

## **Chairman's Report**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to once again work with the Team as Chair. It has been a busy year in many respects with some highs and real lows to work through.

I can honestly say there have been huge amounts of work and progress going on behind the scenes by the Executive Committee, much of it unnoticed and unrewarded. I don't have the space here to thank them all individually, so will do it en masse. It has been a pleasure to work with such a diverse and dynamic group who are all passionate about the Team and the role(s) they perform within it.

The year has been marred by the sad loss of two very long-standing members of the Team. Clive Edwards and John Lister both passed away in April leaving a big dent in the Teams' morale, but as is ever the case in the caving community, their families were supported and will continue to be so. This year the team hosted the bi-annual Cave Rescue Conference and over 80 people attended the informative workshops, lectures and underground elements of the weekend. It was a great chance to catch up with our wider Cave Rescue community and as usual the social aspects of the weekend will be remembered for many years to come. I know it took a lot of organising but it was worth it.

We have been kept quite busy with call outs (although very few of them requiring much in the way of large resources of people and equipment). Most have passed well under the radar of the majority of people, but there has been one notable exception this year which has given us plenty to learn from as we go forward. Our training schedule has been well supported, with over 40 people on some of the practices, and once again many members of our neighbouring teams have joined in on these.

There are a couple of key areas we have been working on over the last year or two that need a special mention here. Firstly SARCALL, a web based system which enables teams to be alerted to incidents from a number of different users (Police, Fire and other teams), but perhaps more importantly there are a number of applications that can assist with dealing with an incident (mapping software, record keeping, asset planning etc.) The Wardens and key members of the Exec. have been testing its use, learning more and more about its capabilities and possible pitfalls. I'm pleased to announce that the Exec. has passed a motion to move to the next level in our adoption plan for SARCALL and we have now begun the process of using it as our preferred method of call out from the Police forces that are operating it. It is certainly feasible that within the year we will be using it for full Team call out purposes.

Secondly you will note some proposed constitutional changes within the papers for the AGM. This has come about as the Team have rightfully been challenged on a number of aspects of the current constitution. Upon taking a full review of it and gaining some outside advice it became apparent that we needed to add some clarity to it. At the same time as it has not been amended since 2010 we have taken the chance to tidy it up a little. Please take the time to review the proposed changes and I hope the motion is carried to adopt the changes.

Our Team remains in good operational health and I'm grateful for everyone's help in achieving this status. I have been in the role of Chairperson for two years now and I am stepping down from this position at this AGM. I will of course still be part of the Executive and therefore be able to work with the in-coming chairperson should they need my assistance.

Thanks again to every contributor to the Team

Gary Mitchell

## **Secretary's report for 2017**

2017 saw SMWCRT attending 8 incidents, an increase on last year.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Details</b>
20/1/17	Daren Cilau	Group of 5 cavers in Daren Cilau. Had set a callout time but a parent panicked late evening and phoned the police. Party exited the cave well within their time, unaware that Rescue had been called. 12 members were involved, 4 onsite.
21/1/17	OFD1 to Top	Overdue - Group of 4 females (inexperienced) and a 1 male leader on a through trip. The girls became very tired (took 5 hours to reach Diver's Pitch), lights were fading, but trip continued. Route not known very well, not able to exit via Cwm Dwr as this way not known and no survey. Missed exit route in Salubrious and were waiting at Trident and Judge when found. Warmed by hot drinks and food and helped to exit. 25 members involved / on standby.
22/7/17	Near Prokofiev Series OFD2	Trapped - Group of 1 male and 2 females going towards Prokofiev Series, 1 female went through narrow area then the second female became trapped by her knee so blocking the exit of the other. Male exited to raise alarm. Small cavers mobilised, eventually the trapped female was freed and exited under her own steam. 29 on site / standby.
6/8/17	Dog in Mine shaft, Hirnant, Oswestry	Callout came via a circuitous route from South Wales Police, then CBMRT handed over the incident to the Team. Mid Wales Team members despatched but as they were about 20 mins. from the site they discovered that both NWCRO (North Wales Cave Rescue Organisation) and NEWSAR (North East Wales Search and Rescue) had been called; the latter had completed the rescue before SMWCRT arrived.
23/9/17	Round Trip in OFD1	Overdue – 2 male cavers on a round trip. Water levels were underestimated and they were slow on the trip as they had to return via the Dry route. Party exited whilst Rescue Team was organising the Search parties. 23 members on site / standby.
14/10/17	OFD2 round trip via Shatter Pillar	Lost and overdue – Party of 6 students (1 leader and 5 inexperienced) whose leader took an incomplete copy of the survey with him. One member had a panic attack over traverses and took time to be persuaded to return over them when it was discovered this was the incorrect route. They then became lost in Salubrious. Eventually they exited and were given hot drinks and food which had been sent up to Top entrance before they walked back down. 15 members involved
22/10/17	Dog in rift, Mardy Mountain	The Wardens were alerted via SARCALL by South Wales Police but there was also a call to CBMRT. No detailed location given to Team members travelling to the area. Dog retrieved by CBMRT.

14/11/17	Dog in rift, Blaina Mountain	SWFRS (South Wales Fire and Rescue Service) were alerted to a lost dog on morning of 13 <sup>th</sup> . They located the dog but having tried to retrieve her they were unable to by nightfall. They returned next morning to try again but SMWCRT were only called in at late morning. Despite the best efforts of those team members who attended, including the bravery of one member who spent a considerable time lowered down in an 8" rift, the dog could not be rescued. Owner and community very grateful for Team's efforts.
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In addition to the above, the Team was aware of the following incidents which did not result in a Callout:-

- April, (heads up using SARCALL) for a group marginally overdue on a Cwm Dwr to OFD1 trip.
- October, there was another alert when the party was overdue on a digging trip in Agen Allwedd.
- October, on a Freshers' weekend, one party tried to complete the Cwm Dwr to Top trip, but realising that the group were not able to complete this due to water levels, their leader took the group safely out through Cwm Dwr.
- Same weekend a party leader on a trip in OFD 1 via dry route and back the same way changed his mind and decided to exit via the Streamway. Having become lost twice he and his group were lead out of the cave by a more experienced group. This could have provided a challenge to searchers as the information on the ticket wouldn't have been correct.
- November, we were contacted via Facebook about a seal pup trapped near Aberavon Beach. Assistance was offered but not required.

There have been a number of e mails answered and requests for members of the Team to attend events. There have been frequent emails from BCRC, MREW and other organisations with whom we have links. Other events, such as BCRC ResCon at Penwyllt, are covered in the relevant Officers' reports.

I am willing to continue as Secretary next year, but would equally be happy for someone else to take on the role with any support they required, or for someone to shadow me and discover what is involved.

Sue Goodhead 13.12.17

## **First Aid Officer Report - Jen Hill**

November 2017

### Rescues & Practices

Another year has passed without the need for medical assistance underground and although this is great news for cavers it does mean that our advanced first aiders rely on the medical based scenarios within our rescue practices to sharpen their skills.

This prompted the creation of an underground training first aid kit, within which are the usual bandages and dressings, as well as 'fake' medication in the form of mints for tablets and sodium chloride for injecting into an orange. Previously first aiders have verbally communicated what they would use in a particular scenario, but this new method allows the first aider to act out each element of a medical scenario and gain confidence in doing so.

The training first aid kit was trailed at the Mines Rescue Practice back in September and proved successful. The September practice also encompassed a selection of medical scenarios which allowed more than one advanced first aider to apply their knowledge as well as provide Surface Control with an opportunity to apply a triage system.

### Controlled Drugs

In order to comply with the regulations for storing Controlled Drugs we have developed a Safe Operating Procedure document as well as installing a new door lock on the first aid room in the rescue stores.

I am happy to stand as First Aid Officer for 2018.

Jen Hill

## **First Aid Training Co-ordinator Report – Gary Evans**

Following a considerable number of changes to the Advanced First Aid Training course, to both modernise the course and to comply with last year's MREW changes, we were able to deliver a very successful Advanced First Aid Course in June 2017. Over a long weekend, we were able to train 7 team members from SMWCRT, 4 from Derbyshire CRO, 3 from GCRG, 1 from NWCRO and 1 from Midlands CRO.

This 2018 course and future Advanced First Aid courses will 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 two courses are:

- 29, 30 June, 1st July 2018 - Penwyllt

- 28, 29, 30 June 2019 - Derbyshire

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

We have some further changes and improvements to implement for the 2018 course 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 6 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 a busy year for the SMWCRT Medical Group and I would like to thank all those who have given their time to moving this all forward 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, SWMCRT

### **Communications Officer's Report for 2018 AGM**

There isn't too much to report this year with the biggest news being that we now have a 'full set' of Cave Links: 8 in all, with two permanently stored at Whitewalls.

There were a couple of issues with the batteries in the new Cave Links not appearing to hold their charge but after a couple of cycles they all seem to be fine. They've all had the SMWCRT menu loaded but there is a little task on my list to amend this to allow Users to change the Time; old and new units show a reluctance to keep accurate time with varying degrees of error and this currently means that they sometimes need re-setting before each use in order to show meaningful message times

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The batteries in the High-band radios continue to slowly fail, one by one; don't forget to take a spare whenever you're issued with a radio please! We hope to be receiving a grant to enable us to purchase a couple of the new Digital sets for evaluation in 2018.

I'm happy to continue in the role if elected but would also fully support any newly elected Communications Officer as necessary.

Keith R. Goodhead, 12.12.17

## **Diving Officer Report – Gareth Davies**

"It has been a pleasingly quiet year, with no diving related incidents. A number of training events have happened this year involving the divers.

The first was at Rescon17, a demonstration was made of some of the dive equipment available to support a rescue by SMWCRT.

The second was in October at Cromhall quarry (Gloucestershire) where nine divers from the Welsh section CDG turned up to listen to John Volanthen discuss using a Full Face Mask and a cylinder switch block. The day then progressed to using the short slix stretcher to move our casualty to the water's edge. Once suitably equipped with FFM and dive kit he was towed around the shallow area of the quarry. This also gave us the chance to test the dive equipment from the stores before it was cleaned, dried and returned. Thanks to John and Andy Ward for their support in organising the day. The Welsh section members were encouraged to join and support SMWCRT and GCRG.

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.

A compressor has been donated to the Welsh section CDG which is currently being serviced / repaired and will then be placed in the store for use if needed."