

# Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team

# NEWSLETTER



Cover Photo - Mario Di Maio

2017 / 2018

# Team Leader's Report 2017

Scott Stevens



## Running to Stand Still

It doesn't quite feel like a year has passed since I last sat down to write the previous annual report. That's either a reflection of me getting older or the busy modern lifestyle that most of us are caught up in. The challenge of balancing family and Team life is ever present for most if not all Team members but credit to them and their

loved ones for continuing to keep Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team operational.

## Human

In terms of callouts, 2017 was certainly a mixed bag. The year started with a winter's callout to the area of Broad Cairn for a pair of missing walkers. February saw us almost going into the Garbh Corrie bothie to retrieve an avalanched climber; thankfully Rescue 951 was able to achieve this. It was with bated breath we stood by until we heard that 951 was in the air again and on its way to

the hospital. (Team numbers were low due to a mix of half the Team being away training in the west and those who were in the area had been watching the 6 Nations). April saw a small party go to the aid of an injured mountain biker on Pitfichie. June had us deployed to support Braemar and Cairngorm MRTs during a technical rescue at the Shelterstone. They had plenty numbers at that point and there was a potential second incident developing, so the guys supported appropriately. July saw the Team supporting the Police in a search for a Missing Person around the Beach Links. October saw us turning out to attend a shout where a walker had become unwell near the Sappers Bothy; the Team had just completed its First Aid re-certification weekend, in the end we didn't deploy but the Team doctors were on hand to give the casualty the once over at the landing site once 951 had delivered him back. October, we returned to a rather windy Broad Cairn for a missing party of 3 plus their 3 dogs. As we were en-route 3 of our Team witnessed a road traffic accident and tended that until emergency services could get there. (Interestingly, polarisation of a compass played a big factor during this particular incident) and in November we also returned to Pitfichie to assist another injured mountain biker, who despite quite a sore injury was in remarkably good spirits.

Although not our busiest of years there was variety in type to keep the Team on its toes.

## No Sleep Til Brooklyn

The ongoing baby boom continues in the Team with the safe arrivals of Babies Munro, Burr and Doig (the latter officially being a 2018 baby, but close enough). Perhaps the Team are taking my chats about "future proofing the Team" a bit too literally.

Congratulations to Audrey who has taken on the herculean task of turning Kerr into a responsible adult by marrying him. (Take note Jamie and Naomi).

We said "Nos vemos luego" to Billy and Claire who set off for Spain to teach English; Billy assures us that the political unrest in Spain at the time was purely coincidental. (The Team Christmas meal wasn't quite the same without Billy the younger).

## Cardiac Ceilidh

Team life continues to be busy between callouts, training, public events and safety talks. We get requests on a weekly basis to attend an event or give a talk and although we try to accommodate as much as possible, sometimes we will have to say no. You will see later on in the newsletter the breadth of audiences and events we attend and although there is the safety message to our talks we also try to have a bit of fun especially with the more junior crowd. Sirens, lights and seeing how many we can fit into a group shelter always raises some smiles.



2017 saw us send more Team members on a level 1 AAA (American Avalanche Association) course run by the Avalanche Geeks in Aviemore. Mike tailors the course for an MRT (Mountain Rescue Team) perspective and in 2018 there will be 10 of us attending the level 2.

Di Gilbert ran another brilliant MIC weekend for us; this gives Team members the chance to be students with external outdoor professionals. No matter your experience, there is always something to be learned. We had 3 Team members attend a LANTRA off-road course and their next step is to attend the "4x4 emergency services instructor course" in 2018. In addition, we had Team members attending national SMR courses.

Team members participated in the Strathpuffer, the 50th anniversary OMM (Original Mountain Marathon), LAMM (Low Alpine Mountain Marathon), GL3D (Great Lakeland 3 Day Mountain Marathon), Tour of the Highlands & the Illuminator. We missed out on the Highland Cross this year due to a mistake on our part but we'll be back for 2019.

In terms of recruitment, we took on 3 probationers at the end of summer and we currently have some potential recruits in waiting. Unfortunately, not everyone who applies is for us or indeed are we for them. We do have to be clear in our expectations and I do believe as long as we are honest and respectful with each other, any disappointment can be managed. Ultimately there are lots of different ways to support the Team, not only on the hill. The balance is to ensure potential recruits don't dry up or lose interest as there is a limited number we can manage. Like fundraising, recruitment is continuous.

## The Red and the Black

I would like to thank a few folks; so here goes. Families and loved ones, as ever without your support it doesn't



work. Dawn and Anne for organising a brilliant Ceilidh, Malcolm for keeping our accounts in order and representing us at the local St John meetings, all our support members for their continued support through the year. St John Scotland for their continued support. Claire and Keith for the excellent support to Naomi and Ali in getting us ready for the First aid re-certification and the Casualty Care Assessments. All the guest instructors and guest casualties at the First Aid weekend. And of course, the Team members themselves for their ongoing commitment, professionalism and passion.

2018 started for the Team with a callout on New Year's Day and as I write this the Team have already been involved in further significant incidents. This winter we have had brilliant blue bird days followed by the unusual (or usual) Scottish phenomena "Turbo Thaw". As I come to closing this report the country has been hit hard by the Beast from the East. Winter is not over and there is a good amount of snow to go out and enjoy.

Before heading out, let someone know your plans and your back up plans. I know it may seem a pain, but it can make a huge difference to MRTs in the event of an

accident. Monitor the weather, we do this continually through the winter, so we can build up a picture. You don't have to go that far, but there are a lot of very good sources of information. SAIS (Scottish Avalanche Information Service), MWIS (Mountain Weather Information Service) to name but two. Be wary of online advice that can be found on social media platforms. Just because "Uncle Jimmy" got lucky when he "went up Ben Macdui in winter one year with nae crumpons or axe" does not make for safe advice. Carry the appropriate kit and clothing and make sure you eat and drink properly. Know or learn how to navigate in winter using a map & compass. If you can, invest in a GPS and carry spare batteries as you would with your headtorch. As for smart phones, think of how you can manage the battery life. There's no doubt that the Mapping software is good, but in winter your smart phone will die in minutes if used as a navigation aid. (A few of our Team members tried an experiment by navigating off a top using a phone. The battery lasted less than 5 minutes.)

Winter can offer up some amazing experiences in the mountains if you respect them. Be safe and have fun. What are you waiting for?



# Treasurer's Report

Malcolm Lamont

## 2017 Financial Year

I am fast approaching Dawn's deadline to provide articles for the 2017/18 Newsletter so I note below the "big ticket" items for 2017 to give a flavour of where our money has been spent.

In due course, an external accountant will prepare accounts for the separate entities and these will be lodged with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) thereafter.

Meanwhile, for the purposes of this Newsletter, the figures are an amalgamation of AMRT and AStJMRA figures. The Association will be wound up shortly and assets transferred to AMRT, the SCIO.

Income	'000	Expenditure	'000
Scottish Govt Grant	£11	Gear & Equipment	£33
Investment income	£16	Base Improvements	£19
SMR Grants	£16	Base Running Costs	£6
Donations	£25	Vehicle Expenses	£9
Investment Income	£9	Insurance Vehicle/Pers/Liability	£5
Collection Cans	£1	Courses	£6
Ceilidh	£1	Bothy Repairs	£2
		Sponsored Walk	£2
		Newsletter	£1
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£79k</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£83k</b>

Included within the Donations figure shown is the sum of almost £16k given by a supporter of mountain rescue in Scotland to provide new waterproof jackets for the team. We are extremely grateful for the amazing generosity of this person, who wishes to remain anonymous. The Ina Scott Sutherland Charitable Trust awarded £5k to the team and the Scout Gang Show donated £1,700.

Towards the end of the year, we received a £500 donation from a chap who had been a team member some 50 years ago! Thank you sir, it was kind of you to remember AMRT. In addition, we also received donations from a number of supporters, clubs and organisations for which we are very grateful. I try to acknowledge such donations promptly but

if you think I have missed you out, do please prompt me!

2017 was a "subsidy" year when trashed and worn out gear is replaced. Of the £33k shown above, it is very roughly split equally between the previously mentioned waterproofs and replacement gear.

Base improvements include a heating system for the garage, a trailer port/wood store, additional radiators in the drying room and total redecoration throughout. This was the first time the base has been painted since we moved in during the late 90s and, all things considered, it had lasted really well!

We have been looking into replacing our oldest 2008 Land Rover and believe we have sourced a low-mileage 2015 Land Rover Defender. It is the intention of our Vehicle Officers to move a number of items of specialist equipment from the old to the new vehicle in order to keep costs down. So I guess we need to keep fund-raising!!!

Many thanks to each and every person, business and club who make donations to the team. All are very much appreciated.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Being a Support Member of AMRT is also a very worthwhile and important role within the Team. I and the rest of the Support Members are responsible for raising the necessary funds in order to keep the Team operational, fully equipped and prepared for every eventuality.

I would personally like to thank my fellow Support Members for their efforts in organising the Annual Sponsored Walk, the Ceilidhs and attending the events which we get invited to over the year.

Our biggest fundraiser of the year is our Annual Sponsored Walk – which you can read about later in the newsletter. We are very grateful to all the walkers who join us each year to support AMRT and Mountain Rescue as a whole.

When I get a message to tell me the Team have been called out – I feel that a part of me is there with them, hoping for a good outcome and the safe return of the casualty or missing person and all my fellow Team members. They do an exceptional 'job', their commitment to the Team and to Mountain Rescue knows no bounds. I am proud to be part of AMRT.

**Dawn MacKinnon**  
*Secretary*



# Sponsored Walk 2017

Our major fund-raiser for 2017 was our annual sponsored walk held on 3rd June.

The route started from the Linn of Dee car park and headed west to the White Bridge on tracks before turning right onto the footpath leading to Corrou and the Lairig Ghru. Shortly before Corrou, the walk cut the corner and headed towards the Luibeg Bridge before using the tracks back to Derry Lodge, Black Bridge and the finish marquee at Mar Lodge.

The route turned out to be well received by the 140 or so walkers who took part and raised funds to help keep AMRT operational. The annual cost is usually between £30k and £40k and the walk generally raises a good proportion of that cost. Everyone involved in AMRT, Operational and Non-operational, are volunteers. Not for us the 6-figure salaries of some charities! This year, c.£16k was raised and many thanks are due to everyone who took part and to their supporters who sponsored the item.

The weather was again favourable and it was a very pleasant day for the 25km walk.

In early 2016, the Team spent a long time looking for Jim Robertson who had gone missing from



Corrou Bothy. Sadly, the outcome was not good but Jim's daughter Lynn and a number of friends and relations took part in the 2016 walk to raise funds for the Team. It was lovely to welcome Lynn and friends back for the 2017 walk.

As ever, the Team members man every junction on the route so no one can take a wrong turning. They take note of all who pass through the checkpoints and hand out juice, Haribos and corny jokes to everyone – no one is spared the corny jokes!

Many thanks to all involved in the walk, organisers and walkers alike, and thanks also to the "tea ladies" who work 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, **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 all walkers - this is hugely appreciated - thank you Alan!

Money raised in the various categories:-

Category	Name	Amount	Gift
Over 18yrs	Steve Travis	£950	Voucher
14 - 18yrs	Alex Corser	£85	Daypack
Up to 14yrs	tbc		
Best Team	One Beginner	£730	Llama Trek Voucher



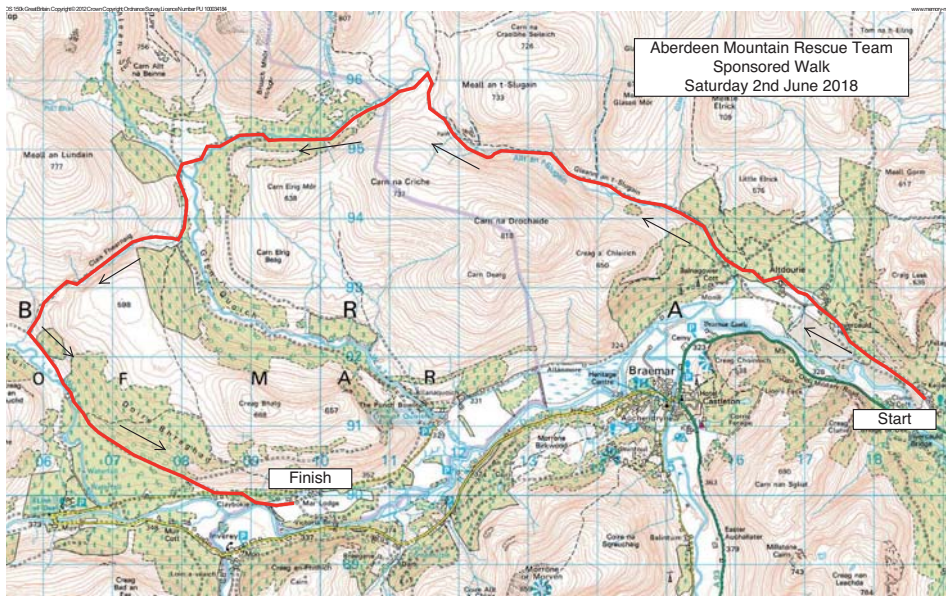
# Sponsored Walk 2018

## Keiloch - Mar Lodge.

**DATE - SATURDAY 2nd JUNE**

This year's sponsored walk, which will be our forty-eighth, will be an 'end to end' walk starting at the Keiloch on Invercauld Estate, where buses will drop the walkers at the start of the walk, and finishing at Mar Lodge. After leaving the Keiloch the walk will follow the track past Invercauld House and then on to Gleann an t-Slugain.

In past years we have traversed Gleann an t-Slugain in both directions and it is always a favourite with walkers. The quiet beauty of the glen makes it one of the finest in the Cairngorms, and as you approach the head of the Gairn the views into the corries of Beinn a Bhuid are spectacular. This year we will follow the glen to its junction with the Quoich Water. At this point the route turns west and picks up the track that descends into the valley of the Quoich. This part of the walk runs down through an impressive stand of Caledonian pine before crossing on to the west side of the Quoich and down to the junction with the footpath through the Clais Fhearnaig. This is the first time we have used the Clais Fhearnaig as part of our walk route which is something of an oversight given that this is one of the most interesting small glens in the Cairngorms. On leaving the confines of the Clais Fhearnaig the walk descends into Glen Lui and heads south east to the hill track running from the Black Bridge across to Mar Lodge. 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.

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).

We look forward to seeing you on the day, and appreciate the support we get from you all.

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# BASE HANDOVER



In 2017 St John Scotland handed over ownership of the Base at Westhill to the Team. We are very grateful to them for their financial support over the years. Their contribution to AMRT and Scottish Mountain Rescue has ensured that Teams across Scotland have been able to continue with their life saving work.



# ORiGiNAL 106 PRiDE OF ABERDEEN AWARD

In 2017, the Team was delighted to be nominated for the Pride of Aberdeen Award. We are not sure who nominated us, but we would like to say thank you. Two of our Team attended the awards ceremony in November and we were surprised and delighted to have won the category of Search and Rescue. It was a privilege to be able to represent the Team at the Beach Ballroom and we are all grateful for the recognition of the work we do.

Massive thanks to everyone who voted for us and all those that support the Team in any way.



## Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team

(a Scottish Incorporated Charitable Organisation)

In view of the recent media publicity garnered by the likes of Oxfam, Plan International, SCIAF and others regarding inappropriate behaviour and highly paid chief executives, I thought it might be worth penning a few words about AMRT.

AMRT was formed in 1964 and shortly thereafter, Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Association was formed to be the fund-raising side of the Team. “& St John” was added in the ‘90s to acknowledge the huge support received from the Order of St John. In 2016, AMRT became a SCIO which provided additional legal protection for Team members.

In the intervening 54 years since AMRT was formed, no member,

either Operation or Non-Operational, has ever received any remuneration for the duties carried out as part of the organisation.

Every couple of years, Team members are able to replace gear trashed and/or worn out by MR activities but the gear replaced is on an “as required” basis and is not a fixed amount given to everyone.

**In conclusion, all monies and donations raised by supporters of AMRT is 100% used in support of the Team.**

**Malcolm Lamont**  
*Treasurer*



**We are so grateful  
to Osprey Housing  
who in 2017  
nominated us as  
their Charity of the  
Year.**

They organised various events, a Ceilidh (which some of the Team attended), bake sales, Grand National Sweep etc and presented us with the proceeds of £1,362.65 at a visit to the Base in December.

Employees of Osprey joined us at our Sponsored Walk in June and I believe really enjoyed the day.

We appreciate the support we get from organisations such as Osprey, they enable us to keep the Team operational.

Thanks again Osprey, we hope you will be able to join us at the Sponsored Walk for many years to come.



# Nick Jack Spirit Award 2017

Dr Alastair Glennie was voted by his peers to be this years recipient of the Nick Jack award. Although this was a close call between Dr Glennie and Dr Dodds for the sterling training and guidance they give the team. One vote was all that separated them. Dr G, or Ali as he is affectionally known by most (I wont share the other nicknames) has been a strong team member for over 8 years and has been instrumental in ensuring the teams first aid and casualty care competence is of the highest standard. Recently Ali has taken on the role of being the SMR Doctor so now has a national contribution to Mountain Rescue. He "manages" all this whilst being a husband, father, busy practice Dr, BASICs Dr and being involved with Sandpiper and much much more. (he also manages to still get on the hill with the team and have the occasional "soft" drink, I mean cider when the occasion arises). We won't go into detail about his mischievous streak, his fondness for wearing shorts or his love of Subaru.

A truly worthy recipient and a good friend.

Well done.



Alastair Glennie accepting the 2017 Award



# A LIFE IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE – Mario Di Maio AMRT

Like so many things that end up dictating the path of one's life my involvement with Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team was in large part the result of a casual and seemingly inconsequential conversation with a work colleague. It was May 1970 and I was seventeen years old and working for an insurance company in Aberdeen. One day over a cup of coffee Jim Murdoch, an Inspector with the company, asked me about my interests and I replied that I was a keen hillwalker and was interested in getting into rock climbing. It turned out that Jim was a member of the Aberdeen Team and our conversation resulted in an invitation from Jim to come along the following Thursday to one of the Team's weekly training sessions and see what Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team was all about. So with more than a little trepidation the following Thursday I headed to the Team's garage in Albyn Lane. At this time the Team was using as its base a building at the bottom of the garden of what was then the St John's Hospital.

On my arrival I was pleased to see Jim and more than a little surprised to see large quantities of newspapers being bundled up by Team members. I

am not really sure what I had imagined would be going on but I certainly wasn't prepared for the fact that Thursday night "training" consisted largely of bundling newspapers. It turned out that this was a major revenue source for the Team – every couple of months the newspapers were collected and taken to a local paper mill, of which there were several around Aberdeen at the time, where they were repulped.

My first Team weekend was June 1970, roughly a month after my first visit to the garage in Albyn Lane, and involved a trip to the West Coast – my memory of the activities that weekend were blurred by pain and sweat. I was shocked at the speed that the guys moved around the hill and it became apparent very quickly that my level of fitness was not up to the mark. As we drove back to Aberdeen on the Sunday night I was already thinking that this was really not for me – physically too hard and way out of my comfort zone. However the following Thursday, encouraged by Jim but with my blisters and aching legs still causing me walking problems, I turned up at the garage for more newspaper bundling, and so started what has turned out to be

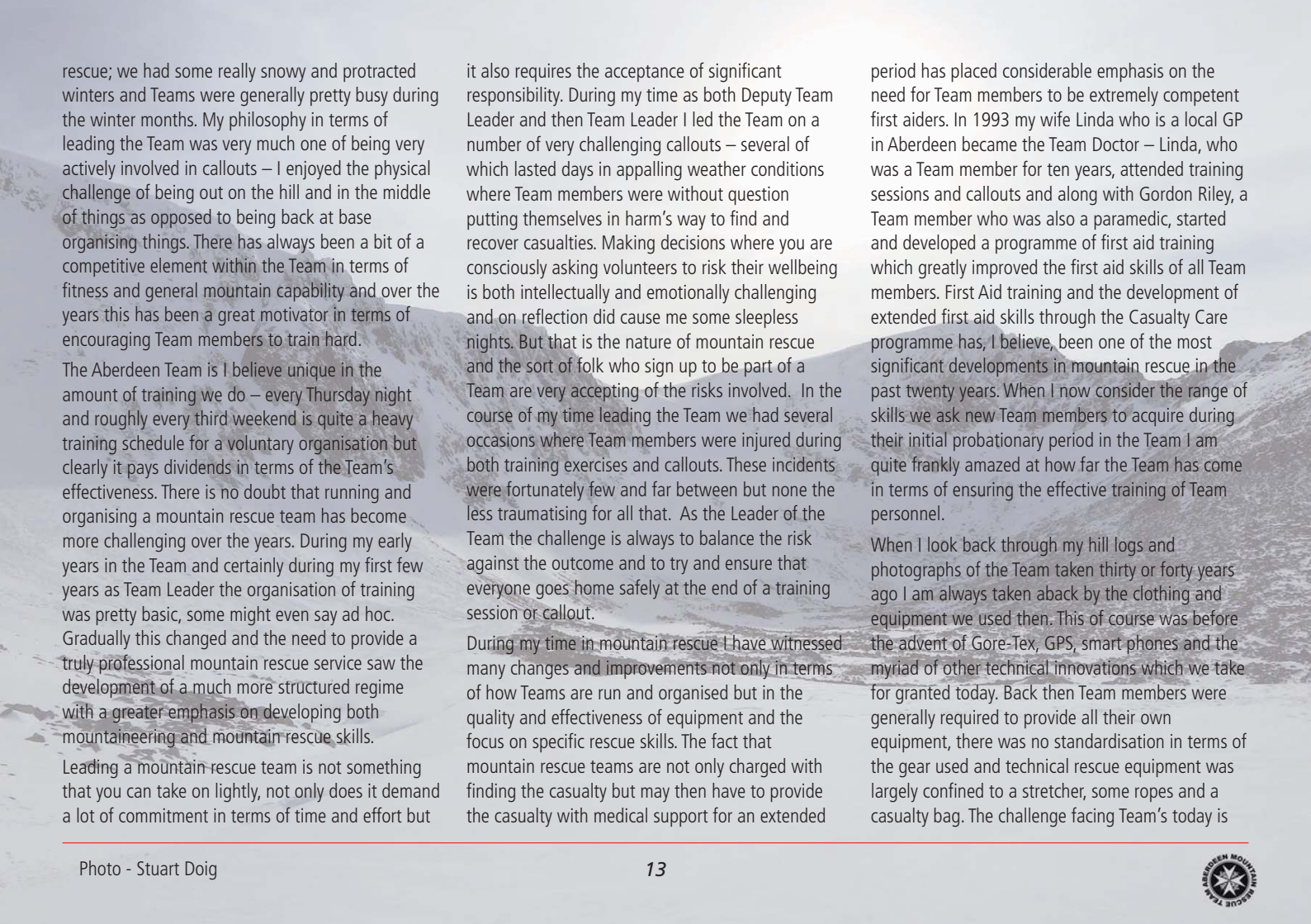
a forty-seven year connection with the Team.

Back in the seventies mountain rescue was still very much in the early stages of development in terms of organised and well trained teams. The

Aberdeen Team had evolved in the mid-sixties from a group known as the Aberdeen Adventure Club. When I joined the Team in 1970 the Team had been in operation for several years and Bill Marshall was the Team Leader. As the youngest member of the Team I received a lot of encouragement and support from Bill, and over the course of my first couple of years in the Team I slowly but surely improved my level of fitness and gained both mountaineering and mountain rescue experience.

In 1976 and six years after joining the Team at the age of twenty-three I became Deputy Team Leader and subsequently in 1993 Team Leader. The eighties and nineties was an interesting time in mountain





rescue; we had some really snowy and protracted winters and Teams were generally pretty busy during the winter months. My philosophy in terms of leading the Team was very much one of being very actively involved in callouts – I enjoyed the physical challenge of being out on the hill and in the middle of things as opposed to being back at base organising things. There has always been a bit of a competitive element within the Team in terms of fitness and general mountain capability and over the years this has been a great motivator in terms of encouraging Team members to train hard.

The Aberdeen Team is I believe unique in the amount of training we do – every Thursday night and roughly every third weekend is quite a heavy training schedule for a voluntary organisation but clearly it pays dividends in terms of the Team's effectiveness. There is no doubt that running and organising a mountain rescue team has become more challenging over the years. During my early years in the Team and certainly during my first few years as Team Leader the organisation of training was pretty basic, some might even say ad hoc. Gradually this changed and the need to provide a truly professional mountain rescue service saw the development of a much more structured regime with a greater emphasis on developing both mountaineering and mountain rescue skills.

Leading a mountain rescue team is not something that you can take on lightly, not only does it demand a lot of commitment in terms of time and effort but

it also requires the acceptance of significant responsibility. During my time as both Deputy Team Leader and then Team Leader I led the Team on a number of very challenging callouts – several of which lasted days in appalling weather conditions where Team members were without question putting themselves in harm's way to find and recover casualties. Making decisions where you are consciously asking volunteers to risk their wellbeing is both intellectually and emotionally challenging and on reflection did cause me some sleepless nights. But that is the nature of mountain rescue and the sort of folk who sign up to be part of a Team are very accepting of the risks involved. In the course of my time leading the Team we had several occasions where Team members were injured during both training exercises and callouts. These incidents were fortunately few and far between but none the less traumatising for all that. As the Leader of the Team the challenge is always to balance the risk against the outcome and to try and ensure that everyone goes home safely at the end of a training session or callout.

During my time in mountain rescue I have witnessed many changes and improvements not only in terms of how Teams are run and organised but in the quality and effectiveness of equipment and the focus on specific rescue skills. The fact that mountain rescue teams are not only charged with finding the casualty but may then have to provide the casualty with medical support for an extended

period has placed considerable emphasis on the need for Team members to be extremely competent first aiders. In 1993 my wife Linda who is a local GP in Aberdeen became the Team Doctor – Linda, who was a Team member for ten years, attended training sessions and callouts and along with Gordon Riley, a Team member who was also a paramedic, started and developed a programme of first aid training which greatly improved the first aid skills of all Team members. First Aid training and the development of extended first aid skills through the Casualty Care programme has, I believe, been one of the most significant developments in mountain rescue in the past twenty years. When I now consider the range of skills we ask new Team members to acquire during their initial probationary period in the Team I am quite frankly amazed at how far the Team has come in terms of ensuring the effective training of Team personnel.

When I look back through my hill logs and photographs of the Team taken thirty or forty years ago I am always taken aback by the clothing and equipment we used then. This of course was before the advent of Gore-Tex, GPS, smart phones and the myriad of other technical innovations which we take for granted today. Back then Team members were generally required to provide all their own equipment, there was no standardisation in terms of the gear used and technical rescue equipment was largely confined to a stretcher, some ropes and a casualty bag. The challenge facing Team's today is

not the quality of the equipment required by teams to undertake and successfully effect rescues but finding the money to pay for it. Some of this burden has been removed over the last few years by virtue of some financial assistance from the Scottish Government however the bulk of the Team's running costs are still raised directly through the efforts of Team members.

In 2012 having led the Team for nineteen years and having been involved with the Team for some forty-two years at that point I decided that the time had come to stand down as Team Leader and hand the reins over to someone younger. I had been extremely fortunate in that throughout most of my years in the Team I had been employed by a very accommodating employer who was extremely supportive of my participation in mountain rescue. On reflection I realised that this played a large part in allowing me to give the Team the commitment and time necessary to make sure that not only were we effective on rescues but that I had the capacity to undertake all the behind the scenes work required to ensure that the day to day business of running a rescue team was undertaken. I was also very lucky in that Linda my wife was not only very actively involved in the Team for many years but has continued to provide support and encouragement throughout my time in mountain rescue.

As the responsibilities of rescue Teams and the expectations of the public increase the challenges of leading a Team will I believe only become greater.

Some may consider that these responsibilities are too great; however, despite the many challenges I know that the satisfaction of organising and participating in a successful rescue has without doubt been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. At the point I stood down as Team Leader I thought that my mountain rescue career was probably at an end – very few ex Team Leaders fall back into the ranks of Team members after they have stood down. I did briefly consider calling it a day but my connection to the Aberdeen Team has been life long and I have been fortunate enough to stay healthy and fit and so the decision to carry on as an on operational Team member was at the end of the day an easy one.

I am often asked what is it that has kept me involved in the Team all these years and I suppose the answer to that is quite a complicated one. Having said that, I think that one of the most significant things has been the camaraderie and friendship of Team members over the years. The Team is as you might expect, quite a close knit group of individuals and the bond that develops when you are regularly working or training with people in difficult and sometimes dangerous



situations does build a special relationship. I consider myself to have been very fortunate in having had such a lengthy and enjoyable time in the Team, and looking back over all those years to my first visit to a Team training night in Albyn Lane I do wonder where all those years have gone and from time to time I wonder how different my life might have been had Jim Murdoch not invited me along.

Over nearly 48 years in the Team, I have attended just over 900 weekend training days - each day probably averaging around 6 hours, equalling around 5400 hours. Approximately 2160 Thursday night training sessions averaging around 2 hours per session, so around 4320 hours. In addition, I have been actively involved in just over 400 callouts which have ranged from incidents lasting a few hours to ones lasting several days.



# AMRT Out and About



# MOUNTAIN RESCUE – An Outdoor Pastime or a Voluntary Second Career?

(Some Not Too Tongue-in-cheek Arithmetical Observations on a Typical Mountain Rescuer's Annual Commitment)

Regular readers of this Newsletter will have formed their own impression of the skills, background and commitment that Team members must have in order for the Service to operate efficiently. They will have seen articles that outline the anatomy of a typical call-out, advice on mountain safety, the nature of various training exercises and the efforts that are required to maintain the Service financially. They have been introduced to individual Team members through potted life histories. In this article I take a slightly different approach to underline the overall scale of commitment necessary to be a member of Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team.

## Call-outs

No one year is the same as any other. Unsurprisingly, the winter months, particularly those after New Year, generally bring a peak in call-outs but, averaging things

out over many years, a Team member can be expected to be called out around twelve times in a calendar year. Our patch, the Southern and Eastern Cairngorms and Lochnagar, typically generates fairly lengthy call-outs. Often these involve searches for missing persons at night. An average of around nine hours' duration each is a realistic estimate. Thus a Team member could be expected to undertake one hundred and eight hours of rescue activity each year (before returning bleary eyed and aching to his or her family and day job).

## Training

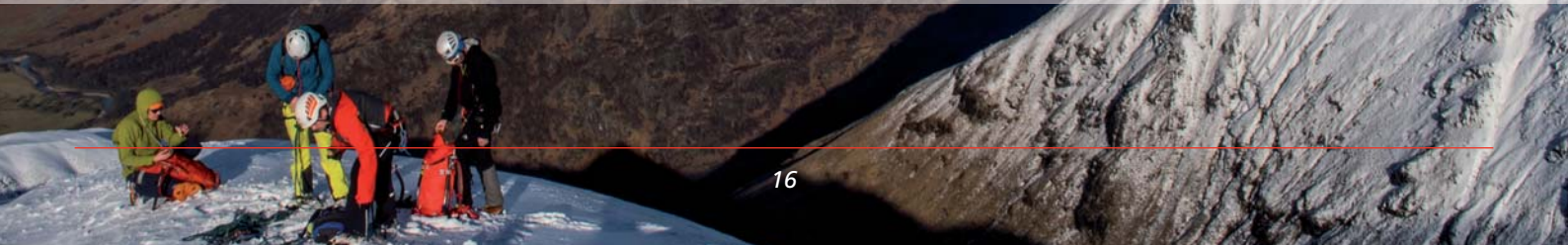
Team training happens each Thursday night throughout the main parts of the year and lasts a couple of hours. All sorts of technical aspects of search and rescue are covered from casualty care, rope work, navigation to communications and driving as well as the inevitable assessments. The summer months allow for rock climbing, rigging and lowering practice at the local

coastal cliffs. In total, about forty five Thursdays are dedicated to training but this doesn't include the formal General Meetings that happen a few times in the year as well.

The main opportunities for the whole Team to practise lengthy exercises with each other, helicopters and other teams are at weekends. Such exercises are run on a roughly three-week cycle with about twelve weekends (say, fifty hours' worth each) being typical for each Team member. Consequently, training accounts for almost seven hundred man (or woman)-hours each year. However, it's worth noting that the National training programme, coordinated by Scottish Mountain Rescue, is an added extra that might happen at any weekend.

## Running the Team

The Team, although a relatively small organisation, is amazingly complex and, in my opinion, becoming more



so. It holds a range of physical assets that need to be acquired; and have planned and recorded maintenance. Various Team members hold responsibilities for these in addition to their operational and training commitments so that the load is shared. The responsibilities range from the leadership and coordination of the Leader and Deputy Leaders to those of the Team doctors and other Team members who take on tasks such as looking after casualty care resources, vehicles, the rescue equipment, radios and the repair, maintenance and stock of the Team's Westhill base or the "bothies" at Spittal of Glenmuick and Derry Lodge. Team members are encouraged to help the Leader represent the Team at the regular meetings of Scottish Mountain Rescue in various locations across the country.

If a Team member is involved in any aspect of leading or running the team, an average of five hours per week would not be underestimating that commitment. Around two hundred and fifty hours in a year might be realistic.



Photos - Jamie Greig

## The Other Stuff

In 2017, Team members gave a total of twenty three talks or displays to various organisations in their own time. Often the audiences were youth organisations for whom Team members consider their messages of mountain safety to be vitally important. In addition, they provided first aid cover or public awareness opportunities for four whole days over the year as well as a couple in the evening. Of course, they also planned and marshalled our annual Sponsored Walk, a huge logistical exercise in itself. Such public events are extremely important in maintaining the public profile of Mountain Rescue and in helping raise our necessary funds.

Can we put a figure on the time all of this involves? Well, assuming three hours commitment for each talk, at least nine hours for each day-long event (each needs about ten members) and an equal distribution across twenty Team members, we arrive at a rough figure of at least twenty five hours per member.

## The Reckoning

Taking all the above together and assuming an equal contribution across the Team, an astounding figure of one thousand and seventy three hours per person per year is accumulated. That's about twenty hours per week on average. However, add to that the personal time that members put in to stay not just hill fit but mountain rescue fit then a huge chunk of time is the result. When set against the standard working week of forty hours, the challenge of finding an extra twenty hours in today's busy lifestyles must be enormous.



Amazingly, there are Team members who have sustained over FORTY YEARS of that challenge.

The contribution of Team members to a service for others is truly awesome but the understanding, tolerance, support and encouragement of partners, families and friends is equally remarkable and should be recognised. To all Mountain Rescuers and these supporters, the hill-going public owes a tremendous debt of gratitude.

So, is mountain rescue just an outdoor pastime or a voluntary second career? I leave it for you to judge.

If you are interested in becoming a Mountain Rescuer, don't let this put you off. The rewards of teamwork and service more than compensate. If you want to find out more, check out our website at [www.amrt.org.uk](http://www.amrt.org.uk) or email: [info@amrt.org.uk](mailto:info@amrt.org.uk).

**Charlie Hunter**  
*Support Member*



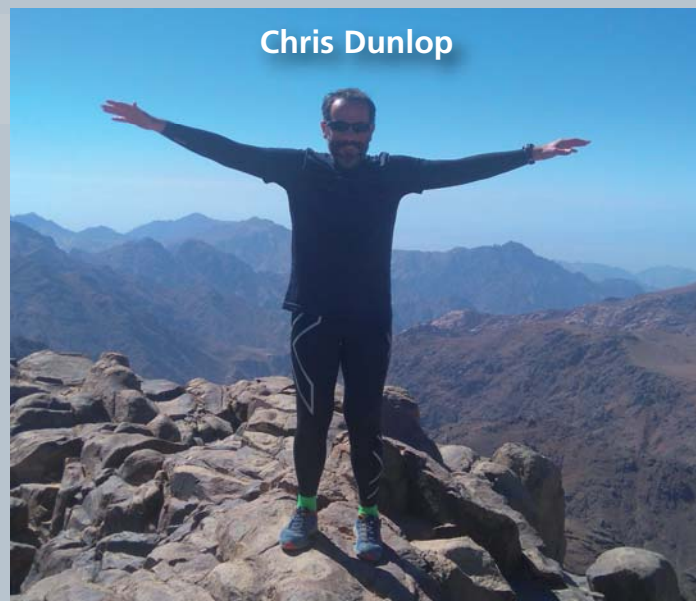
# RAISING FUNDS FOR AMRT

## St Katherine's and Mount Sinai Trek

**We are very grateful to everyone who raises funds for the Team in whatever way. This year Christopher Dunlop recently embarked on a run / trek across the Sinai desert and mountains, whilst at the same time raising money for AMRT. We are very grateful to Chris and his efforts and want to say a big thank you to him for raising £537.50 for the Team. On his return Chris gave us the following write up detailing his adventure:**

St. Katherine's (8,651ft) and Mount Sinai (7497ft) are the 2 highest mountains in Egypt. In total, the ascent of both mountains is around 7,874 feet; I was very happy to have ascended and descended both mountains in less than 12 hours-albeit with a 5 hour sleep on the summit in between! There are clear pathways up both, but you do need to hire a local 'guide'-my guide didn't know what the hip belts on his rucksack were for and we needed to stop every 45 mins or so for a cigarette break-him, not me.

The whole area is beautiful; the deserts are very....deserted, a consequence of reports of terrorism. The area is potentially unsafe in some respects-I really didn't see any security measures however which wouldn't be quite easy to breach if determined enough. However, I did feel very safe. Unless someone speaks Arabic, it's worthwhile hiring a Bedouin guide. The desert mountains up to around 5,000 ft. are far more challenging, interesting and awesome to look at. They are very difficult to navigate-there's only 1 reliable map of the area and it's an older Israeli Army map. If someone wants to risk entering Egypt with an Israeli Army map....good luck with that. The sandstone is really brittle, so it's too easy to assume that a foothold is solid for it to give way quite easily, which I discovered to my cost. If someone goes here and uses a guide, sort out your own food; the hygiene standards are worse than non existent. Outwith large towns, sourcing food etc is incredibly difficult.



Chris Dunlop

This is an incredibly beautiful area and well worth a visit. There are limited areas like that within a few hours of the UK. The isolation of the desert areas is truly immense and inspiring. However.....if you get lost on a mountain in the desert, you're potentially pretty stuffed. Little/no phone reception, no MRT, military not interested. There is no back up and you are truly on your own beyond the skills you have, which in itself for me was one of the attractions. I used a belt, braces and elasticated waistband approach to navigating-GPS, compass and an intermittent bit of toilet paper under rocks! There was one point where finding the valley I came from was very challenging, it was getting dark. Just then, I saw the entry point on the mountain via the toilet paper-the last time I was so glad to see toilet paper was after a bad curry in Dundee.

# AMRT Events 2017

10/01/2017	Rotary Club of Inverurie	Kintore Arms, Inverurie	Talk
11/01/2017	Auchleven WI	Village Hall, Auchleven	Talk
07/02/2017	Daviot and Oldmeldrum Explorer Scouts	Team Base	Talk and Demo
08/02/2017	18 x Scouts	Team Base	Talk and Demo
21/02/2017	Aberdeen University Wilderness Medicine Society	Aberdeen University Suttie Centre	Talk
21/02/2017	Fetternear Institute of the SWI	Fetternear	Talk
14/03/2017	Aboyne Academy	Aboyne Academy	YPI Talk
21/03/2017	58th Culter Scout Group	Peterculter Church Hall	Talk
27/03/2017	Westhill Air Cadets	Westhill ATC, Westhill Road	Talk
08/04/2017	Fintry Hill Walking & Fintry SWI	Fintry Public Hall	Talk
12/04/2017	Royal Aberdeen University Club	Northern Hotel, Aberdeen	Talk
24/04/2017	Order of St John AGM	Team Base	AGM
27/04/2017	Westhill Senior Citizens		Talk
07/05/2017	RNLI	Deeside Activity Centre	Display
18/05/2017	Tiso Open Night	Tiso Aberdeen	Promotion/display
05/08/2017	Aboyne Highland Games	Aboyne	Display and cover for hill race
12/08/2017	Osprey Housing	Doubletree Hotel, Springfield Road	Ceilidh in Aid of AMRT
20/08/2017	RNLI	Victoria Dock Entrance, Waterloo Quay, Aberdeen	Talk/display
11/09/2017	Alford Beavers		Talk/display
12/09/2017	Scottish Government Parliamentary Reception	Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh	Talk
05/10/2017	Cults Hill Walking Club	Cults Primary School	Talk on Hill Safety
17/10/2017	Kirk of St Nicholas Guild	Kirk of St Nicholas	Talk
25/10/2017	Tiso Open Night	Tiso Aberdeen	Promotion/display
30/10/2017	Northfield Parish Church Guild	Northfield Church Lounge	Talk
06/11/2017	63 Aberdeen Scouts	Team Base	Talk and Equipment Demo
14/11/2017	Grampian Region of the Pensioners Association	Aberdeen Cricket Club	Talk
18/11/2017	Team Ceilidh	Aberdeen Altens Hotel	Fundraising Social
23/11/2017	Danestone Local History Group	Danestone Community Centre	Talk
12/12/2017	Aberdeen and Deeside Probud Club		Talk



# 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:**

**Charlie Hunter**

**Day Job:**

Retired Secondary Head teacher now enjoying an active adventurous retirement

**Why Join the Team**

I started hill walking and climbing with like-minded pals when at secondary school. I was encouraged by my parents who were outdoorsy but hadn't done anything technical or serious. However, my Dad's colleague's son was a member of the Team (Gordon Cooper, sadly he passed away when in his twenties). I was fascinated by his stories and photos of the local hills and the Alps. He encouraged me and my school pal (Dave Stewart) to come along to the Team and help out with door-to-door fund raising. This we did and just seemed to be absorbed into the Team from then on. In the Team I found common purpose, friendship, adventure and the satisfaction that comes from teamwork and shared challenges.

**Time in Team**

24 years from 1973 until 1997 as an operational Team member after which I was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the Aberdeen and St John Mountain Rescue Association so, technically, I've been a member ever since 1973 - Doesn't come close to Mario's service though!

**Role in Team**

I am a Support Member and coordinate all the many public events, displays, talks, etc that the Team is called upon to carry out as well as giving talks myself when necessary. However, as an operational Team member I have served as Treasurer, Deputy Leader, Secretary of the Association and Treasurer of the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland (now Scottish Mountain Rescue).

**Life outside the team**

Being retired from the "day job", I now have great opportunities to keep fit and explore Scotland and the rest of the world. Together with my wife, Aileen, we climb annually in the Dolomites and ski in the Alps. We cycle, walk and sometimes canoe in Scotland but since retirement have also climbed Kilimanjaro, revisited our contacts in Rwanda, climbed Mt Kinabalu in Borneo and are planning similar activities in Western Canada this year. Life is not boring.

**Great "moment"**

Infamous with Dave Stewart for a) trying to play chess in the Team bothy at Derry Lodge and b) for using a piton on Crystal Ridge in Coire Sputan Dearg (it's only a diff!)





**Name:**

**John Rathbone**

**Day Job**

Helicopter Technician.

**Why Join the Team**

To gain new skills and to give a little back to the outdoor sports I enjoy.

**Time in Team**

Just over 1 year.

**Role in Team**

Operational member.

**Life outside the team**

Walking, skiing, running, surfing and trying to keep up with my two year old son.

**Great "moment"**

Tagging along with Coastguard Helicopter 951's training on Braeriach. Any evening in a team Bothy always has memorable moments!



**Name:**

**Mike Law**

**Day Job:**

Tree Surgery.

**Why Join the Team**

Always wanted to be part of a MR team.

**Time in Team**

10 years.

**Role in Team**

Bothies Officer.

**Life outside the team**

Skiing, Biking, Kids, Outdoors.

**Great "moment"**

Stranded on roof of Land Rover on way to floods in Ballater.

# THE TEAM



**Name:**

**Stuart Warrender**

**Day Job**

Senior Designer at Subsea 7 (or as Pam tells everyone, I draw boats).

**Why Join the Team**

I get asked this question quite a lot and as ever struggle to give a good answer, I'm just glad I did.

**Time in Team**

5 years.

**Role in Team**

3rd Deputy, Casualty Carer.

**Life outside the team**

Life outside the team has changed a bit over the last couple years with Pam and I welcoming the arrival of James who has just turned 2. Fireman Sam and Thomas are good friends these days. Away from family life I "enjoy" running and mountain biking. I can often be found making up the numbers in various team events, with the Strathpuffer & OMM somehow becoming annual things.

**Great "moment"**

(As submitted by Scott) - So many to choose from, but one that sticks out was watching Stuart almost "take off" with his Mountain bike on a slightly windy Cairngorm summit. It seemed such a good idea at the time.



**Name:**

**Stuart Gillan**

**Day Job:**

Equipment Design Engineer.

**Why Join the Team**

Wanted to volunteer with my free time and be part of a team. So as a keen climber and mountaineer and the fact the base is next to my work AMRT was a good fit.

**Time in Team**

Since Summer 2013 - so 4 years.

**Role in Team**

Operational Team member.

**Life outside the team**

Frequently out hiking and climbing, from Pass of Ballater and the Cove sea cliffs to the Andes, Himalayas, Atlas, Tien Shan and Southern Alp ranges. Also, lots of cycling, spending time with friends and family and working on the family farm.

**Great "moment"**

Getting dropped off on the Sron Riach by helicopter on a sunny winter's day was pretty awesome!



**Name:**

**Stewart Munro**

**Day Job:**

Senior Mechanical Engineer.

**Why Join the Team**

I was keen to support the outdoor community and volunteer some of my spare time.

**Time in Team**

4 ½ years

**Role in Team**

One of the four Stuarts.

**Life outside the team**

Married with a young daughter and very furry dog.

**Great "moment"**

(as submitted by Scott) - Great Moment - Apparently after Stewart fell off his bike and hurt himself quite badly. The first person to find and help him was from another Mountain rescue team...



# 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

[www.amrt.org.uk](http://www.amrt.org.uk)

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