

# Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team

# NEWSLETTER



Cover Photo - Courtesy Aberdeen Journals

2015 / 2016

## Chairperson's Report

Another year flies by and I find myself writing my report for the Annual Newsletter. Things quietened down slightly (for me anyway) following the 50th Anniversary celebrations. However the Team was still busy with training, call outs and various other activities, of which you will read about later in this newsletter. The Association continues to work away in the background with fund raising and awareness activities. We also attended a few joint events where both Team and Association members worked together meeting the public and raising the profile of the Team. I would like to thank all those Team and Association members who give up their time freely to attend these events.

People often say to me "Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team, where are the mountains in Aberdeen?" What they don't realise is that the Team covers a huge area of Deeside and Donside, Grampian and the Cairngorms. They are on call 24/7, 365 days a year and can be called out by Police Scotland to any number of incidences including climbers, walkers, skiers, snowboarders, mountain bikers and missing persons amongst others. Mountain Rescue can be seen as the fourth emergency service and it is not all about search and rescue for mountaineers. If you would like to know more about the Team and what they do, visit our website at [www.amrt.org.uk](http://www.amrt.org.uk) or

following us on Facebook and Twitter. It always astounds me to see the amount of time people are willing to give up, totally voluntarily in order to support the Team. Being it as a member of the Team themselves or by sitting on the Association committee as a support and fundraising group.

As usual our annual sponsored walk was our biggest fundraising event of the year. On Saturday 6th June we again went along to the Glen Tanar Estate, where Eric Baird and all his staff made us feel very welcome. We were lucky with the weather and had a good turnout. Ice-cream, courtesy of Mackies and fine cakes from Allan Duffus, Sinclair's of Rhynie were enjoyed on the lawns at the end of the walk. The Team and Association, as ever marshalled the route, with their usual brand of banter and sweeties. If you would like to take part in this year's walk on Saturday 4th June, please see information later in the newsletter. We would love to see you on the day and are very grateful to all those that take part each year and support the Team.

St John Scotland continues to support Mountain Rescue financially and we recently bought two new Land Rover Defenders, paid for partially by a donation from the Order. During February some St John members were able to visit the HQ in Westhill to officially hand over the keys and see a

demonstration of first aid training by the Team. This year will see a change in the Team's structure following the resolution to become a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation). This means that the Team and Association will become known as Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team. The new structure will have Operational and Non-Operational members, so it's really only the name which is changing. The Team will continue to provide a life saving service and members of the former Association will carry on with fund raising and PR activities.

We live in such a beautiful part of the world where we have an adventure playground on our doorstep, but please ensure if you are venturing out that you take the appropriate precautions for the conditions which you will encounter. Enjoy!



**Dawn MacKinnon**  
*Chairperson*

## A View from the Left Hand Bench

It's nearly a year since my first training weekend with the team, and a fine winter's day on Lochnagar. Many lessons learned that day – take a bigger rucksack, pack more clothes, and sit on the bench near the door! Anyway, despite manoeuvring round the back and closer to the stove, I was invited back, and started the long process of training.

Since then it's been an exciting year – learning how to drive a team 'Landy', getting winched into a huge



S92 helicopter, being hauled up a steep slope by a series of ropes and pulleys, and helping to carry the famous MacInnes stretcher over several Munros. Plus launching rocket flares, some nervous attempts at First Aid, and managing not to get lost on a night navigation exercise.

Along the way the 'Old Hands' have supported, cajoled and advised, I can even forgive them for the Christmas party initiation rites.

December 30th and it was for real: "Callout" in the middle of the night, an early morning pickup and off to Ballater and Aboyne to help with the flood relief. It almost ended at Cambus O May as the water reached the windscreen of the Landy, but Jamie willed the complaining machine through. Distressing scenes in Ballater, watching water flow out as folk opened their doors, but heartening to see the community pulling together in the Victoria Hall.

So, one year on and looking forward to the next one!

Steve Helmore

## CHAP Staff BBQ

On 30th August the Team were invited to attend CHAP Construction's staff barbeque at Park.

The weather was glorious and Association members went along with a Land Rover which was one of the highlights of the day, especially with the youngsters.

Following this, **Tom Burn, Plant & Transport Manager** visited the Team at the garage at Westhill to hand over a cheque for £400 being the proceeds from the raffle on the day.

The Team would like to thank Tom and his staff for this kind and generous donation. It is donations such as this that enable the Team to remain operational.



Photo: A. Rae



# Sponsored Walk 2015

The 2015 Sponsored walk, held to raise funds for mountain rescue, took place on the Glen Tanar estate on Saturday 6 June. The morning dawned with the team members having to re-guy the marquee owing to the winds which had blown very strongly overnight, fortunately without causing any damage. It did, however, show us that some remedial work was required on the marquee and this work was carried out at the end of 2015.

Thanks are again due to Eric Baird, Senior Ranger at Glen Tanar for his support and encouragement leading up to and during the walk itself.

166 walkers (virtually the same number as in 2013 and 2014) took part and, despite the cool wind, enjoyed the route which started from our marquee beside the Visitor Centre, crossed the old bridge, went behind the Home Farm and followed the Water of Tanar for a couple of kilometres before re-crossing the Tanar and heading SE along the track on the west side of the Strone before reaching the Fimounth track.

Then, trending in a north-easterly direction as far as The Guard and the Fungle road, the route took the South Drive westwards back to the marquee where refreshments, sandwiches and "fine pieces" were on offer. We are once again very grateful for the support of Alan Duffus of **Sinclairs of Rhynie Bakery** who kindly provided the cakes which are

eagerly scoffed by all! **Mackies of Scotland** once again provided ice cream for the walkers and team alike!

In organising the walk, we benefitted from discounted coaches from **First Bus**, a loan vehicle from **Peter Vardy Land Rover** and some water bottles from **Shell UK**. We extend our thanks to all companies for their generosity.

Thanks to all the friends, relations and work colleagues who kindly sponsored the walkers, we have again raised more than £18,000 for mountain rescue funds including Gift Aid Relief. Thanks to all who have supported AMRT over the years. It is truly a delight to welcome back familiar faces each year.

Finally, many thanks to all team members for creating and supervising the route and thanks also

to the ladies who worked hard to ensure all walkers were suitably fed and watered at the finish!

Money raised in the various categories:-

Over 18yrs - **Stephen Travis £1,040**

14 - 18yrs - **Alec Corser £127**

Up to 14yrs - **Rory Calvin £218**

Best Team - **Team Travis £2000**

Gift vouchers will shortly be mailed to the individual winners and, thanks to **Ecocamp Glenshee**, Team Travis will receive a Gift Voucher for a 4-person Llama trek - thank you Ecocamp!

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



Photo: A. Rae

Refreshments for the walkers en-route

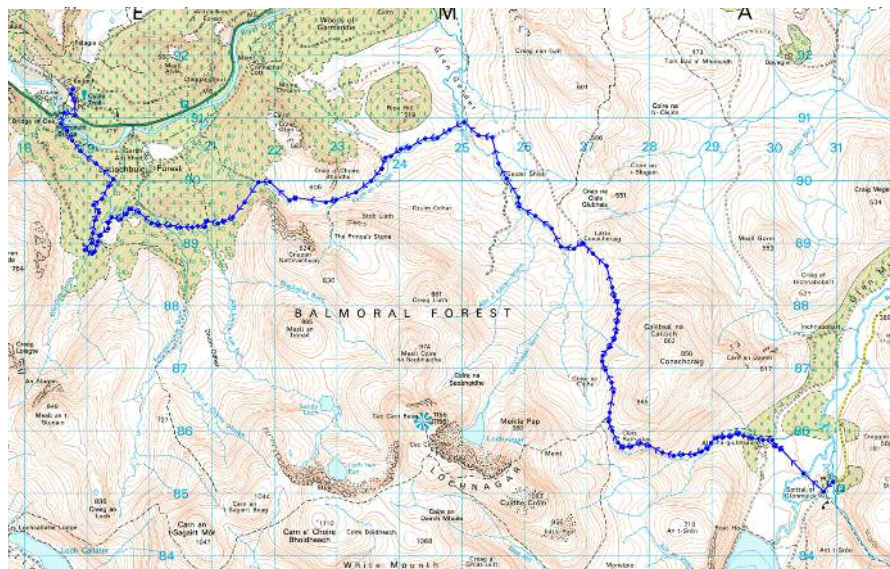
# Sponsored Walk 2016

## Spittal of Glenmuick - Keiloch.

### Saturday 4th June, 2016

This year sees a totally new route for the annual sponsored walk. The route is an end to end walk which will give walkers a chance to traverse some of the finest mountain and forest scenery in Deeside if not in Scotland. Starting on Balmoral Estate and finishing on Invercauld Estate the walk links two estates whose mountains and glens have featured large in the many rescues undertaken by the Team.

The walk will start at the Spittal of Glenmuick where Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team has had a forward operational base for almost fifty years. This base has been the starting point for many rescues on Lochnagar and the surrounding mountains. From the Spittal the walk will follow the track across to Alt-na-giubhsaich and then up the "tourist track" leading up to the high point on the eastern shoulder of Lochnagar. From here the route will follow the track down towards Gelder Shiel giving walkers views of the corrie of Lochnagar to the west and the forested hills of Balmoral lying to the north. From Gelder the route will turn west along the Feith an Laoigh burn past the Princes Stone and the craggy northern slopes of Cnapan Nathraichean. At this point the walk will enter the Ballochbuie Forest – a 900 hectare stand of native pinewoods. Ballochbuie is ecologically of great importance being one of the few remaining stands of the ancient Caledonian pine forest that once covered much of Scotland. Ballochbuie contains some fine examples of mature trees some of which are over 400 years old.



The forest is also important as a stronghold for a significant population of Capercaillie. The walk route traverses some three kilometres of forest track before reaching the Glenbeg Burn. At this point the route turns north down past the Falls of Garbh Allt and on towards the old bridge at Invercauld. The walk will end at the Keiloch where refreshments will be available. We look forward to seeing you on what we are sure will be a most rewarding and interesting day out.

For entry forms visit [www.amrt.org.uk](http://www.amrt.org.uk) or email: [walk@amrt.org.uk](mailto:walk@amrt.org.uk).

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# Operations Manager Report 2015

Scott Stevens



## "Walk This Land"

This year's reflection has been started several times but never quite finished, so this weekend I have committed to finishing it and getting it sent to Dawn our Chairperson. Why so many versions you may ask? The reality is, since Christmas Eve we have been flat out as a Team. Every weekend in 2016 so far has seen the Team or Team members attending callouts, training or other SMR related activities.

Bennachie has seen us deployed three times this year for three separate broken ankle incidents. It may not be a very big hill in mountaineering terms, but it remains a busy enough wee spot. The latest callout there thankfully, saw swift resolution with Rescue 951 winching the casualty off the hill, before the Team members went to help some curious observers to get unstuck from their steep vantage point.

The previous weekends callout had seen Rescue 951 unable to lift the casualty due to poor visibility and the

party of six had to carry the casualty-laden stretcher a fair distance to the nearest transport (I got there as fast as I could guys, honest).

In terms of callouts 2015 had not been a particularly busy year and in Mountain Rescue that's just the way it goes some years. Whilst a lack of callouts on our patch is good in terms of folk not getting into bother, it does mean that there is additional effort ensuring the Team remain focused and ready to respond.

Our training calendar remains full as we continually go through the cycle of practising our key skills which range from first aid, navigation, off-road driving, technical rope skills, avalanche preparedness and hill craft whilst keeping fit enough to be part of the Team.

Recruitment is a continuous challenge, as Team members leave (for a wide variety of reasons) we must look to fill the gap. Whilst we are sad to lose experienced Team members, we must ensure that the Team remains operationally at its best. That means selecting suitable recruits to join the Team and getting their skills MRT ready.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our Association for their continued support. You, our supporters who help raise money and spread the word about the team. The family and partners of our team members: Without home support, it is very difficult to be a member of any Mountain Rescue team. And of course the team itself: as well as callouts there is the training, the talks, the public engagements and all the wee jobs of looking after kit, the base our vehicles and so on that go on in the background but are equally as essential.

## "Come a Long Way"

2016 will see a very significant change in how the Team is managed. For almost 50 years, the Team has been

supported by the Aberdeen & St John Mountain Rescue Association. As a Team, we have always been thankful to have a dedicated group of people who help raise funds, promote the Team and organise events such as our annual sponsored walk.

However, Mountain Rescue is ever evolving and the Team took the decision in 2015 to become a SCIO. There are many benefits to becoming a SCIO but it did leave us with the dilemma of having two charitable organisations for one Team. You do not need to be a business expert to recognise the inefficiencies in operating in such a manner. The suggestion for the two organisations to merge was aired, and in principal many agreed that this was the way forward.

A series of meetings and workshops followed to ensure we were doing the right thing, and that the inevitable change is managed accordingly. As our Associations' full title suggests we have an established close connection to St John Scotland (formerly the Order of St John) and this relationship will continue as before.

Thankfully, our Current Association & St John members are happy to become part of the new SCIO and for most of those involved; it will be business as usual. Many thanks to Kev at Ochils, Steve at Tweed Valley and Andy at SMR for their time and advice that was of massive benefit to us.

## "Restless Natives"

As ever, Team members like to keep themselves busy throughout the year for many reasons. For some, it's participating in the activity that first brought them to the Team, or a means of keeping fit and for others it's the inability to sit still for too long that drives them out the house before they drive their families mad. We had Teams and individuals enter into the Highland



Cross, Etape Roayle, The Highlander, The Illuminator, Bennacie Hill race and in January 2016 saw us re-enter the Struthpuffer after missing it last year. We also sent a wee raiding party to Italy to compete in the Dolomites Mountain Rescue race, which was certainly an experience. Detailed accounts are in the newsletter. I always enjoy listening to the stories when the guys come back from an event and their enthusiasm is great to be around; admittedly hearing their tales makes me yearn for my sleeker years.

## "Be Long Here"

The end of 2015 saw the Team called out to assist during the flooding of Ballater and Aboyne. This was certainly new territory for the Team and we are reflecting on areas where we can reasonably improve. The guys did a great job in very challenging conditions and they pushed themselves and the gear to its limits in order to help the community. The power of a river that has burst its banks should not be underestimated.

2016 has started with a few shouts on Beannchie and as I write this, we have already witnessed some tragic events on the Scottish hills where there has been injury, loss of life or there are still souls unaccounted for.

Teams across the country continue to turn out and help their communities by employing their specialist skills on the hill, during resilience activities, searching for missing persons and spreading the word about mountain safety.

This is where you come in. You can help, not only by supporting us, or your local Team in whatever way you can but also, by learning or passing on to others the basics in hill craft. We know very well that accidents can happen to anyone, if you and your party are well prepared it may make the difference between a "good story" and an "epic".

It is quite often the simplest of things that can catch people out. Knowing the basics; such as telling someone your route or leaving a route card (in a safe place), allowing plenty of time, having a head torch, understanding your limits, turning back if it gets too much, wearing the right gear, having an escape plan, eating & drinking properly and learning navigation with a map & compass. Get these right and you are helping reduce the chances of an "epic".

2016 has already seen some excellent mountain days with stunning blue skies and amazing snow conditions. I hope that the rest of the year will give us more great days out. So what are you waiting for? Get out there and enjoy it.

PS: Oh and Willi, Aurepi and Zou should you read this, a wee donation would not go amiss.



Photo: A. Rae Handover of the keys for the new Land Rover Defender by members of St John Scotland. L-R: Sheena MacBride, Scott Stevens, Gordon Casely, Clifford Eastmond.



Photo: M. Law

Taking part in this year's Strathpuffer.



# Treasurer's Report

## 2015 Financial Year

The financial accounts for the year to end December 2015 are not yet prepared by our external accountant but I summarise below our major Income and Expenditure as follows:-

Income	'000	Expenditure	'000
Scottish Govt Grant	£11	Team subsidy	£6
Investment income	£7	Equipment	£8
Donations/Bequests	£146	HQ expenses	£9
Sponsored Walk	£18	Vehicle expenses & Insurance	£8
Gift Aid est	£1	New Land Rover (net)	£10
Sales of Whisky/		Miscellaneous	£14
Calendars & Cards	£4	Comb. Liability & Pers Liability Ins	£3
Scottish Mountain		Funds invested	£100
Rescue grants	£16		
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£203k</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£158k</b>

During 2015, the Association was delighted to be remembered in the Wills of Miss Helen Crompton and Miss Joan Robertson and we believe there is likely to be a further payment in respect of Miss Robertson's Estate. Sadly, we do not know why mountain rescue has been remembered in this way as the ladies are not known to the Association but, as you can imagine, we were delighted to receive the bequests.

The surplus of £45k for the year essentially comprises Donations/Bequests of £146k less £100k invested to produce income in future years. Excluding these figures, our Income and Expenditure broke even for the year.

As mentioned in last year's Newsletter, we placed an order for a further Land Rover Defender at the end of 2014 as we knew production of this iconic vehicle, which suits the team ideally, was going to end in December 2015. The 05-Reg Landie, then surplus to requirements, was offered to Skye MRT at a very advantageous price and I duly delivered it to them in July last year. The joy of Gerry Akroyd, Skye MRT team leader, knew no bounds when he discovered it had an additional cab-heater which ran independently of the engine! They were going to be toasty on Callouts! St John Scotland very kindly provided £10k towards the purchase of each of our two new vehicles, further evidence of the major support provided to MR in Scotland.

Our 08-Reg vehicle suffered some water damage in the Ballater floods but Peter Vardy Land Rover were able to repair it very promptly. Chris Hind and Alan Rae now have a programme in place to waterproof the vehicles to a greater extent than previously.

Finally, one concession granted by central Government last year was the ability, from April, for mountain rescue teams to reclaim VAT on expenditure. This will be a great help given we have incurred c.£5k of VAT since April.

**Malcolm Lamont**

*Honorary Treasurer*



# Awards 2015

## Nick Jack Spirit Award 2015

Each year the Team members vote amongst themselves to present the Nick Jack Spirit Award to one of the Team who they think has gone that extra mile and showed a dedication beyond that required from being a member of AMRT.



Nick Jack was a valued former member of the Association and following a donation from his widow and in his memory, each year one Team member is bestowed with the award.

This year there were some very worthy nominations, but unfortunately there can only be one winner and this year that was Stuart Warrender (Warry). Although Stuart hasn't been in the Team long, he has showed a willingness to support them in any way possible. He has attended training, a high number of callouts and treated a number of hill casualties. He has also been present at many of the talks and open days which the Team and Association are involved in and at some of these has inspired legions of scouts and cubs with his tales. Warry has given up massive amounts of his own time on top of the usual training and call out commitments.

He gives plenty and asks for nothing in return and is a very worthy winner of the 2015 Nick Jack Spirit Award.

## Great Scot Award 2015

In 2015 AMRT former Team Leader Mario DiMaio was nominated for the Great Scot Award. We were delighted when he won his category for Unsung Hero. Mario has been a member of Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team for 45 years, 19 of which he held the post of Team Leader. Over the years Mario has been involved in more than 600 incidents helping save the lives of many people.



*Courtesy: Sunday Mail*

When interviewed for the award, Mario said: "I have been walking the hills for as long as I can remember, so when someone suggested I went along to a mountain rescue meeting as a teenager, I thought why not. I nipped along and, 45 years later, I'm still here. Being part of the team is my way of putting something back. I don't think what I do is heroic – I just see it as my job and I'll do it for as long as I am fit and healthy".

Mario and his wife Linda, attended an awards ceremony at the Hilton Hotel in Glasgow to receive his award, one of four Unsung Heroes. He was presented with the award by Muriel Gray. The overall Great Scot 2015 winner was Captain Eric Brown, former Royal Navy officer and test pilot, whose courage has helped make our skies a safer place.

We are very proud of Mario; it is well deserved recognition of his commitment to the Aberdeen Team and to mountain rescue in Scotland and the UK.



# Floods!

The flood events through the UK as a whole this winter were exceptional to put it mildly. Northeast Scotland succumbed over New Year with first Deeside and then Donside and the rivers to the north inundating large areas and at times cutting off entire villages or even towns.

Driving through the affected areas three months later, you can still see debris hanging from fences several feet above the road, often several times that above the normal river level!

Aberdeen MRT were mobilised on December 30th as the floods took hold in Deeside, as part of a multi-agency response to protect lives. The high clearance of the team's Land Rovers mean that these vehicles can be used to cross some flooded areas (not all, as one of the drivers that day discovered!), while the auxiliary cabin heaters that they have installed provide some relief from the elements for anyone who has been out in the cold and wet.

The team were tasked first to Ballater to help with operations there. A large area of the village had been flooded by that point and it was later temporarily cut off from the surrounding areas but most of the team were able to reach it. The remainder were deployed to Aboyne and monitored the river levels, co-ordinating with the police, fire, ambulance and other services in case evacuations became necessary.

As the water levels receded slightly later in the day, the team were able to move between Ballater and Aboyne as required. The whole job was an unusual one for the team, as it was very much a case of doing whatever was necessary, rather than searching remote areas for missing people! Some of the individual tasks included scouting on foot through flooded areas to check for hidden debris that might damage following vehicles, passing messages to the coastguard helicopter crew, transferring patients from helicopter to hospital and assisting in transporting evacuees to the community refuges that were being set up.

In the following days, the immediate response to the

floods switched to other agencies more specialised in swiftwater operations.

AMRT is glad to have played a part in helping the local community however, and we pay tribute to the community spirit displayed by so many people and organisations at the time and in the aftermath. Several months later, we are aware that for many the clean-up is still ongoing. Our best wishes go to all affected.

**Brian Callaghan**



Photos: S. Helmore, K. Nelson, A. Rae.



# The Land Rover Defender



As mentioned previously in this Newsletter, during 2015 Land Rover decided to cease production of the Defender. We were lucky enough to be able to order two vehicles before this happened, helped by the support of St John Scotland. This is a photo taken during the recent floods on Deeside. "Across the country in all the flood-hit areas, Defenders were rescuing people – in most cases, being the only vehicle that could work in these conditions. We were pushing the envelope in order to save people and our vehicle became stranded at one point. It was winched out with the person who had just been rescued in it and recovered to our local Land Rover centre, Peter Vardy. After a few days in their workshop, it was back in service, rescuing those in danger.



Is the replacement for the Defender going to be able to live up to this standard? After this experience it will be a very hard act to follow".

**Alan Rae**  
AMRT Vehicles Officer



# Glack Attack

On the 10th of October members of the operational Team and the Association attended the Glack Attack event near Dunecht. The Glack Attack is a 5km obstacle mud run and the Team were tasked with helping to marshal the more hazardous obstacles and to support the dedicated first aid provider with the evacuation of any casualties in the event of an injury.

We spent the day in a number of marshalling roles ranging from directing participants to raking mud and soaping a slope!

Unfortunately the Team's training and resources were called upon three times during the event to help with the evacuation of casualties with a range of injuries. One of the key skills we practice regularly in training is packaging casualties and transferring them into stretchers and for two of the casualties this is what we had to do. Once packaged and safely in the stretcher they were carried from the course to our Team Land Rover to be transported back to the event HQ.



Part of the course on the Glack Attack route

Photo: S. Munro



The Team helping evacuate an injured competitor

Courtesy: Aberdeen Journals, Colin Rennie.

We are asked regularly why we use Land Rover Defender 110's and apart from the obviously off road capabilities you can fit a casualty in a stretcher in the back with the seats down. This capability made it an ideal vehicle for the event.

It was a good day out for the Team and we enjoyed talking to members of the public about the work that we do. Hopefully next time we won't have to put our training into use!

The Team would like to thank the Glack Attack organisers for inviting us along and hope all the injured are fully recovered.

**Stewart Munro**



# SNAPSHOTS . . .



. . . Top: Returning to Base - Stewart Munro. Bottom: Glen Derry - Stuart Doig.

Above Right: Climbing and Vertical kit practice at Mickle Partans - Stuart Doig

# AMRT DOLOMITI RESCUE RACE

Pieve di Cadore, Northern Italy, October 2nd & 3rd 2015



*They're off!*



The team, after the third request from the Dolomiti Rescue Race organisers, decided to travel to Pieve di Cadore in Northern Italy to take part in an Alpine Mountain Rescue Race. Not to be intimidated (more than 3 times) by racing against over 30 crack Italian Mountain Rescue Teams, we sent four of our available, I mean 'finest', team members to represent Aberdeen MRT.



*Plans de Antelao (Thilo (L) & Kerr)*

All started well with a cancelled flight which meant a romantic trip to Verona instead of Venice. On arrival the team members piled into two spacious Italian supercars... Fiat 500s! and headed up the motorway to the mountain town of Pieve di Cadore (923m) which is approximately 120km North of Venice.

We found the race organisers and were immediately taken to the town hall for a briefing along with the other teams. This led to being paraded in front of everyone as the only foreign team in the 'International' race (Borders MRT were also there). Bring on the race!

We woke to rain and an athlete's breakfast – black coffee and croissants - and headed to the start line for the mass start at Pradiadelan (Calalzo di Cadore) (1040m). The Italians had brought in a DJ from Ibiza (probably) who was blaring out the dance tunes, including dance bagpipes... repetitively.



Anyway, the race started and we began the ascent to the Plans of Antelao (1626m) and from there to pass Piria (2080m) which was just great.

We arrived at a field Plans of Antelao (1626m) then onto Pass Piria (2080m), where the fun started as we began technical section of the race with 200 metres of fixed ropes running up to the highest point on the course at 2130m. We put on our helmets and clipped in with our Via Ferrata lanyards and scrambled our way up the crag.

*Courtesy Dolomiti Rescue Race 2015*

After some interesting climbing moves in running trainers and Kerr wishing he had taken up

yoga, we descended into the next valley towards the rifugio (Hut) and Mount Antelao, King of the Dolomites (1796m). This was awesome; all of a sudden the clouds broke and we were running along a narrow track with cosmic views across the valley and onto the dramatic Marmarole Mountains and the jagged grandeur of the Spalti di Toro.

We stopped at the rifugio for tea and Italian cakes (they don't do uncivilized races in Italy!) before running off the cake on the decent to Antracisa (1693m). We then climbed on a track built 100 years ago during the First World War toward the rugged peak of Monte Tranego (1849m).

The view from here was incredible and made even sweeter by a big abseil! Not so much by the two Italians ogling my thighs...

**..terrible thing envy.**

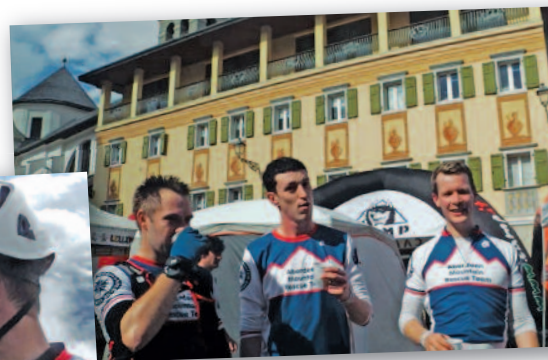
*Preparing our ropes for the abseil.*

We finally got to use the two 50m ropes we had been carrying round the course as we tied them together and threw them down the cliff.

A few minutes later we were at the bottom and frantically packing the ropes back in the bags and continued the run to Pieve di Cadore (923m).

As we entered the town we were greeted by the final challenge – assembling an ancient stretcher - which had to be carried to the finish line in Piazza Tiziano (848m).

Luckily a bloke - Aberdeen MRT Ops Manager Scott - turned up to shout some encouragement (some of it anyway) to get us the last kilometre to the line and a smug looking Borders MRT. Dammit.



*L to R, Stuart 'Warry' Warrender, Kerr Nelson, Thilo Rahn*

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The total elevation of the race is 1250 metres, with a decent of 1440 metres.



The day didn't end there, the after party began and our hosts looked after us with excellent pasta bolognese and a raffle where pretty much everyone won.

We exchanged team shirts and our team 50th memorial whisky was quickly devoured by our Dolomiti MRT friends. The second

✱



bottle didn't last long either! The next morning, after espresso, **we found a photo of the team in the local paper!\***

One of the team members stayed on after the team returned to Aberdeen and went to do some Via Ferrata with the Borders MRT and got a good dose of the amazing scenery the Dolomites has to offer!

Stuart Gillan

View looking south toward Cortina d' Ampezzo



Photos: K. Nelson, S. Stevens, T. Rahn.

AMRT members L to R: Stuart Warrender, Kerr Nelson, Stuart Gillan and Thilo Rahn





# THE HIGHLAND CROSS

## Team Tradition!

For as long as I have been in the Team, the Highland Cross has been talked about, with guys telling stories about previous years and 'personal bests'. The Highland Cross is a duathlon through some stunning scenery from coast to coast – Kintail, through Glen Affric and Strathglass to Beaulieu.

The 20 mile run followed by a 30 mile cycle has always been something I wanted to do with the Team and in 2015, in the event's 33rd year, I got my chance. 265 teams of 3 enter this annual competition and help raise money for various charities including Highland Disability Sport, Highland Hospice and Sight Action and the event is usually oversubscribed due to its popularity.

AMRT have had a Team in the Highland Cross for many, many years and there is an unofficial competition between mountain rescue teams who enter for the coveted MR Cup.

Stuart Warrender, Neil Gauld and I were all feeling strong at the start of the race despite the minimal training I'd done, but how could you not feel incredibly inspired and eager to get going when surrounded by so many excited and slightly

nervous competitors all chatting animatedly about what was to come? The run is gruelling so you're thankful for the water stops where you can re-hydrate and cram some sugar down your neck to keep you going! Passing the Fire Ladies and on to the Yellow Brick Road, your legs are feeling pretty heavy by this point but the bike section isn't far away so you find your rhythm and plod on to the transition stage.

Getting on the bike is a huge relief and you feel like you're flying as you eat up the miles towards Beaulieu. I was flying a little too fast at one point and came crashing off the bike.

I had been a little ahead of Stuart to begin with and the next thing he knew I was catching him up, telling him I'd come skidding off the road into a ditch! We both headed into Beaulieu together finishing with a time of 4hr 49 minutes.

I've signed up again for 2016 and am really looking forward to it.

**I'll try not to crash this year...**

**Billy Lindsay**



# THE TEAM

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



**Name**

**Dawn**

**Day Job**

Finance Administrator for Teledyne Bowtech

**Why Join the Team**

Tricked by Mario

**Time in Team**

18 years

**Role in Team**

Chair of Association (fundraising body for the Team)

**Life outside the team**

Family, walking, skiing, travel and working! Generally 'bossing' everyone about (I call it organizing)!

**Great "moment"**

Sponsored Walk 2010 (those who know me well will know why!)



**Name**

**Chris**

**Day Job**

Engineer at DNV

**Why Join the Team**

I thought I was up to the job of giving something back to the outdoor community

**Time in Team**

5 years

**Role in Team**

Deputy Vehicle Officer

**Life outside the team**

Happy owner of too many Landrovers

**Great "moment"**

Phone call to me on the night of the December 2015 Ballater flood callout - "hmm I might have got one of the vehicles a little damp" - later seeing a photo of one of the team Land Rovers stranded windscreen deep in floodwater



**Name**

**Mario**

**Day Job**

Gentleman of Leisure (former Depute Head, Aboyne Academy)

**Why Join the Team**

My initial contact with the Team was via a chap called Jim Murdoch who I briefly worked with. Jim was a member of the Team and encouraged me to come along to a Thursday night training session - the rest, as they say, is history

**Time in Team**

46 years

**Role in Team**

Ex Team Leader, snore finder general

**Life outside the team**

Cycling, fly fishing and messing about in my garage

**Key Moments in MR**

My first really major callout was the Cairngorm Disaster in November 1971 when five youngsters and an adult instructor died in a blizzard on the Ben Macdui plateau. I was 18 and it was a pretty traumatic experience. I suppose the other callout that sticks in my mind would be the crash of two F15 USAF fighter jets which hit the top of Macdui in March 2001. I led the first party to the scene and we recovered the body of one of the pilots in terrible weather conditions

**Great "moment"**

A mass resignation of Team members during a callout for two walkers missing in the central Cairngorms. A party of about twelve of us made our way to the Pools of Dee in terrible weather - really heavy rain and high winds. By the time we got to the Pools everyone was soaked to the skin and exhausted. We got into a couple of group shelters to have something to eat and to get out of the weather for a while. Someone started to moan about the conditions and then there was a consensus that we were all going to resign - it was at this point I explained that even though we all resigned we were still going to have to walk back to Derry! Needless to say none of us actually resigned!

# THE TEAM



**Name**

**Brian**

**Day Job**

Geologist

**Why Join the Team**

I've always been in the mountains and it seemed like the natural thing to do. I had also been involved in MR previously in Ireland before coming to Aberdeen

**Time in Team**

10 years +

**Role in Team**

SARDA Dog Handler

**Life outside the team**

Thanks due to employer and partner for their patience and adaptability!

**Great "moment"**

The first time my search dog (Flynn) found a missing person, who would have been out of sight of any human searchers – it's great to get somebody home safe and well. On a less serious front, the day she came back carrying a bikini – the owner never appeared!



**Name**

**Naomi**

**Day Job**

Doctor

**Why Join the Team**

Moved into the area and transferred from the Brecon Beacons Team

**Time in Team**

2 years

**Role in Team**

Doc / token Girl!

**Life outside the team**

2 Kittens, some chickens, Jamie (also team member!)

**Great "moment"**

Exploding Para-flares on 1st Team weekend





**Name**  
**Why Join the Team**  
**Time in Team**  
**Role in Team**  
**Life outside the team**

### Malcolm

Asked by the then Chairman and wanted to Support MRT  
 25 years  
 Treasurer of Aberdeen & St John Mountain Rescue Association  
 Active member (and Treasurer!) of Aberdeen & District Motor Club, competing as a navigator in the Scottish Road Rally championships. I also took part in local autotest competitions in my self-built Riley Elf



**Name**  
**Day Job**  
**Why Join the Team**  
  
**Time in Team**  
**Role in Team**  
**Life outside the team**  
  
**Great "moment"**

### Billy

Thilo's minion  
 Had been on receiving end of MR help in the past and felt like it was something I'd want to be involved in  
 6 years  
 Hill Lead  
 Hillwalking, running interpretive dance, cycling, crochet, travelling, rap battles, climbing and monster truck racing  
 Discovery of my ability to make uncanny impersonations of other team members



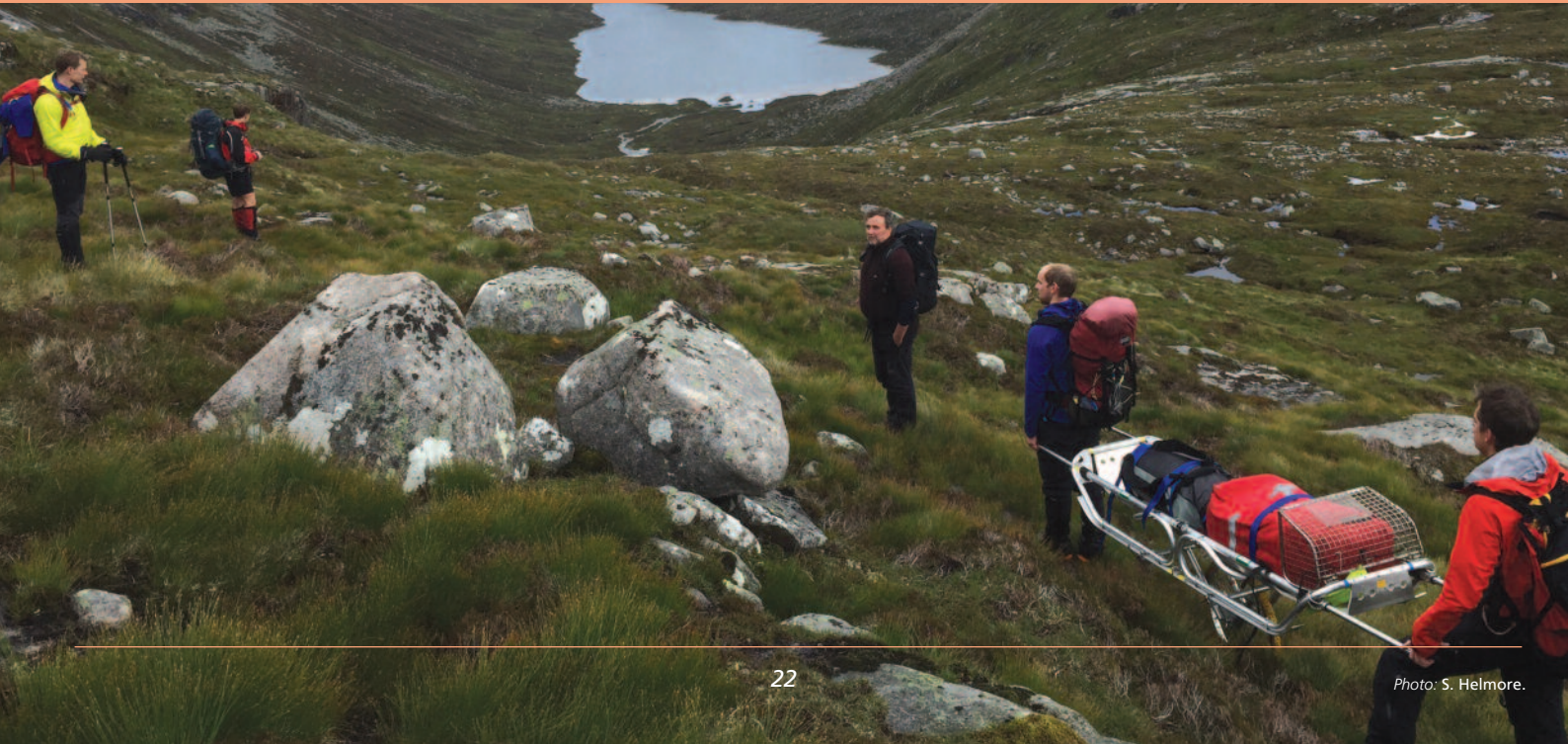
**Name**  
**Day Job**  
**Time in Team**  
**Role in Team**  
**Life outside the team**

### Callum

Joiner with Aberdeen Council  
 35 years  
 Hill Lead  
 Married with 1 daughter

# Training, Events and Talks

The Team are on call 24/7, 365 days a year, they train every Thursday night and one weekend in three throughout the year. In addition to this, many Team and Association members take part in various talks and events spreading the word of mountain safety throughout the North East of Scotland.



## 2015 WHAT

05.01 Auchterless Women's Guild  
24.01 Marshalling the SKIMO race at  
Glenshee  
29.01 Stonehaven Mountaineering and  
Walking Club  
09.02 Ellon Hillwalking Club  
12.03 Huntly Womans Group  
10.04 Alford Emergency Day  
30.04 Banchory Scouts  
01.06 Ferryhill School  
22.06 875 Sqn ATC  
25.06 Ferryhill School  
04.07 Westhill Academy Open Award Group

## 2015 WHAT

11.07 Echt Show  
25.07 Banchory Show  
01.08 Aboyne Games  
06.08 Alford Emergency Day  
07.10 Garioch Heritage Society  
08.10 WRI  
10.10 Glack Attack  
29.11 Inverurie Christmas Market  
12.11 Westhill Rotary  
12.11 Banchory Primary School  
01.11 Quarryhill Primary School  
09.11 Newmachar Scouts

# 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 and Association by sponsoring walkers or by donating to our charity.



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