet surrounding the circumstances of the callout and the subsequent actions of the rescued walker. When the missing walker was not found in Corrie an Loachan Uaine during the initial hours of the search, it was assumed that she must have been left stranded high up on the eastern flank of Derry Cairngorm. However, it became clear in the post callout debrief that the party were almost certainly not on Derry Cairngorm when the accident happened. Indeed, the most likely location for the incident was on the shoulder of Stron Riach, some

two kilometres to the west of Derry Cairngorm and somewhere on the southern edge of Corrie Sputan Dearg. It is almost certain that an early navigational error by the party had them on the wrong hill! This would help to explain a number of anomalies in relation to their account of the incident and the fact that rescue teams on the first day of the callout were, based on the information supplied by those who raised the alarm, searching in the wrong area. It is difficult to be sure where the walker spent the time, she was missing, but her subsequent discovery in the lower part of Glen Lui does suggest that she was lost somewhere in the upper reaches of the Luibeg Burn and Corrie Sputan Dearg.

Given that the missing walker, who had very limited experience of Scottish winter hillwalking, had managed to survive three days and two nights out in one of the worst storms of the winter, it was perhaps not surprising that in the immediate aftermath of the rescue there was considerable press interest. When it subsequently transpired that the missing walker had entered into a deal with a newspaper to sell her story for a significant sum of money, reported to be £20,000, it prompted a considerable amount of negative reaction. It was widely reported at the time that the missing walker was going to donate at least some of the money to the rescue teams that had taken part in the search. To my knowledge however, none of the teams involved received anything in the way of a donation, and in the course of the following year I received regular phone calls from various media outlets asking if we had received anything. Although rescue teams do not in anyway look for financial reward for the work that they do, it was felt by many that there was something fundamentally wrong about any individual benefitting financially from a mountain rescue incident. The cost of the rescue was estimated to be something in excess of £70,000 and there is no doubt that there was a real monetary cost to the rescue teams and individual team members who were involved in the rescue.

Sadly, the lasting memory of this callout is not that it was a very challenging event which tested individual team members over an extended period in the most dramatic of conditions and resulted in a positive outcome with a life saved, but that it was a rescue that was tainted by the media scramble for a story and the subsequent disquiet and concern over the fact that an individual appeared to have benefitted financially



Photo: Mario DiMaio

from it.

Mountain rescue is not an exact science and there are a great many variables that dictate not only the outcome of a callout but also how that callout enters the mythology and folklore of a rescue team. Fortunately, most callouts result in positive outcomes and it would be fair to say that part of what bonds rescue team members together is their shared experiences – particularly of those callouts that have pushed them to the limits of their physical ability and skill. This particular callout should have been

one of those, but sadly it is one that will always have the caveat that it may not have been quite what we all thought it was and that it was tarnished by the subsequent actions of the press and the victim. Those actions do not of course detract from the fact that a life was saved, and something approaching one hundred people gave freely of their time and effort to go to the assistance of a fellow human being – and in the end that is really what mountain rescue is about.

**Mario Di Maio**



# Spirit of Nick Jack Award

## Mario DiMaio

Each year the Team are asked to nominate one of their peers who they believe has gone the extra mile, to receive the Spirit of Nick Jack award. We do this in honour of the late Nick Jack who was a much-valued support member and friend of AMRT.

Each year it is getting harder to pick out an individual who is worthy of this award as so many of the Team members give much more than is required. However, the votes were collected and the winner this year is Mario DiMaio.

Mario has been a member of AMRT for nigh on 50 years and spent 19 years as Team Leader. Those of you who have followed the Team and their exploits I am sure will know Mario, and his commitment not only to the Aberdeen Team, but to Scottish Mountain Rescue as a whole. We were very proud of his recognition last year in the Queen's Honours list and his award of an MBE, which was truly deserved.

Following his retirement as Team Leader in 2012, Mario has become a valued provider of maintenance and upkeep of the two bothies at Derry and the Spittal of Muick. He has manufactured boxes to kit out the trailers, in order to keep them tidy and the items inside weatherproofed. Mario also spends a fair amount of time carrying out DIY jobs at the base. His over 60's card at B&Q is coming in very handy!

Mario remains as an Operational Team member, his knowledge of the Cairngorms proving vital in the education of the new members of the Team and he can still get up the hill quicker than most ½ his age! Mario's sense of humour, professionalism, fitness, hill skills, honesty, knowledge and integrity make him a valued Team member and friend. Although none of us do this for the accolades; I think we would all agree that Mario is a truly worthy recipient of this award.

Dawn MacKinnon - AMRT Secretary



# Public Events Analysis

Every year, Team members promote mountain safety and support for mountain rescue by giving various talks and attending events ouwith their usual responsibilities of being a member of a Mountain Rescue Team. Below is an analysis of the events we have attended over the past three years and it gives the reader an insight into the commitment of the volunteer Team members:

| Type of Event  | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|--|------|------|------|
| Talk or Talk/Demo  | 23   | 24   | 12   |
| Display involving vehicles, first aid cover, etc               | 4    | 4    | 6    |
| St John AGM  | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| Social Events (Osprey Ceilidh, Team Ceilidh, Team Curry Night) | 3    | 0    | 0    |
| Tiso/MS Evenings   | 2    | 3    | 4    |
| Events Declined  | 5    | 7    | 8    |

| Talk Audiences                             | 2017      | 2018      | 2019      |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Youth Organisations/Schools                | 8         | 15        | 6         |
| Senior Citizens, W.I. or Church Guild, etc | 7         | 2         | 3         |
| Business, Professional, Community          | 4         | 4         | 3         |
| Hillwalking or Outdoor Clubs               | 3         | 2         | 0         |
| Rotary                                     | 1         | 1         | 0         |
| Scottish Parliament                        | 1         | 0         | 0         |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>24</b> | <b>24</b> | <b>12</b> |



Team members at the Tiso Winter Open Evening

# Maintaining our Public Profile

When you read this newsletter, I'm sure you are impressed by the huge commitment to training for their operational roles, and in responding to call-outs, made by members of Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team. Inevitably, most of this time is spent outwith the public eye and goes unrecognised except by those close to us, but the support of the wider community is also vital to us. Consequently, we also make a big effort to gain that support and to raise awareness of the Team's existence, aims and work. Of course, this adds to the demands made of the Team, but is a necessary backdrop to our core functions. The summary shows, how we not only inform and educate about mountain rescue and seek support for it, but also how we help spread the message of mountain safety and how we collaborate with partners in doing so.

Over the last few years, Team members have been involved in an average of about twenty (20) talks or demonstrations annually. Half of these (on average 10 per annum) are for the benefit of young people with schools and uniformed youth organisations such as scouts and cubs comprising our key audiences. Some have been lucky enough to visit our base in Westhill in an evening, to see and handle some of our special rescue equipment. Such visits are intensive in use of Team members' time and we have been trying to manage a demand that outstrips our capacity to meet it.

Other talks (roughly 9 per annum) have been aimed at adult groups that represent social, business or professional elements of the community. These spread the word about our work, but it is striking that some of those audiences are still unaware that Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team exists despite it now being in its 56th year. Perhaps also surprisingly, it is the hillwalking and mountaineering community that makes the least demands on our time with only 5 such talks having been given by us in the last 3 years.

On an average of about 5 times each year, the Team mounts half day or whole day displays at large public events such "Blue Light" days or the Aboyne Highland Games. Alongside these, we sometimes provide marshalling or communications support for hill races or events like last summer's "Bennachie Bosie". These allow members of the public to meet members informally and have a relaxed chat about any aspect of the mountains or mountain rescue, just like what's possible on our popular sponsored walk each year.



Team members attending Scottish Mountaineering Winter Safety Lecture Series

Finally, we have become a regular feature at the local Tiso Outdoor Experience Evenings twice a year and the regular mountain safety evenings led by Mountaineering Scotland's safety officers.

We are grateful not only for the funds that these events raise for us, but also for the exposure that they give us to local outdoor enthusiasts.

If you would like to request a talk, visit or our involvement in any other event, please contact us by e-mail on [info@amrt.org.uk](mailto:info@amrt.org.uk) or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

**Charlie Hunter, Public Events Coordinator**



# AMRT Talks and Events 2019

During the year, AMRT members, who are all volunteers carry out numerous other activities on behalf of the Team

| Date       | What  | Timings            | Location                                   | Notes  |
|------------|---|--------------------|--|--|
| 10/01/2019 | Aberdeen Med-Chi Society Lecture                            | 7.00 pm            | Med-Chi Hall, Foresterhill                 | Lecture  |
| 06/03/2019 | Kintore Scouts (30)   | 7.00 - 9.00 pm     | Team Base                                  | Talk and Tour of Base                                      |
| 09/04/2019 | Mountaineering Scotland Skills for the Hills Event          | 7.00 - 9.00 pm     | Craigdon, St Andrew's Street, Aberdeen     | Display and donation cans                                  |
| 02/05/2019 | Westhill Beavers (Redwood)                                  | 6.30 - 7.30 pm     |  | Talk   |
| 05/05/2019 | RNLI  | 12.00 - 4.00 pm    | Deeside Activity Centre                    | Display  |
| 14/05/2019 | Tiso Outdoor Experience Evening                             | 6.00-8.00 pm       | Tiso Aberdeen                              |  |
| 16/05/2019 | Bridge of Don Womens' Discussion Group                      | 1.30 - 3.00 pm     | Bridge of Don Community Centre             | Talk   |
| 21/05/2019 | Echt Young Farmers  | 7.30 - 9.00 pm     | Echt Hall                                  | Talk   |
| 22/05/2019 | Hazlehead Primary School                                    | 9.30 am            | Hazlehead Primary School                   | Talk (Assembly)  |
| 22/05/2019 | 205 (Scottish) Field Hospital                               | Evening            | TA Barracks, Inverurie                     | Talk   |
| 27/05/2019 | St Peter's RC School P7                                     | 11.00 am           | St Peter's School, Dunbar St, Old Aberdeen | Talk   |
| 29/05/2019 | Durris/Drumoak Scouts Stretcher Race                        | Evening            |  | Landrover and old stretcher                                |
| 23/06/2019 | Bailies o' Bennachie, Mither Tap Event                      | 8.45 am - 3.00 pm  | Bennachie                                  | Marshalling at the summit and display at Back o' Bennachie |
| 03/08/2019 | Aboyne Highland Games                                       | All Day            | Aboyne                                     | Display and cover for hill race.                           |
| 15/09/2019 | Scottish Ambulance Service Bennachie Emergency Services Day | 10.00 am - 4.00 pm | Bennachie Centre                           | Display  |
| 17/09/2019 | Queen's Cross Church Lively Minds Group                     | 12.00 - 1.30 pm    | Queen's Cross Church                       | Talk   |
| 29/09/2019 | Bennachie Hill Race   | 2.00 pm            | Bennachie                                  | First Aid Cover  |
| 03/10/2019 | Aberdeen Med-Chi Society                                    | 7.00 pm            | Aberdeen Med-Chi Society, Foresterhill     | Acknowledgement of Donation                                |
| 16/10/2019 | Tiso Outdoor Experience Evening                             | 5.30 - 8.00 pm     | Tiso Aberdeen                              | Display  |
| 21/10/2019 | St Mark's Church Guild                                      | 7.30 - 9.00 pm     |  | Talk   |
| 27/11/2019 | Mountaineering Scotland Winter Safety Event                 | 7.00 - 9.00 pm     | Tiso Aberdeen                              | Display and Merchandise                                    |
| 12/12/2019 | Westhill Duke of Edinburgh Group (40 participants)          | 7.15 - 9.00 pm     | Westhill Academy                           | Talk on Mountain Safety                                    |

# Donations

Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team relies on donations in order to remain operational and we would like to thank everyone who supports us in one way or another.

We now have some AMRT branded merchandise for sale and we will hopefully soon be launching an on-line shop and adding to our portfolio – keep an eye on our website [www.amrt.org.uk](http://www.amrt.org.uk) and on our social media pages for updates.



## The larger donations for 2019 were: -

|                         |        |
|-------------------------|--------|
| Apache                  | £2,200 |
| Total E&P               | £2,000 |
| Baillies of Bennachie   | £1,310 |
| MedChi Society          | £1,000 |
| TeeKay Petrojarl        | £1,000 |
| Burnside Brewery        | £815   |
| Cosmic Hill Bashers     | £500   |
| Cults HWC               | £450   |
| St Fittick's Rotary     | £400   |
| Hillgoers               | £380   |
| CNR International       | £333   |
| Cairngorm Club          | £300   |
| Garioch Road Runners    | £275   |
| Mountaineering Scotland | £204   |
| Seafeld Walkers         | £200   |

Burnside Brewery in Laurencekirk brewed a special beer Thirst Aid and a donation from each sale came back to the Team.  
[www.burnsidebrewery.co.uk](http://www.burnsidebrewery.co.uk)

Hillgoers have continually supported us over the past few years and their 2020 calendar proceeds were in aid of the Team.  
[www.hillgoers.com](http://www.hillgoers.com)



Our very own beer - Thirst Aid - see our social media sites for stockists



Thanks to the team at Burnside Brewery for brewing the special charity beer with a donation from each sale going to the Team.





# There and Back Again

One thing that I have learned during my time in Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team is that Dawn gets what Dawn wants and after stepping down as Team leader I thought I had shaken off all Team writing duties; how wrong was I?

About 18 months ago I took the decision that I would stand down as the Team leader. This decision was not taken lightly; and rightly or wrongly I chose not to consult my family or my fellow team members on the matter (perhaps for fear of being talked out of it). My reasons were numerous, far too numerous to go into here but one of the main reasons was due to an ongoing issue with my knee which only surgery would resolve. My dilemma, although I felt I had to stand down; I wasn't ready to leave the Team.

Surgery was successful, however the road to fitness was both longer and harder than expected. My fitness slowly returns, and some days are better than others. I have however, set myself an internal deadline.

I also felt I needed to allow Stuart some space as he settled into the role of Team Leader, and although not always around at the base, I supported and offered counsel when asked from the side-lines.

So how do you return? One of the main challenges is realising how rusty some of my skill set had become during the period of being TL. I have found myself having to re-learn some things and get reacquainted with certain pieces of kit. This is no bad thing, as volunteers we train a lot and there is a wealth of knowledge in the Team to tap into. What doesn't change is the Team camaraderie and my return to the ranks has not phased the guys in the slightest and nor should it. There is little to no room for an ego in MRT (which is refreshing these days). Team members get stuck in and I enjoy that part of the Team life. Hopefully I will continue to make a useful contribution to the operational side of the Team for some years to come.

It is a great honour and privilege to have been the Team Leader, but it was never the main reason for joining the team; becoming Team Leader sort of happened. As Mario said to me upon joining "what's the worst that could happen". So, it is nice to return to the ranks and contribute in the manner I had originally planned.

And of course, the phrase "it never happened when I was Team Leader" is never used.

Scott Stevens



# The Team

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



Name: Peter Ellwood  
Day Job: Completions Engineer  
Why Joined the Team: It is always something I have wanted to do, plus to gain new skills  
Time in Team: 4 ½ years  
Role in Team: Operational Team Member  
Life outside the Team: Hillwalking, skiing and keeping up with my very energetic Springador dog  
Memorable 'moment': Assisting fire crews put out a woodland fire during the 2016 AMRT sponsored walk

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Name: Alastair (Dr Ali G) Glennie  
Day Job: General medical practitioner  
Why Joined the Team: To spend more time away from work and on a mountain!  
Time in Team: 10 years  
Role in Team: Team doctor  
Life Outside the Team: I am also the national medical officer for Scottish Mountain Rescue (the organisation that supports and represents Scottish Mountain Rescue teams) which is essentially a voluntary part time job, with responsibility for managing national medical training, examinations, drug and medical provision plus liaising with other medical organisations nationally and internationally. It takes up almost every bit of spare time I have and occasionally I get to spend time with my wife and 2 children!!  
Memorable 'moment': Experiencing hypothermia first hand on a rescue many years ago on the summit of Cairn Toul in winter at about 3am because I forgot my duvet jacket and spare hat and gloves, ending up in an hour long manly hug with equally as cold fellow team mate Chris to warm up

## 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.



### Contact Details:

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AB32 6JL

|              |                  |  |
|--------------|------------------|--|
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| Secretary:   | Dawn MacKinnon   | <a href="mailto:secretary@amrt.org.uk">secretary@amrt.org.uk</a> |
| Treasurer:   | Malcolm Lamont   | <a href="mailto:treasurer@amrt.org.uk">treasurer@amrt.org.uk</a> |

Visit the Team's website at  
[www.amrt.org.uk](http://www.amrt.org.uk)

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