

3. Chairman's Report for AGM Jan 2019 Dan Thorne

Firstly, please accept my apologies for not being present at the AGM.

I would like to thank the Team and Executive committee for the opportunity to work with them for my first year as Chair. The Executive committee have had a busy year with the usual business of running the Team. Some significant changes to our Governing body, BCRC, have seen Peter Dennis being elected as Chair, and Gary Mitchell as Assistant Chair and MREW Rep.

Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) have also been going through significant changes, working through a plan to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and increasing their demands for professional working practices. This all affects us as a Team working under the governing bodies and relying on them for Insurance, access to drugs and medicines, as well as training for our medics.

It has been quite a first year, with six incidents, including our support to the Thailand rescue operation. All callouts this year have only involved a small number of team members (see Secretary's report for details) which highlights the need for practice and training weekends to keep team members skilled up and rescue ready.

We have now completed our implementation of SARCALL for receiving calls from the Police and other Calling authorities, along with a big project to load all Team data into the system to use for putting Team Members on standby. We will now use SARCALL in the event of a callout to find availability of the Team. Thanks for all the hard work in implementation and testing.

Looking ahead we have some difficult decisions to make about the structure of the Team, recognising the hard work of those who are able to keep up Rescue specific skills at Rescue practices, whilst keeping the valuable knowledge of those cavers whose skills would be crucial in the event of a 'big' Rescue.

We also have our first peer review scheduled for early 2019. This will allow us to prove ourselves as the largest cave only rescue team in the UK. The two-day review process will dig into all areas of the running of the Team and allow us to learn lessons from other Teams.

Finally, a very big thank you to the whole Team and particularly the Executive committee who have had an unprecedented year and learned a lot about dealing with the International press as well as running a Cave Rescue Team.

I am happy to stand as Chairman for another year.

Dan Thorne

4. Secretary's Report Sue Goodhead

2018 saw SMWCRT involved in 6 incidents, a slight decrease on last year.

Date	Location	Details
21/02/18	Porth yr Ogof	Trapped - A youngster from Plas Pencelli Outdoor Education Centre had become trapped by his knee in an enlarged limestone joint. Staff had attempted to release him for approximately 2 hours before the Team were called. He was warmed, given some Entonox and lubrication was applied to the knee. His weight was lifted off his leg and the knee eased out. He walked out of the cave with assistance. 14 members were involved.

10/03/18	Agen Allwedd	Overdue – Group of 4 males and 1 female were undertaking a Outer Circle trip. However, on the return journey 1 member was unable to negotiate a squeeze in the Coal Cellar. The whole party had to return the long way round so they were overdue. The party exited the cave as the first SMWCRT members arrived at Whitewalls. 22 members were involved or on standby.
04/07/18 & 05/07/18	Assist BCRC for Thailand Rescue	Communications equipment (Cave Link and France Phone) were transported to Heathrow from Penwyllt. It included resourcing in order to transport personnel quickly to Heathrow to meet flight deadlines. 6 members were involved.
07/07/18	Assist BCRC for Thailand Rescue	Diving masks were collected from Cardiff and driven to Heathrow by a Team member for transport to Thailand by Thai Airways. A police escort was provided in order to meet the deadline for the flight departure. 5 members were involved.
07/08/18	Dog fallen into a ravine - Pistyll Rhaeadr	Call came directly from Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service. about a dog reported to be 30ft down a steep gully on a narrow ledge with a further 100ft below of possible fall height in the region of the Pistyll Rhaeadr waterfall. Two local Wardens were available and made their way to the scene, North East Wales Search & Rescue Team (NEWSAR) were also contacted as the call out was in their area. The location was several hours from their nearest support at the point of contact and it was agreed they would be on standby should we need their support. A request for equipment was made to Midlands Cave Rescue Organisation (MCRO) and two of their members and a further joint Team member were called to assist. Once on site a quick assessment of the options for a rescue were carried out and a rope and rescuer were lowered to the dog's location. The dog (a large working collie) was packaged up in a 'dumpy' bag and hauled to safety. 3 SMWCRT and 2 MCRO members were involved.
16/09/18 & 18/09/18	Black Mountain	Sheep at bottom of shaft in shake-hole – On the first date the weather was too atrocious (thick fog and rain) and the sheep couldn't be seen or heard. On the second date the weather had slightly improved, the shake-hole could be located and the sheep found. It was hauled to safety, checked over by 2 Team members who are sheep farmers, fed and released away from the shake-hole. 7 members were involved on the 16 th and 6 on the 18 th .

Once again there have been several requests for members of the Team to attend events or give a talk. There have been frequent communications from BCRC, MREW and other organisations with whom we have links. The Thailand rescue generated huge numbers of phone calls and email requests from media sources which were fielded to BCRC by those members who received them.

I am willing to continue as Secretary next year, but would be happy for someone else to take on the role with support if it was required.

Sue Goodhead – December 2018

First Aid Officer Report December 2018 - Jen Hill

2018 has been another quiet year in terms of first aid required during rescues.

We have continued to provide medical scenarios during practices and have completed another Advanced First Aid course this year.

We have made some minor changes to the Search Kits by removing the aspirin and paracetamol, to coincide with guidelines set out by the BCRC Medical Officer. All medication we carry is now only found in the Advanced First Aid Kits or the Doctors Kits. This is to ensure that casualties only receive medication from qualified personnel to prevent the risk of complications later in the rescue.

I will be stepping down as First Aid Officer this year but will continue to offer my support in 2019.

Jen Hill

First Aid Training Co-ordinator Report – Gary Evans

Following the changes to the Advanced First Aid Training course made in 2017, we were able to consolidate the changes and additions in the delivery of another successful Advanced First Aid Course in June 2018. Over a long weekend, we were able to train 8 team members from SMWCRT, 1 from Derbyshire CRO, and 1 from SECRO.

This 2019 course and future Advanced First Aid courses will continue to be delivered in partnership with Derbyshire CRO and Team members can attend a course in the area that works best for them.

We are always keen to get new Team Members with an interest in First Aid involved by putting themselves forward to undertake the Advanced First Aid course, so for those that want to renew and those that want to get involved for the first time, the agreed dates for the next course are:

- 28, 29, 30 June 2019 - Derbyshire

Note that the first day of the course is an evening session only.

We have some further changes and improvements to implement for the 2019 course, some of which were agreed at the BCRC Medical weekend in December, and these will be finalised and implemented in time for the course at the end of June.

I have also managed to find places for team members that have approached me for basic first aid training in courses that I have been running and 5 team members have been trained on two day basic first aid courses in the last year.

As always, if you are interested in receiving First Aid training at any level, would like a chance for a First Aid refresher, or would like to help with delivery as a volunteer casualty, please do get in touch with me.

This has been another busy year for the SMWCRT Medical Group and I would like to thank all those who have given their time to enable the many changes to be implemented and for their ongoing commitment to deliver excellent Advanced First and Casualty Care Training to Cave Rescuers from SWMCRT and our partners from other Cave Rescue Teams.

Gary Evans
First Aid Training Coordinator
Warden, SMWCRT

Communications Officer's Report for 2019 A.G.M. Keith Goodhead

No significant changes to report this year again, hopefully next year it will be a different story; read on!

I sent a number of our old HeyPhones to Canada earlier in the year, to the Alberta / British Columbia Cave Rescue Service. I am proposing that the remainder are removed from Stores so if you know of anyone who could use them, please let me know.

As well as establishing that we have Cave Link communication from the rear of the cottages at Penwyllt (handy for Surface Control) to a number of locations in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu I, an interesting issue was observed during the OFD practice in December. Skip the next paragraph if you're never going to be operating a Cave Link!

Unit LC1 appeared to keep sending messages but nothing was being received. Not until observing one of the intended receiving units did I notice an unusual **double-blinking of the alternating red/green 'Receiving Message' indicator**, followed by no message actually received. Returning to Control and testing with another unit from stores, the problem could be replicated and shown to be with LC1 rather than the receiving units. A full hardware reset was required; resulting in the menus reverting to German but not, thankfully overwriting our custom menu; LC 1 is now fully functional.

The last stage of the Agen Allwedd search plan, including the placement of Cave Links to facilitate this, is still outstanding for the Grand Circle. Hopefully we can finalise this in 2019.

The Dan yr Ogof Practice in June tested the France Phone link through from the other side of the Long Crawl to a Base Station outside the cave. Communication was possible although some deficiencies were highlighted (this is why we have practices!) including the need to:-

- 1) relocate the Base Station away from the noisy fan-house
- 2) replace a boulder-shattered junction-box en-route to the Long Crawl. This DyO practice was also the first outing for one of the 'New, Old-Style' Base Stations; very good it was too apparently, especially once the fan had stopped!

A suitable location for the external connection (and earth) has been agreed with the owner and I've provided an appropriate box, to be installed when convenient.

Another still-outstanding task for the Comms officer following the Agen Allwedd practice in September is the provision of sufficient clearly marked reels of wire for France Phone communication into the cave from Whitewalls. Suitable special spoolable reels have been sourced for this.

By the time you read this I will have provided detailed pricing for a full set of Digital Radios, including Hand-helds, Base units and a Vehicle mounted unit. We will be applying for grant-funding for the majority of this; let's hope we're successful as we've suffered yet another failure of one of our old analogue units and the promised second-hand ones from local MR teams haven't materialised yet!

Finally, I must thank my 'deputy Comms Officer' (she knows who she is!) for the assistance and also note that I'm happy to continue in the role if elected. I would of course also fully support any newly elected Communications Officer as necessary.

Keith Goodhead

Diving Officer Report Gareth Davies

Other than the Thailand incident, it's been another incident free year.

During the year a number of cylinders were tested free of charge, thanks to Bristol Channel Diving for their continued support and all are in current test.

Gareth Davies

SMWCRT Webmaster Report Paul Tarrant

The website was updated during the course of the year with several articles broadcasting forthcoming rescue practices, adding information reports and acknowledging donations made by organisations to the Team. All of this activity is really 'business as usual', however, things changed dramatically in late June and July with the major cave rescue in Thailand.

The Thai rescue resulted in the BCRC generating centrally co-ordinated daily bulletins which were nearly all posted on the SMWCRT website as soon as they were released. The website had to have contact details anonymised during the rescue to protect certain individuals involved, from receiving emails or phone calls from media reporters. Interestingly, hits registered on the website for the remarkable highly successful Thai Rescue articles amounted to 5471 hits, whilst the unsuccessful dog rescue in November 2017 generated over 14,342 hits!

I am happy to carry on the role for a further year but will be delighted if someone else wishes to take this on.

Paul Tarrant