

Aberdeen & St. John Mountain Rescue Association **NEWSLETTER**



Chairperson's Report

2014 was a very busy year for the Team and Association. We celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Team's formation and we felt that it was the perfect opportunity to do some additional fundraising and also increase the profile of the Team in the area.

Along with the usual talks that the Team give and the events that we attend we added a few additional items to our calendar. The sponsored walk took place on Saturday 7th June on the Glen Tanar estate and we are very grateful to Eric Baird and all his staff there. The walk was well attended and as usual the Team did an excellent job of marshalling and encouraging the walker's en-route. We are grateful to Allan Duffus of Sinclair's of Rhynie for providing delicious cakes for all the entrants. We would also like to thank Shell for their donation of anniversary beanies to give to everyone and also to Mackie's ice cream for providing each walker with a well deserved and enjoyable ice cream tub at the end of the walk. Our annual sponsored walk wouldn't be the success it is if it wasn't for the people taking part and raising money for the Team and the support we get from estate owners and sponsors for the event.

In July, the Team and Association spent the day in Union Square, meeting the public. A Land Rover and equipment were on site along with information and photos. Giving people a chance to meet us all and find out more about who we are and what we

do. Thank you to the staff at Union Square for allowing us to spend the day there and to those of you who took the time to visit us.

On 11th September the intrepid adventurer Mark Beaumont kindly took a break in his busy schedule in order to give a talk at the Copthorne Hotel. Mark shared with us what it took for him to cycle around the world in record breaking time, to row the Arctic and his 118,000 mile journey with the Queen's Commonwealth baton and the people he encountered along the way. This event was very well attended and again we are grateful to everyone who bought a ticket, the Copthorne for their assistance with the venue and also to Mark for giving up his time to support AMRT.

Later on in September saw AMRT host an evening get together followed by a day at the Derry Bothy with current Team members and as many former members as we could get in touch with. We would like to thank Colin Bruce and his staff for providing an excellent venue and meal at the Bothy in Braemar. Bill Marshall gave a speech reminiscing about how mountain rescue was back in the 60's and 70's and a lot of old stories were relayed on what turned out to be a very enjoyable and interesting evening. Saturday saw some of the former Team members spend a day out at the Derry with the Team – it was a great opportunity for 'old' and 'new' mountain rescuers' to reminisce and swap tales.

At the beginning of November we finished off a

busy year by holding an anniversary ceilidh at the Hilton Tree Tops. Dancing went on to the small hours to music courtesy of Ceolmohr. Stovies were supplied by the hotel and we held a very successful raffle. Thanks go to the hotel and to my colleagues Anne and Clifford on the Association who sourced most of the raffle prizes. It was an excellent end to a busy year and everyone had an enjoyable evening.

Throughout the year we also had articles in various publications, both in paper and online. Grough, The Leopard, Land Rover Owner International, The Evening Express, The Deeside and Donside Piper to name but a few. Although most of our activities out with rescues are about raising funds in order to keep the Team operational, they are also about raising the profile of the Team, both locally and nationally. A lot of effort goes on behind the scenes in order to inform the public about who we are and what we do and I would like to thank all my fellow Association members for the effort they put in. I would also like to thank the Team personally for their time attending these and other events and the support they give to the Association for fundraising activities.

Things have changed a great deal over the past 50 years. However the resolve of the Team members remains the same. Despite leading busy lives, they are willing to make themselves available to help anyone who requires assistance either in the mountains or the surrounding area of Deeside and Donside. The amount of commitment the members of the Team show in the pursuit of safety on the hills

is second to none. It takes a lot of dedication to become a member of a mountain rescue team, bearing in mind that everyone is a volunteer.

I would also like to thank St John Scotland for their continued financial support with regard to a contribution for the purchase of vehicles. Finally I would like to thank everyone who has supported the Team and Association over the past year and especially over the past 50 years. Without the public and supporters of AMRT we could not continue to survive and offer the voluntary lifesaving service that we provide.

When heading out, please remember to be careful and take the appropriate precautions for the conditions which you will encounter. Stay safe out there and enjoy this wonderful countryside we have on our doorstep.



Dawn MacKinnon

Chairperson

Team Visits

Every year The Team receives a number of invitations and requests from community groups such as Cubs, Scouts and local mountaineering clubs to come along talk about the Team, MR in General and topics such as winter preparedness or our role in the wider emergency response community. In the last year I've had the chance to go along to a few of these evenings.

Cults cubs invited us along to talk about the Team and Mountain Rescue as part of a theme to familiarise the cubs with how various emergency services operate, and to back up work done previously getting them ready for nature and hill



walks. We presented a quick slide show then had a run through of the equipment we carry as standard in our packs, with a lot of really good questions from the cubs and leaders alike. Deploying avalanche probes was probably the most popular moment of the talk though!

The biggest draw of the evening was undoubtedly the Team Land Rover – something about the flashing lights and sirens I think! Eventually the leaders even let the kids have a go.

The final event I attended was a slide night with the Stonehaven Mountaineering and Hillwalking club who invited us along as part of their winter indoor meet program. As this was a slide show only, there were no blue lights to panic the people of Stonehaven. Only, what was hopefully a well-received talk on MR in Scotland, the Aberdeen Team and the types of callout we get, and a final section on winter readiness in the hills.

Although an extra demand on Team members time, these talks are always enjoyable to do, and a good way to raise awareness. The Team is lucky to have strong support from the local outdoors community and are always happy to re-enforce this with these types of events.

Stuart Doig

Sponsored Walk 2014

The 2014 annual sponsored walk was held on a glorious day in June on the Glen Tanar Estate near Aboyne. Logistics were a little problematic as the Start and Finish points were at two different locations, but fortunately the pleasant weather meant that few folk were not inconvenienced by this arrangement. We extend our thanks to Eric Baird, Senior Ranger at Glen Tanar, for his help and enthusiasm in enabling the walk to take place.

165 walkers took part over a 23km route which started near Tombae, west of Aboyne, and continued in a SW direction past Craigræ Beg and over Black Moss before dropping to the Water of Tanar and ascending again to take a southerly route past Red Craig, Black Craig and Clachan Yell.

From Clachan Yell, the route then headed NNE back to the Water of Tanar and past the Home Farm to the Finish marquee erected beside the Visitor Centre.

A few walkers took advantage of the short Nature Walk which was also on offer, guided by Eric Baird and an assistant, and this was very much enjoyed by those who took part. Eric was very informative and discussed the flora and fauna of the area and also the history of the estate.

Thanks to support from **Mackies of Scotland**, we were able to offer a very welcome ice cream to

everyone at the finish and, given the very warm weather, this went down a storm!

Tea, coffee and juice were also available, together with fine pieces provided by **Allan Duffus of Sinclairs of Rhynie Bakery**.

Our thanks also to **Shell** who provided Beanie hats to mark the Team's 50th Anniversary year and further gifts were provided by **Out There**, Banchory, **Braemar Mountain Sports**, **Hilltrek Aboyne**, **Craigdon, Tiso** and **Nevisport**. **First Bus** again provided discounted coaches and **Peter Vardy** loaned a Land Rover - thanks to all concerned!

I am pleased to say that due to the generosity of the individuals taking part and their supporters, we raised more than **£18k towards MR funds**.

The walk is our single biggest annual fundraiser and we are very grateful to all the support received.
Thank you!

Members of AMRT again marshalled the route and their banter (and sweeties) is a continual topic of conversation at the end of each walk, mainly for the awfulness of the jokes told!

Money raised in the various categories:-

Over 18 yrs	Michaela Cargill £1,106.09
14 - 18 yrs	Alec Corser £80.50
Up to 14 yrs	Corvette Gillon-Fergusson £30

Best Team **Get a wiggle on! £1,692.65**

Gift vouchers will shortly be mailed to winners in the different categories.



Photo courtesy Alan Rae

Sponsored Walk 2015

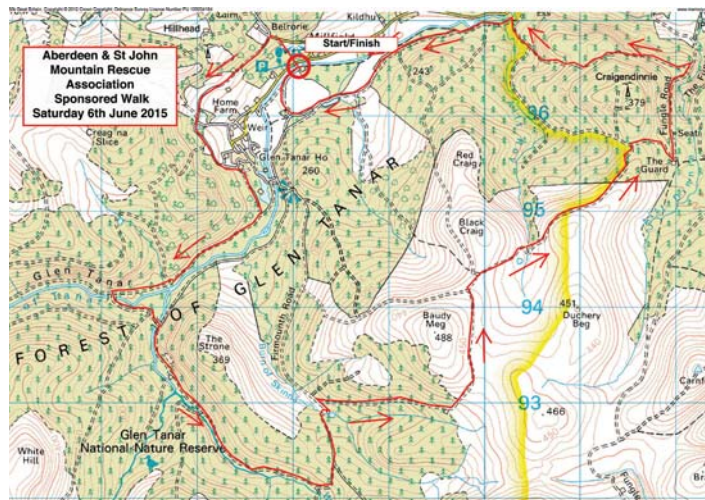
Saturday 6th June, Glen Tanar.

This year's sponsored walk sees a return to Glen Tanar. Following the very successful visit to the Glen in 2014 and the very positive feedback from those who took part we decided that a return visit was warranted.

The walk will start at the Visitor Centre which is located on the south side of the delightfully arched stone bridge across the Tanar beside the car park. The walk route goes from the Visitor Centre north across the bridge and then up behind the car park joining the track which traverses the side of the hill round past the home farm and Glen Tanar House before dropping down into the Glen. Following the main track west up the Glen for about two kilometres the route then crosses the Tanar and slowly climbs as it heads south east round the edge of the Strone eventually connecting with the Firmouth track. This section of the walk goes through the Glen Tanar Nature Reserve and offers the possibility of sighting Capercaillie and Osprey.

The walk route leaves the Firmouth track and heads due east to the Guard at the top of the Fungle Road before descending to traverse the north side of Craigendinnie. The recent clearing of forestry in this section will afford great views across towards Aboyne and mid Deeside. A fairly steep descent to the South Drive will bring walkers back to the Tanar and a gentle walk back to the Visitor Centre past the historic Chapel of St Lesmo.

Although Glen Tanar is well known to walkers in the Aberdeen and Deeside area this year's route will give walkers a chance to experience a number of different aspects of the Estate and the area around the main Glen. The route is not particularly difficult although it does need to be treated with respect and walkers should ensure that they have adequate footwear and clothing to cope with the conditions.



As always walkers will be treated to a well earned cup of tea and something fine to eat on their return to the Visitor Centre. This year will mark the forty-fifth sponsored walk which the Team and Association have run and we hope that you are able to join us on Saturday 6th June for what we are sure will be a great day out.

The sponsored walk is our main fund raiser of the year and we really appreciate the support we get from walkers and the sponsorship they secure.

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

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Operations Manager Report 2014

Scott Stevens



"Alive and Kicking"

I write this year's report post Team AGM where myself and the Hill leads have been re-elected so I am hoping for a slightly quieter year than the last, although early indications show that is unlikely. 2014 was a very busy year for the Team; it also saw the Team celebrate its 50th Birthday. This is an amazing achievement and testament to generation

after generation of Mountain Rescuer who continue to give their time freely to train and help those in need on the hill.

I would like to thank the following; Team members for turning up week after week and quite often going the extra mile for the Team. Our Association for their continuous support, fund-raising and for mucking in at events last year. St John Scotland for their continued support. The families, the support you provide your Mountain Rescuer is of extreme importance to them

and to the rest of us. And last, but by no means least, our legion of supporters who continue to raise much needed funds for the Team. Thank you all.

"System Working Overtime"

With this being our anniversary year we wanted to ensure that we celebrated the fact and took on quite a number of additional activities. I don't have the space to do every activity justice but, here is a wee overview:-

We increased our public profile which meant some of our more camera shy team members had their comfort zones well and truly smashed. We had stands at Union Square, the Aboyne games, the Inverurie Christmas show, the Dunecht Dash and many more. The Team's social media profile was enhanced with an improved website, a Twitter account, and more activity on Facebook. We "rescued" a (not so) local Evening Express reporter from the top of Scolty hill (under a watchful gaggle of scouts) and "dangled" a Land Rover Owner International journalist on the end of a rope. Our sponsored walk was a great success on a beautiful sunny day at Glen Tanar. We had a Team reunion at Braemar Mountain Sports Bothy, Mark Beaumont gave a talk on our behalf and we danced into the night at our Ceilidh (some more than others). We produced our calendar, ran a limited edition whisky (still some available), made some Christmas cards and had Team members attend the Strathpuffer, the Highland Cross and a variety of other hill related races. "Phew".

All this while trying to keep the following parties happy; wives, children, dogs, Dawn, employers, colleagues, family & friends. (And not always getting it right!)

In terms of callouts, we attended over 16 separate incidents ranging from missing persons to injured walkers. While the majority of the callouts had a happy conclusion, some sadly did not and our thoughts go to those who were affected by those tragic events in 2014.

"War Machine"

The US Army has "Rambo", Murder she wrote has "Jessica Fletcher" and Aberdeen Mountain Rescue has "Stuart (Warry) Warrender" who has an uncanny ability to be in the vicinity of someone having an "accident". Thankfully we have trained him up to Cascare level so he is well suited to treat most hill related injuries and more. Joking aside, Warry certainly had his skills tested in the last year and responded skilfully and professionally to every incident. Well done.

"Another One Bites the Dust"

When I wrote my last report the Team had gone through a substantial change in its structure and we had a gang of new of probationers. Unfortunately in 2014 we saw quite a number of experienced Team members hanging up their crampons for a variety of reasons; time constraints, health reasons, or new jobs elsewhere. We are sad to see them go and hopefully we will continue to see some of them, especially at the annual sponsored walk. We are fortunate enough to still have a waiting list of potential recruits and will start the vetting process once the main winter season has passed. A few of us feel that we are likely to see a more fluid turnaround of Team members as less and less are actually local to the area and many have

moved here with employment. Whilst some will stay and settle, others will move as work or family commitments change.

“Keep on Running”

Every autumn we have elections for the role of training officer (T.O) and our latest T.O is attempting to introduce some Oil and Gas management quirks to the Team. This could be viewed as a Sisyphean task by some but it is an admirable goal (How is that working out for you Rob?). It's interesting to note that the majority of the Team have employment within the Oil and Gas industry and whilst it's not intentional, you can often see the looks of bewilderment on the faces of the Team “non -Oiliees” when the conversation is loaded with acronyms. (“Why would you want to put a ‘Christmas tree’ on the sea bed?”)

The philosophy of “train hard fight easy” is equally applicable to Mountain Rescue as it is other services. While it is great to get on the hill on fine day and enjoy our amazing mountains, it is beneficial if the weather is a bit on the bleak side during Team training. It is important to know that you, your skills and kit can operate in any conditions. On one overnight search last year the evening started well enough with clear starlight skies. Within a few hours the visibility was down to just meters with rain and gales that made even talking to the next guy difficult. Its times like this when our training kicks in and the preparation to get you and your kit right pays off. “Faff is the enemy” at the best of times but even more so in these situations.

Training remains an essential part of what we do and it's encouraging to see the less experienced guys

running sessions. It builds their confidence, quite often brings a new approach or new idea into the open and helps form relationships. We try to keep our training relevant but have variety to keep it interesting and challenging.

Scottish Mountain Rescue (SMR) organise training courses throughout the year and we had no shortage of willing participants to attend these events. Quite often we had Team members on the waiting list to take advantage of any last minute cancellations.

The courses are a good opportunity to learn the latest techniques, get a feel for what other teams are doing, networking and the odd pint or two. We are very fortunate that these courses are currently funded by SMR via Government grants, meaning costs to teams are minimal and hopefully this will continue to be the case.

“Wind of Change”

SMR also became a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) in 2014 and teams across the country are doing the same. There are many benefits to the Team becoming a SCIO and at our AGM we voted in favour of us becoming one. It does mean that the Team and Association will become one body and that will require a new constitution and a slightly new way of working.

We also have a long standing relationship with St John Scotland who have continually supported us and other teams over many years to acknowledge, and whilst we move into a new age we should also remember our heritage.

“Eight Days a Week”

2015 looks to be another interesting year for the Team and for Mountain Rescue on a National level. Potential change to VAT giving much needed relief to teams, the economic uncertainty in the area could impact upon fund raising and becoming a SCIO creates opportunity to funding that was not so obvious in the past. I am sure there will be other challenges that are yet to appear.

Sadly this year also sees the trusty yellow Sea Kings being phased out from April onwards when the new Bristow SAR service comes into play. These have been a welcome sight many times on the hill and I have both witnessed and been aboard during some amazing displays of skill by the various crews. She will be sadly missed but I am sure there will be some familiar faces popping up under the new contract. The new airframe is highly capable and we look forward to working with it.

Regardless of the challenges, the Team remain prepared and ready to assist those who may need help on the hill.

We are often asked for our top tips for keeping safe on the hill and our thoughts about the latest gadgets. For me, it's getting the basics right. Know how to use a map and compass, wear the right gear for the season, eat/hydrate properly, understand the forecast and let someone know your route plan. Get these basics right and you should be able to safely enjoy our magnificent playground.

So what are you waiting for? Get out there have fun and stay safe.



Treasurer's Report

2014 Financial Year

As I write this, the annual accounts for 2014 are not yet finalised but I show below approximate numbers for the year. The Association's main income and expenditure was as follows:-

Income

Scottish Govt Grant	£10k
Investment income	£7k
Donations/Bequests	£31k
Sponsored Walk	£18k
Gift Aid est	£1k
Mark Beaumont talk/Ceilidh	£3k

Total **£70k**

Expenditure

Team subsidy	£13k
Equipment	£10k
HQ expenses	£3k
Vehicle expenses/insurance	£5k
New Land Rover	£27k
Miscellaneous	£23k
Comb. & Pers Liability Insurance	£3k

Total **£85k**

The deficit is in line with expectations given that we replaced the 04-Reg Land Rover during the year.

As mentioned in last year's Newsletter, it was our intention to order another Land Rover as JLR are planning to discontinue the manufacture of the Defender in 2015. An order was duly placed towards the end of 2014 and we are due to take delivery in late February/early March.

A request for part-funding of the new vehicle has been made to St John Scotland (previously the Order of St John) who have supported mountain rescue for many years. Indeed, Aberdeen MRT was probably the first ever beneficiary of St John support as the team had free use of garage premises at the rear of St John (now Albyn) Hospital for many years. When the

hospital was sold, St John commissioned premises at Westhill which the team now occupy rent-free.

Annual expenditure continues to creep ever upwards and we are extremely grateful to the many organisations who support us each year. A special thanks must go to those who remember the Association when preparing their Will. Over the years, we have been fortunate to receive a number of bequests.

One of the larger items of gear purchased last year was a number of 400m ropes for high crag work at a cost of c.£3k in total. I would not be happy having to carry one of these in my rucksack! Some of the guys also updated their first aid certificates and a few also undertook B&E tests to allow them to tow trailers since current driving licences do not allow that facility any more.

After a number of false alarms, it was decided to replace the alarm system at the base. This was installed in September and is working well. We have been remarkably fortunate over the years in that there has been very little expenditure required to maintain the base in good order.

Malcolm Lamont

Honorary Treasurer

Dunecht Dash 2014

This well organised event comprises a 2km Fun Run and an accurately measured and timed 5km Race, both held within the grounds of Dunecht House on mainly private tarmac roads.

The event is organised by the Dunecht School Parent Council as a fundraiser. All profits go to Dunecht Primary School funds and nominated charities, this year Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team were fortunate to be picked as the nominated charity.

The 2km Fun Run is aimed at children. and adults running with children. Before the event Coby and I visited the school to tell the children about AMRT, although it has to be said that Coby was the main focus of attention and discussion. It's not often that a big black German Shepherd comes into your school. The main focus of the talk was to enlighten everyone on AMRT activities and hopefully inspire the children to raise plenty of money.

The highlight of these talks that Coby comes to is the demonstration of his ability to find missing persons by air scenting. This can be difficult to set up in an enclosed area as we are relying on at least some sort of a breeze to carry the scent of a 'missing' person (in this case two eager pupils) towards Coby. I learnt very early on in MR that Coby never gets it wrong. It's only the dog handler that can mess up by not ensuring that Coby's nose gets downwind of the entire area we are searching. This

includes messing up the set-up of a demonstration.

With the two pupils suitably hidden in the walled playground and my fingers crossed that the breeze would indeed move their scent towards him. I released Coby who took off, with his nose soon clearly full of scent. However, given the small playground and Coby being used to working much larger areas, he shot off past the hiding place and found a hole in the wall and went off into the area beyond the school - a bit of giggle from the assembled crowd. Of course once Coby realised the scent had gone he found another way back into the school (phew) and back to where he last scented the missing pupils, this time he found them and the

rewarding game began.

The Dash was a great success and managed to raise **£1091.50 for AMRT**, a fantastic effort by the children and all those involved. Some members of AMRT went along on the day. Coby and I returned to the school to attend the end of term assembly and pick up the cheque for the money raised. Coby did try and steal the show by joining in with the recorder recital.

If you want to find out about this event for next year please see www.dunechtdash.co.uk.

Roland Jones



Search and Rescue Helicopters - All Change!



For many people the public face of mountain rescue is the Royal Air Force Search and Rescue helicopter. The arrival on scene of the imposing and very yellow Sea King helicopter has gladdened the heart of many lost and injured walkers and climbers - not to mention Mountain Rescue Team members. The service provided by RAF Search and Rescue helicopters over the last forty plus years has been quite literally a life saving one, and there are many people around today who undoubtedly owe their

lives to the efforts of the RAF Search and Rescue helicopters and their crews.

My first encounter with an RAF Search and Rescue helicopter was in the mid 1970's. The occasion was a callout for three missing walkers who had set out from Glen Clova to cross over into Glen Callater via Jock's Road. There was a lot of snow around and the weather was appalling. During a break in the frequent snow showers it was decided to fly six of us on to the high ground between the two glens. The helicopter that was then being used by the RAF was the Whirlwind. This machine looked fragile and made a very loud "clattering" noise with a level of vibration inside that was more than a little alarming. Although we were grateful for the "lift" there was a certain amount of apprehension in the cabin as we climbed out of Glen Clova followed by general relief when we were dropped at the high point on Jock's Road. In the seventies and indeed into the eighties it was somewhat unusual to have a helicopter attend a mountain rescue incident, and as far as the Cairngorms was concerned it was generally an aircraft from D Flight 202 Squadron based at Lossiemouth which appeared.

The Whirlwind was eventually replaced by the Wessex which was a much more robust and capable aircraft; it was faster, had a greater range and with a greater uplift capacity and was ideal for search and rescue operations. In the late seventies Wessex helicopters based at RAF Leuchers were quite common sights during mountain rescue incidents in the Cairngorms. In many ways the Wessex was seen by both aircrew and mountain rescuers as the ideal

aircraft for mountain rescue operations and the introduction of the Sea King into RAF service in 1978 was not universally welcomed. There were fears that the Sea King was simply too large and heavy for safe flight in the confines and difficult conditions encountered in the mountain environment.

The Sea King however quickly established itself as a superb rescue platform and with its range and load carrying capacity it was capable of extended sorties ferrying rescuers to remote corners of the Cairngorms. The Sea King has now been in service as a search and rescue helicopter with the RAF for over thirty years and has proved itself time and time again. If you ask any helicopter pilot they will tell you that mountain flying is amongst the most challenging there is, and over the years I have been privileged to observe from both within the helicopter and from the ground amazing displays of skill by the Sea King's aircrew.

The RAF currently operates six helicopter Search and Rescue Flights at strategic locations around the UK. Each Flight is equipped with two Sea King helicopters and maintains one aircraft and crew on 15 minute readiness. Additionally The Royal Navy operates two Sea Kings in a Search and Rescue role and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency operates four helicopters under a commercial contract.

However, from April 2015 the responsibility for all UK Search and Rescue Helicopters will be transferred from the Royal Air Force to Bristow Helicopters Ltd as part of a commercial contract

which will run through until 2026. This contract will see the introduction of new aircraft to the search and rescue scene with the Sikorsky S-92 and the Augusta Westland AW189 forming the backbone of the new service. These aircraft will carry hi-tech search and rescue equipment and have extended capability in poor weather and during the hours of darkness. There is no doubt that the introduction of these aircraft has the potential to greatly increase the range and scope of rescue operations and we look forward to working with the crews and aircraft over the coming months and years.



We will however all miss the Sea King, and its distinctive shape and colour will no longer be part of the UK search and rescue scene. The contribution that

these aircraft and their crews have made to mountain rescue could never be overstated. As this new chapter in the organisation of the UK's Helicopter Search and Rescue opens, we would like to record our gratitude to all of the aircrew and ground crew who over the last thirty-five years have made the Sea King a central feature of mountain rescue within the UK.

Mario DiMaio

The Nick Jack Spirit Award

This award is nominated by the Team and is awarded to a team member who goes that bit extra in terms of time and commitment.



This year's recipient is **Chris Hind** who is one of the Team's Vehicle Officers. The award was presented to Chris by Dawn MacKinnon on behalf of Nick's widow, Helen Jack.

Some may say that Chris's obsession with Land Rovers verges on the "unhealthy" and we all now know more about Land Rovers than we ever would have cared to admit to. It does however mean that the Team has a willing and able vehicle officer.

Chris really is "Tyre-less" in his contribution and gives up much of his free time in addition to the usual team commitments to ensure that the Land Rovers are

working. When a (non-Aberdeen) vehicle got stuck last winter, only down to Chris's expertise did it get 'unstuck'.

Chris then organised a small group to attend the latest Land Rover approved winch course and this knowledge can then be shared amongst the Team. In addition when he is not attending Land Rover events around the UK he can be found organising our garage, painting the garage floor, painting bits of Land Rovers, welding something Land Rover related (or not) fixing sallopettes, charging batteries, removing wheels, replacing wheels, wiring up lights, fixing stickers, general tinkering and getting stuck in at Team training and callouts.

Chris, Many thanks. You are a very worthy winner for this year's Spirit of Nick Jack Award (just keep away from the chocolate)!

Inverurie Christmas Event

The Team and the Association jointly took part in this annual event for the first time on 30th November 2014. This well attended event included a parade, live music, children's activities, pipe bands, trade and local interest stalls and culminated with the Christmas lights switch-on, followed by an excellent fireworks display from the top of the town hall. The weather gods granted the day dry, calm conditions. All combined to attract a considerable amount of local public participation and press coverage.

Our stall was alongside other local interest groups and near the live music, so we enjoyed a healthy footfall all day. Friends new and old stopped by for a chat, to learn of our work, make a donation, or take the opportunity to buy some of our Christmas cards or calendars.

Our vehicle position afforded us an easy escape route in case of a call-out. And, just as the parade kicked off, we were indeed called out to Bennachie.

So, the practice dummy was unceremoniously dumped from the stretcher, while we made a sharp exit. A successful rescue operation ensued, with the injured walker packaged and airlifted to ARI by Rescue 137 in a very timeous fashion.

Then, back to Inverurie to tidy up the stall and collect the dummy. Luckily the

Association members were able to hold the fort whilst we were away. This just goes to show that the Team are on call 24/7.

See us again there this year.

Ash Johnston



FIFTY YEARS IN THE MAKING

1964 - 2014



The Team has been using Land Rovers almost as long as it has existed. Shown here is the first one the team ever had back in 1966. Since then the Team has used various models of Land Rover right up to the latest and last true Defender. During the last 50 years the Defender has proven its place in the history of the Team.

It would have been difficult for the Team to attend many of the callouts without the reliable Defender and its fantastic off road capabilities. The vehicles and trailers that we use require a strict maintenance and servicing programme, which is either carried out by myself or at the local dealer. The photo shows one in my workshop being serviced and repaired for another year's duty.

All Team members are trained in off road driving and winching.

Even at the sponsored walk these vehicles play a vital role, meaning that if assistance is required, as has happened in the past, then help is on its way. Here is a gaggle of Land Rovers is called (suggestions are welcome) from last years walk.



In 2014, the Team and some of the vehicles featured in the Land Rover Owner International magazine. An article covering six pages showing the reader exactly what a mountain rescue Land Rover is used for and what it is capable of. 'Only the good looking guys were invited'.

Here's to another 50 years (*ps I will not be doing the servicing*).

Alan Rae
Vehicle Officer



Coast to Coast

September 2014 saw two Team members, myself and Rob Ross, head north to take part in the Scottish Coast to Coast. An event which starts from the dark waters of the east coast at Nairn finishing on the west with a paddle across Loch Leven in Glen Coe. In-between was a mere two days and over 100 miles of running, cycling and paddling!

A good piece of advice was given to us from the Team's Operations Manager before departure "Don't embarrass us". Great, so no pressure then. (Ops Managers note - Not sure I was as polite as that).

Day one started with an 11km run from Nairn beach to Cawdor Castle and the location of the first transition to the bikes. The next section was an enjoyable 77km cycle to Fort Augustus via Loch Mhor into the wind. After a fast start the use of mountain bikes started to take its toll, the last eight miles was not a fun experience and our position was starting to be lost to the guys on road bikes.

On arrival in Fort Augustus and the second transition there was a short 3km "mini run" & kayak on Loch Ness before finishing the day at the Local Camp Site.

The evening involved not one but two meals at the local pub and what can only be described as



torturous stretching, before a night in the tents.

Day two started early with a 33km off-road cycle along the Caledonian Canal where a lot of time was made up with the mountain bikes, this then went straight into another 21.8km road cycle ending up at Fort William and the first of the day's transitions. Goodbye bikes! Next up was a "Wee run along the west Highland Way" a 23km trail run following the West Highland Way out of Fort William finishing over Mam Na Gualainn and back down to the north bank of Loch Leven. The finishing stretch was a 1.5km kayak across Loch Leven to the finishing Line at the Isles of Glen Coe Hotel.



We successfully crossed Scotland in a time of 9 hours 31 minutes and 7 seconds securing 16th place overall and 5th in the pairs. Hopefully not too embarrassing! This year may see an attempt at the whole event in one day!

Stuart Warrender

Aboyne Highland Games



During the year AMRT take part in a number of local events and on 2nd August, 2014 we were asked along to the Aboyne Highland Games. The games have been going since the early 1700s in one sort or another and the 2014 Games saw many compete in events such as the Light Hammer, Weight Over the Bar and the Caber Toss. As well as these Heavy Events, there were Piping, Dance and Fiddle contests where all different age groups take part. AMRT were asked to help marshal one of the light events, the Hill Race – Open Competition, which we were happy to do and in return we were given a stand at the Games field. Here we set up a display and we spoke to members of the public about who we are and what we do. AMRT's aim at events such as this one is to raise awareness of safety in the hills and what to do if something was to go wrong. It was also a good opportunity to show off the kit we use when participating in a rescue.

Billy Lyndsay

Points of Light Award

We are delighted to announce that former Team Leader Mario DiMaio has been awarded a Points of Light Award by Prime Minister David Cameron.

This is a well deserved award for someone who has served as a member of AMRT 43 years, 19 of those as Team Leader.

When Mario joined AMRT their base was located in the garages at the back of St John's Hospital in Albyn Lane and was a different base to the modern facilities that house the Team now in Westhill. During these early years there were no written instructions, risk assessments or procedures in place. In time, Mario would be instrumental in creating a Team structure and protocols.

Mario has led, been involved and witnessed mountain rescue evolving since the 70s. He has led by example and has always been there for a Team member should they need advice, guidance or just someone to talk to. He has been instrumental in moulding the Team into a professional, fit and very capable entity.

Mario also recognised that the impact of modern life, family and employers on the volunteer rescuer had increased, but that they were still willing to give their time freely, so training was modified accordingly, as were attendance requirements.

Thankfully Mario continues to be an active Team member and is on hand to share his experience and knowledge with the younger Team members and those who are now leading the Team. Mario's depth of knowledge of the Cairngorms and surrounding area is second to none and for him to pass this on to others is certainly a special gift.

Mario is undoubtedly a deserved recipient of the Points of Light award and we are delighted that his dedication over the years and commitment to the future of the Team has been suitably recognised.



AMRT IS 50

2014 SAW ABERDEEN MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM CELEBRATE ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY.

AMRT was formed in 1964 from members of the then Adventure Club and interested local mountaineers. Its formation came at a time when mountain rescue in North East Scotland and elsewhere was less formally organised.

The structure in those days was one that involved members of local hill walking clubs and Territorial Army volunteers organised by a local co-ordinator. Rescue was, as it still is in many areas, also supported to a large extent by local keepers, stalkers and shepherds.

Although their efforts were sterling and given with good grace it was generally felt to be an unfair onus to place on those people whose employment caused them to live in the mountains. Increasing mountain usage and increasing accident figures also caused the police to think that a formal MRT structure should be in place. In this climate AMRT was born.

AMRT was formed in response to a growing awareness that there needed to be a more

structured approach to the problem of organising search and rescue operations in the area of the Cairngorms and the lower hills of Deeside and Donside. Over the past fifty years the Team has busied itself with developing a professional approach to mountain rescue and one which ensures that members of the Team are highly skilled as both mountaineers and mountain rescuers.

The Team train every Thursday night and one weekend in three. They have two bothies, which are used for training weekends and when on call outs. One is at the Spittal of Muick and one at Derry Lodge on the Mar Estate. The use of these bothies gives the Team a base close to their area of operation when called out to rescues in the Cairngorms.

Members of the Team come from a range of backgrounds, doctors, oil industry workers, teachers and so on. Each one of them shares a passion for the hills and mountaineering and a dedication to mountain rescue services. Training is rigorous and comprehensive, a necessity for each and every Team member to ensure complete readiness for operational duties. Every one of the Team members is a volunteer, they all have jobs, families and outside interests, giving their time freely makes them a very special bunch.

AMRT are on call 24/7, 365 days a year. Called out by Police Scotland to assist in search and rescue anywhere within their operational area, the Team could find themselves searching for mountaineers and walkers in the mountains or for missing people in and around Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

There have been numerous call outs over the Team's fifty years of operation, including some headline grabbing rescues such as the Cairngorm disaster of 1971, the light aircraft crashing into the waters of Loch Muick in 1992, the search for a missing child in Aberdeen in 1997 and the F-15C fighter jets on the summit of Ben MacDui in 2001.

Over their fifty years the Team has seen many changes in equipment and technology, but their resolve to turn out and help others, sometimes in atrocious conditions and in the middle of the night, does not alter. They are always willing and ready to answer that call.

Shortly after the formation of AMRT, it was decided that a parent body should be established to assist in providing funds and support for the Team.

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50 YEARS



Team Members at Derry Bothy 1969 Photo courtesy Bill Marshall

AMRT IS 50

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Since its establishment in the late sixties Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Association has developed very close links with the Team, and indeed a number of Team members sit on the Association's Executive Committee. In the mid 1990s The Association changed its name to the Aberdeen and St John Mountain Rescue Association in recognition of the support which the Association and the Team had received locally from St John Scotland.

The Association consists of a voluntary committee who also have a connection to the hills and mountain rescue, but for one reason or another are not able to be part of the Team. They raise the necessary funds each year to enable the Team to remain operational.

The Order has played an important part in the overall development of AMRT by providing considerable financial support over the years. In 1995 the Order generously provided a new purpose built HQ at Westhill, which was officially opened by the Duke of Gloucester in 1997. The OSTJ have provided us with financial support by way of the purchase of Land Rovers which is our most expensive outlay. The

Team and Association continue to have close ties with the local division of the Order. AMRT continue to be the best that they can be at what they do. There is a unique combination of 'older' members of the Team who bring with them a wealth of experience and the 'young' guns who are just coming into the Team or have only been involved for a few years. This mixture of knowledge and enthusiasm will ensure that AMRT continue to be a dedicated, exceptional collection of people who will give their utmost to ensure that if required, they are ready to help anyone who needs them.

We have had a busy year, celebrating the past five decades of search and rescue operations with our Annual Sponsored Walk in June, followed by a day in Union Square in July. In August we organised a talk by Mark Beaumont about his adventures. In September we had a reunion with as many former team members as we were able to get in contact with and enjoyed an informal evening in Braemar followed by a day at the Derry Bothy. Our final event was an anniversary ceilidh in November. Although these events are primarily fundraising activities, they also allow us to raise the profile of the Team in the surrounding area and enable us to show the public who we are and what we do.

An Evening with

During September as part of the Team's 50th year anniversary celebrations we were very lucky to have Mark Beaumont travel to Aberdeen to help raise funds for the Team. 185 lucky people packed into the Copthorne Hotel on a Thursday evening to listen to Mark's first-hand accounts of his adventures from around the world.

Former Team Leader Mario, who has taken on the role of unofficial team spokesperson, took on the mantle of kicking off the evening by introducing Mark. He did such a sterling job of researching Mark on Wikipedia that he did half of Mark's talk for him!

Mark's talk was both inspirational and interesting. He covered a whole range of his adventures from cycling around the world, to rowing across the Atlantic and to his involvement in the Commonwealth Games Queen's Baton relay. If anything the most interesting part of the evening was listening to him talk about the people he met on the relay and hearing what the Commonwealth games meant to them.

Mark Beaumont

Following a book and cycle top signing session, Mark chatted to members of the Team and Association who had turned up to help organise and support the evening and he even helped to take the group photo.

I thoroughly enjoyed the evening and the opportunity to meet Mark having closely followed his exploits over the years.

My signed envelope has taken pride of place beside my Chris Hoy and David Millar autographs at home in our study.

The evening was a great success and a lot of thanks must go to our hosts at the hotel and to Cotswold Outdoors and Craigdon Mountain Sports for selling the tickets.

We thank Mark for being so accommodating and for agreeing to spend the evening with us but our biggest thanks goes to everyone who bought a ticket to support the Team

Stewart Munro



AMRT IS 50

AMRT 50th Reunion

AMRT Reunion and a Day at the Derry

As part of the Teams 50th anniversary celebrations, a reunion was held at Braemar Mountain Sports 'Bothy' on the evening of Friday the 26th of September. Past and present Team members got together to reminisce and share stories about Mountain Rescue and the changes that have been seen over the past fifty years.

There were members present from all five decades of the Team's history and this led to a very interesting evening with lots of pictures shared and lots of familiar faces catching up on times gone by. Bill Marshall, one of the founding members of Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team and the very first Team Leader gave a fascinating talk about how the team came into existence. A group known as the Aberdeen Adventure Club used to meet up regularly to go hill walking in and around the Cairngorms. On one trip, when leading a group of around 40 people from Braemar, through Glen Callater, up Jocks Road and into The Spittal of Glen Muick it was discovered

that one person was missing when they had reached Glen Muick. Bill Marshall managed to round up a number of people from various backgrounds to return the way they had come to search for the missing person. Thankfully the missing person turned up back in Braemar but that was the very beginning of what we now know as Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team.



Photo courtesy Rob Reglinski



Photo courtesy Linda DiMaio

A fantastic meal was provided by the Bothy, as was a cake decorated to look like our much loved Derry Bothy.

As the youngest member of the Team, it was an honour to cut the cake with Bill who was one of the oldest in the room.

Several former members of the Team joined the present members at the Derry Bothy on the Saturday for a day in the hills, where more stories and adventures were shared.

From the reunion weekend it is clear to see how times have changed.



There have been great advances in equipment and clothing and there are now many training opportunities available to the Team covering all aspects of mountain rescue life.

One thing that has clearly stayed the same over the teams 50 years is the dedication and commitment of its members to voluntarily provide rescue cover to others in trouble in the Deeside and Donside areas. There have been hundreds of people who

have passed through the Team over its history and whether they have served just a few years or a few decades, I'm sure that like me, they are immensely proud to be part of Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team's history.

Iain Powell

50th Anniversary Ceilidh

Former and current Team and Association members and their friends and families gathered together to mark the Team's 50th Anniversary at a Ceilidh at the Hilton Tree Tops on Saturday 1st November.

Dancing continued into the small hours to the excellent sounds of Ceolmohr. What better way to end a busy and extraordinary year for the Team than with a few drinks and a good 'knees up'.

During the evening Scott Stevens, the Teams Operations Manager thanked the Team, the Association and all the people involved behind the scenes who enable AMRT to continue being fully operational 24/7, 365 days a year, especially partners and family members of the Team.

During the evening a very special presentation was made to Mario DiMaio, who has been a member of AMRT for 44 years, of which 19 of these was as Team Leader. Mario received the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland's Distinguished Service Award. This award is presented to nominated team members who have made a significant contribution to mountain rescue in Scotland either at Team or National level. Amongst other things, Mario was instrumental in encouraging St John Scotland to help finance mountain rescue teams in Scotland and Aberdeen was the first team to have a purpose built headquarters,

paid for by the Order. Mario remains an important member of AMRT, both for support to the members that have been in the Team for a number of years and also for encouragement and guidance for the younger members, coming into the Team.

The Team and Association are grateful to all those that support us and help the Team to remain operational. We would also like to thank the Hilton Tree Tops for their hospitality and tasty stovies. We would like to thank Ceolmohr for providing an excellent set which got everyone up on the dance floor from the first tune. Also a big thank you to those businesses that provided raffle prizes for us, of which there are too many to mention here. Finally we would like to thank everyone who attended the event, without your support we would not be here.

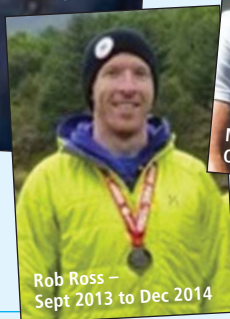
Rob Reglinski

*Photograph: Rob Reglinski
/ Alastair Glennie*

On left "Bill Marshall one of the founder members of AMRT"



Saying goodbye...



During 2014 we lost a few Team members for various reasons. Some of them we managed to capture accepting their leaving gifts from Mario DiMaio, former Team Leader, others we didn't. Frank left officially in 2013, however we didn't managed to pin him down until 2014 to give him his Quaich.

The Team train every Thursday night and one weekend in three, but on top of that they are involved in call outs, take part in events and give talks. Here is just a taster of some of the other things that have kept them busy over the past year...

January 2014

- Rothienorman WRI
- Newdeer Primary School
- Strathpuffer

February 2014

- Skimo at Glenshee
- Cults Cubs

March 2014

- Westhill Scout Group

April & July 2014

- Dunecht School

May 2014

- Highland Cross

June 2014

- Union Square

August 2014

- Aboyne Highland Games

September 2014

- Banchory Scouts
- Scottish Coast to Coast
- St Machar's Bennachie Walk
- MRRM Gathering Glenmore Lodge

October 2014

- Aberdeen Ladies Lunch Club
- 107 Air Cadets
- Association of Secretaries Dinner
- Bennachie Hill Race

November 2014

- Shell Kilimanjaro Expedition Group
- Boys' Brigade

December 2014

- Inverurie Christmas Fayre



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



Virgin Money Giving

We have established a Virgin Money page for the Team, follow the link on our website 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.

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Visit the Team's website at
www.amrt.org.uk

Follow us on





AMRT c 1970's Photo courtesy Bill Marshall

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

